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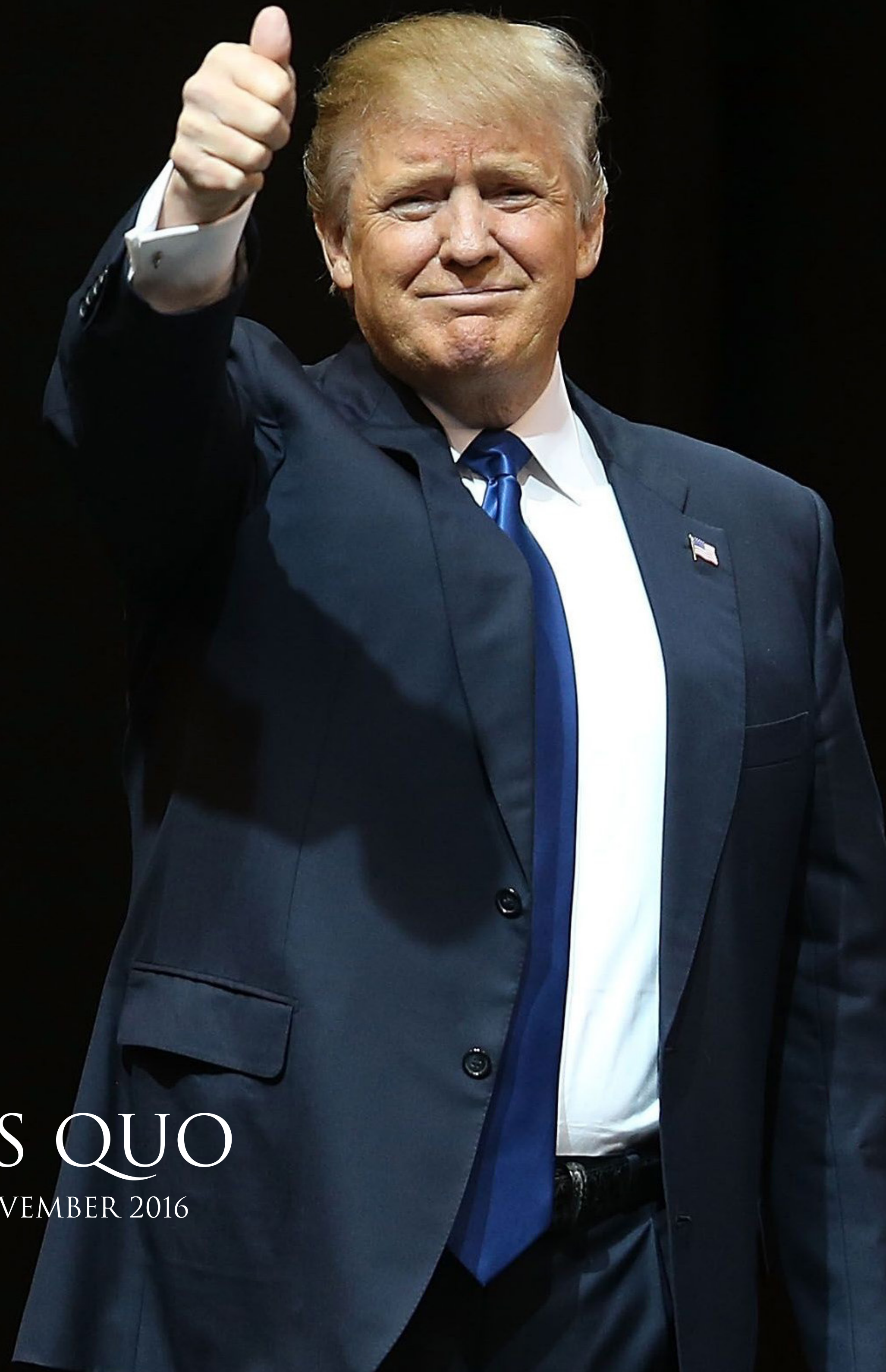

THE STATUS QUO

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Welcome to Issue I, Volume VII of Leviathan. It is with great pleasure that I present to you an issue on 'The Status Quo'. This issue explores how the existing state of affairs is being actively maintained and challenged in numerous domains, and the implications of these challenges.

The surprise election of Donald Trump as President of the United States just a few weeks ago represents one of the most widely covered—and perhaps most influential—challenges to the status quo. As such, the cover photo for this issue depicts Mr. Trump, as he has come to represent a physical manifestation of discontent with the existing state of affairs in American politics.

Yet the factors which contributed to the election of Mr. Trump are not unique. As the articles in this issue demonstrate, the discontent of citizens with the manner in which their country is run is quickly becoming a worldwide phenomenon. Several writers examine the rise of those who feel their government does not adequately represent them, or that the existing order does not benefit them. Alexander Brotman examines the influence of reactionary politics on upcoming French elections, and Sofiane Aklouf profiles the resulting growth in popularity of Marine Le Pen and Le Front National. However, Sam Taylor illustrates an alternative approach to discontent in his profile of Jill Stein, analysing the reasons why people vote for third party candidates—and why these candidates run—despite low chances of electoral success. Similarly, in the Latin America and Caribbean section, Mark Wilson argues that the Columbian people were justified in voting against a government deal, as Columbia counter-intuitively risks perpetuating the violent status quo by pursuing a sub-standard peace accord.

Moreover, recent challenges to the existing state of affairs have not been confined to national politics. Bernard Lluminca analyses Germany's concurrent desire to maintain their international status as the leading power on the continent while also weathering domestic emotional and cultural crisis brought on by the massive influx of migrants. This issue also features an entertaining and thought-provoking point-counter point argument conducted between Jeff Justice, a former professor, and Camilla Hallman, an undergraduate, regarding the future of liberal democracy as the dominant form of government.

Additionally, some writers chose to focus on more positive implications of challenges and changes to the status quo. In the Middle East and North Africa section, Samin Ahbab argues the power of online education has the capacity to reinvigorate stagnant education efforts in Egypt, Lebanon, and Algeria. Controversially, writer Jordan Lee defends the rise of the populist left in Europe as a legitimate challenge to a broken political system, and Samuel Phillips postulates a 'Post-Karimov' Uzbekistan. Finally, two writers focus on how migration can beneficially alter the status quo. Sophie Waters examines how the empowerment of the Eritrean diaspora is contributing to the disintegration of an oppressive regime, and Soleil Westendorf analyses the importance of Costa Rica to Latin American asylum seekers.

Let me conclude by offering massive thanks to my Deputy Kanzanira Thorington, my Production Chief Betzy Hänninen, and the entire Leviathan staff, without whom publishing this issue would not have been possible. I would also like to thank Darya Gnidash and the Edinburgh Political Union, as well as Dr. Ailsa Henderson and Dr. Sara Dorman of the School of Social and Political Science, for their continued advice and support.

It is with excitement that I also announce that, for the first time, Leviathan will be accepting Letters to the Editor to be published in our next issue. I would encourage each of you check our newsletter and social media accounts for information regarding the next theme, and to learn more about submitting letters. If something in this issue strikes a chord with you, or if you disagree with a point here, send us your argument in less than 500 words, and we may choose to publish it in the next issue. The deadline for both Articles and Letters to the Editor for Issue II will be 31 January 2017. We look forward to reading your submissions.

I hope each of you finds this issue as timely and thought-provoking as I did.

Sincerely,

Nicholas G. Pugh

Nicholas G. Pugh
Editor-in-Chief

NICHOLAS PUGH — **Editor in Chief**

Nick is a fourth-year studying International Relations and he was previously the Africa Editor and Deputy Editor-in-Chief. He grew up on both coasts of the United States, but calls Edinburgh and Arlington, Virginia home.

KANZANIRA THORINGTON — **Deputy Editor in Chief**

Kanzanira is a fourth year student of Law and International Relations from Connecticut. She was previously a member of the Journal's Production Team and served as Latin America Editor last year.

MATTEO CROW — **Africa Editor**

Matteo is a fourth year Sustainable Development & Politics student, with a primary regional focus on Africa and the Middle East. He originally hails from California, but spent the past summer interning at a Washington D.C. nonprofit focused on investment in Africa.

NOAH GIBBS — **Editor for Asia-Pacific**

Noah is a fourth year International Relations student and a proud Colorado native. He enjoys spending time in the Colorado Rocky Mountains, especially to ski and hike. He is primarily interested in matters of security, particularly when they relate to the use of airpower or outer space.

IMA BISHOP — **Europe and Russia Editor**

Ima is an International and European Politics masters student from Edinburgh. She completed her undergraduate degree at Oxford and her research interests lie in EU politics and the impact of nationalism, political identity and psychology on political events.

RAFAEL ROSALES — **Editor for Latin America**

Rafael is a fourth year student of International Relations from Venezuela who calls Norway his second home. Rafael is looking forward to be editor of his home region, and as someone who follows events there closely, is always willing to discuss Latin America.

MEERUM INAM — **Editor for Middle East and North Africa**

Meerum Inam is from Karachi, Pakistan. He currently a fourth year student studying International Relations. Meerum is one of the founders of Pathways for Peace, a platform that encourages dialogue and understanding on contentious issues through debates and discussions.

JONATHAN RIDDICK — **Editor for North America**

Jonathan is a fourth year student of History and Politics, originally from Kent. Academically, Jonathan is primarily interested in the area of political communication, in particular the impact of social media on campaigns and its ability to influence voters.

BERNARDAS JUREVICIUS — **Editor for International**

Bernardas is a second year studying English Literature and Language. Born in Lithuania, much of his political views were heavily influenced by the country's former status in the Soviet Union. His role models include Christopher Hitchens and Edward Snowden.

VERONIQUE IVORY-JOHNSON — **Postgraduate Editor**

Veronique is a postgraduate student in the School of Social and Political Science. Originally from Manchester, she has completed studies in London and Boston. She is particularly interested in the relationship between nationalism, education policy and the secondary education system, particularly in Ireland and Northern Ireland.

SAM PHILLIPS — **Chief Copy Editor**

Sam is a second-year studying Politics, focusing on the former Soviet Union, and was previously the Europe and Russian regional editor for the journal. He is from Seattle, USA, and enjoys Edinburgh's relatively balmy weather.

LORA UHLIG — **Copy Editor**

Lora is a third year International Relations student; she is originally from Kansas City, but feels lucky to call Edinburgh her second home. She loves to travel and learn about other cultures, which has fueled her interest in global studies.

JELENA SOFRONIJEVIC — **Copy Editor**

Jelena is a first year, studying Politics alongside Philosophy and Sociology. Born in England to Yugoslavian parents, she credits her inquisitive nature and desire to seek the untold side of a story to her upbringing.

MICHAEL DRAX — **Copy Editor**

Michael is a first year student of Arabic and History from Northumberland. He is very involved with the Debates Union and is a proud member of Murder Mystery Society. Michael reserves a particular interest in the affairs of the Middle East and Asia.

ABIGAIL ADAMDA — **Copy Editor**

Abigail is a first year History student from London. She has always been interested in the history behind the headlines, but volunteering with Restless Development as part of the International Citizen Service programme has encouraged her to view issues in a global context.

BETZY HÄNNINEN — **Chief of Production**

Betzy is a second year International Reations student. She is originally from Norway, but found her way to Edinburgh to pursue her studies. She is partiularly interested in security studies, after spending a year at the Norwegian Joint Headquarters for the Armed Forces.

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A second year student from London, Ayse is studying International Relations. She is Turkish but grew up in England. She is currently also studying Linguistics, and she wants to do further research into the effects of different languages on comprehension and thought processing.

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Guillermo is a second year student of International Relations. He was born in Edinburgh, but has lived in the Orkney Islands for most of his life. Before university, Guillermo worked for his local MP and volunteered in Nicaragua as part of the International Citizen Service.

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Sofiane is a visiting student from Grenoble, France. His family lives in Algeria, where he often visits. He studies in the Alps, but lives in Paris. After attending college, he aims to become a newspaper journalist.

RANJANA RAVI — **Tresarurer**

Ranjana Ravi is a second year studying Law and International Relations. Originally from Bangalore, India, she moved to Edinburgh more than five and a half years ago and considers it her home.

MICHAEL MALVENDA — **Production Team Member**

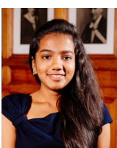
Michael is a second year studying Law and International Relations. He was born and raised in the US to Cypriot and Chilean parents who he credits for his global fascination and eclectic personality. Besides working on the Production Team, Michael is the Social Media and Marketing Director for the NGO Ashinaga at the university.

ABIGAIL VACHERON — **Outreach Coordinator**

Abigail is a third-year student of Philosophy and Politics. She grew up in Connecticut but prefers Edinburgh's grey skies. In addition to working with Leviathan, Abigail is the Vice President of African Prisons Projects, where she was previously the Head of Outreach.

ALEXIS NICOLE GAVIOLA — **Digital Director**

Alexis is a fourth year law student from the United States. She grew up in New York City, but also lived in Los Angeles, New Jersey, and the Philippines. She is passionate about the abolition of modern day slavery, reforming the criminal justice system in East Africa, and is an avid Arsenal FC supporter.



SANJNA GIRISH — **Fundraising Officer**

Sanjna is a first-year student of International Relations from Bangalore, India. With a particular interest in the refugee situation in the Middle East, Sanjna aims to broaden her understanding of the complexities that are intrinsic to the world in which we live.

HELENA BONGARD — **Fundrasing Officer**

Helena is a third-year student of History at the University of Edinburgh. She grew up near London and Paris, and spent a few years living in Dublin. She was also the Interim Outreach Coordinator for Leviathan over the summer

MATTEO CROW | REGIONAL EDITOR

In this issue Leviathan takes on the status quo, a sphere of remarkable turmoil given the existing political instability around the world. The expansion of social media and technology is exposing events of political violence in Ethiopia, Eritrea, and South Sudan to the international community, and in some cases governments are being forced to justify previously domestic concerns. While a number of entrenched Western democracies are also facing populist uprisings to their political status quo, in Africa these challenges address many remnants of post-colonial rule, and the marginalisation that accompanied it.

Examining one of the world's most hostile autocracies, Sophie Waters takes on the political dissent in Eritrea, examining how younger generations are challenging the autocratic Isaias Afewerki and the practice of conscription. The 'world's fastest emptying nation' has a growing diaspora that is

Adopting both a theoretical and practical challenge to the status quo, Matthew Pflaum explores the practical implications of marginalisation in Ethiopia and the Oromo people's continued struggle for political equality. He questions development practices reliant on economic growth and challenges the reader to conceptualise development with a more holistic approach.

Alex Peek concludes the Africa region by profiling South Sudan's Salva Kiir and his refusal to submit to the international community. Peek examines how Kiir rose to power and solidified his rule, and the steps he has taken to curtail the efforts of the international community in their mission to bring peace.

Popular movements challenging the existing political establishment are only certain to grow as economic and political reform further expand the opportunities available to populations across Africa.

Salva Kiir

ALEXANDER PEEK profiles the controversial president of South Sudan, Salva Kiir

With ceasefires and peace accords being ignored, Salva Kiir is dragging his country deeper and deeper into a conflict that has no hope of ending in the near future. South Sudan is in the midst of a constitutional and humanitarian crisis exacerbated by the autocratic former rebel leader, Salva Kiir.[1] After repeated attempts by the international community to stem the fighting between the Dinka South Sudanese president and Nuer former-vice president, Riek Machar, the president of the world's youngest nation does not appear to be slowing his operations nor is he concerned with foreign criticism of the grievous human rights violations being committed by his troops.[2]

Salva Kiir started his career as a rebel commander serving in both the First and Second Sudanese civil wars. By the end of the First Sudanese Civil War in 1972 he had become a low ranking officer in his rebel troop. He then progressed to the Sudan Military College, where he formalised his military training.[3] Kiir subsequently took over as leader of the SPLM (Sudan People's Liberation Movement) in 2005 after the movement's founder, Dr. John Garang, was killed in a helicopter crash.[4]

His time is office shows him to be intolerant of dissidence and a common violator of his own laws. In 2013, he illegally dismissed the Speaker of the House for publicly speaking out against him and then barred him from any contact with the press.[5] Kiir subsequently went on to dismiss his entire cabinet.[6] The leader of the opposition, Riek Machar, claims that this was because Salva Kiir wanted to take steps toward implementing a dictatorship and cultivating his own power.[7] This move has made it possible for him to quickly mobilise against rebel forces with a questionable degree of force without being hindered by supervisory bodies.

His methods for silencing public opinion extend beyond his cabinet. The government prohibits state journalists from reporting on war crimes or any stories related to armed conflict.[8] In 2015, Salva Kiir issued a direct threat to journalists in which he stated, 'If anybody among you does not know that this country has killed people, we will demonstrate it one day, one time [...] freedom of the press does not mean you work against the country.'[9] This threat was followed by the death of prominent journalist Peter Moi, who was shot three days after the threat was issued.[10] The SPLA (Sudan People's Liberation Army) reinforce these comments by regularly stopping and harassing members of the South Sudanese press.[11] Other instances of persecution, such as the imprisonment of journalist George Livio, have recently come to light.[12] This censorship and detention of journalists is a direct violation of South Sudanese Constitution's clauses on freedom of the press.[13] The restriction of information denies civilian reports of the conflict and allows Kiir to prevent crucial news from reaching the opposition.[14]

Salva Kiir is unable to rule his own country effectively. As such, it falls to international governing bodies to intervene in the interest of protecting the state's citizens[15]. However, Kiir is unwilling to cooperate with the international community, and seems bent on resolving the country's domestic conflict by internal means. In an open letter to the New York Times titled 'South Sudan Needs Truth Not Trials' he wrote, 'disciplinary justice — even if delivered under international law — would destabilize efforts to unite our nation by keeping alive anger and hatred among the people of South Sudan.'[16] The letter also states that instead of international judicial intervention, he believes an internal tribunal, much like those in South Africa and Northern Ireland after their own civil conflicts, would be more appropriate.[17] His reticence towards interference has been poorly received, especially by the New York-based NGO, Human Rights Watch (HRW), who believe that without foreign intervention there can be no lasting peace in South Sudan.[18]

As the situation deteriorates in South Sudan under Salva Kiir's rule, it begs the question: how can South Sudan hope to resolve its struggle without foreign guidance? Salva Kiir's dictatorial actions no longer affect solely his own citizens; the effects of the crimes committed in South Sudan are now being felt in surrounding nations. Over one million refugees have fled South Sudan into Uganda, Ethiopia, Sudan, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo.[19]

Kiir's dealings with NGOs only go as far as superficially pleasing the international community, whilst being able to retain his current course of action. The former rebel leader views any foreign involvement on South Sudanese soil as a violation of the country's sovereignty.[20] Despite condemnation of his military engagement by the UN, EU, and US;[21] there has been little to no progress in regard to actively restarting the peace process.[22] In a surprising move, Kiir recently allowed 4,000 UN peacekeepers access to the country.[23] This seemingly humanitarian gesture was marred by the fact that the decision to allow the peacekeepers entry came only after a turbulent meeting with the UN Security Council. UN representatives stated that if the South Sudanese government prohibited the deployment of UN troops, an arms embargo would be placed on the country.[24] This move therefore enabled Kiir to continue the internal conflict while keeping the UN's requests superficially satisfied.

Salva Kiir's forces have carried out numerous attacks on foreign aid workers and continue to impede on their ability to perform their duties. Aid workers in the capital, Juba, were provided with no assistance from the UN when government troops stormed a hotel in the city centre and proceeded to gang-rape a team of foreign aid workers and murder a South Sudanese journalist.[25] The workers called the UN base for help, but the armed peacekeepers and armoured vehicles needed to facilitate their rescue were unable to get authorisation to leave the base.[26] The inability of relief organisations to provide protection to civilians has prompted HRW to request the increase of UN sanctions on South Sudan.[27] This targeting of peacekeepers by government forces challenges the international community

to a degree unseen in other conflict zones, and further hinders their ability to work.

Direct raids of UN camps by government forces have fomented an atmosphere of fear and apathy amongst aid workers. Unfortunately, peacekeepers have been among those caught in the crossfire between government and rebel forces.[28] There have been direct attacks on UN bases, carried out by Dinka government forces looking for Nuer rebels in these camps.[29] This direct attack on 'safe places' has sparked trepidation amongst UN personnel towards intervening against Dinka forces.[30] Regretfully, this fear of retaliation from Dinka uniformed personnel seems to have created a feeling of helplessness among the UN personnel in performing their duties. One story reported UN peacekeepers standing idly by while a Nuer woman was being raped outside a UN compound in Juba.[31] A UN spokesperson commented saying that they were looking into the inaction of UN personnel,[32] and have since dismissed the station chief 'for lack of leadership.'[33]

Salva Kiir's failure to provide a stable political environment leaves his country without direction, and its citizens without civil stability. As his stranglehold on the Nuer people and NGOs continues, Salva Kiir may find himself with no citizens left to rule over. With the lack of monitoring ability, nobody is certain of how many have died thus far as a direct result of the conflict.[34] Numerous peace accords and ceasefires have been signed and subsequently ignored.[35] With no strong opposition force and no sign of a sincere peace deal to come from Salva Kiir himself, it is unlikely that the international community's efforts to mitigate human rights abuses will have any substantive effect. Pre-independence, South Sudan's only unifying identity was its ability to come together against a common enemy. In a country home to at least eighteen different ethnic groups at a time when ethnic violence is so prevalent,[36] it is highly doubtful that a man with unassailable loyalty to his own tribe will be the one to bring about unity and peace to this highly fragmented nation.[37] At the dawn of this nation's history, perhaps it is not prudent to expect a wartime president to bring about peace.

Alexander Peek is a third-year student of Modern Languages student at the University of Exeter

A Fight for Equality

MATTHEW PFLAUM reacts to the Oromo people's marginalisation and political struggle for equality

In the past month, the government of Ethiopia has banned seven tools of civil protest in response to protracted protests by the Oromo people that began last November.[1, 2] The protests and the corresponding government crack-down resurrected historical tensions and disputes, particularly between the marginalised Oromo and the Amhara and Tigrinya – the two groups that tend to dominate political and economic life in Ethiopia.[3] Ethiopia, with its rapidly growing economy and relative stability, is considered a model of development success, but the recent violence over basic human rights issues has exposed certain underlying fragilities and lingering problems, particularly concerning ethnic fragmentation and political equality.

The Oromo began protesting last November after the government proposed a strategy called the 'Addis Adaba Integrated City Master Plan.' The plan will extend the capital territory into historical Oromo territory, displacing hundreds of thousands of Oromo in the process.[4] Addis Adaba is the economic epicentre of Ethiopia, and recent investment has transformed the capital at a remarkable rate,[5] something the government wants to maintain and encourage. However, these changes force expansion into traditional Oromo lands, inciting the protests and subsequent government crackdown seen today. The protests have spread around much of the nation, reaching about 200 cities and towns (Figure 1). This program is the immediate provocation for the protests, but there are also deep historical tensions and issues of oppression behind the protests. In essence, the Oromo are resisting the status quo of oppression that has long dominated Ethiopia.

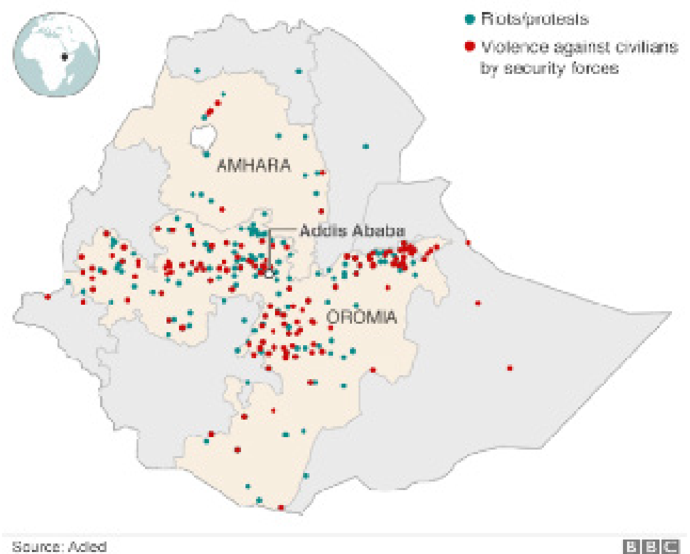


Figure 1. Location of protests in Ethiopia.

Oromo leaders view the government's plan as further evidence of oppression and injustice. Their historical exclusion and marginalisation has never been properly addressed or solved. Throughout much of Ethiopia's history, its leaders and kings concentrated power within the Amhara and Tigrinya tribes.[6] Over the past century, the Tigrinya (who make up six percent of the population) have enjoyed disproportionate power and influence in the nation.[7] Interestingly, there have been distinct protests by some Amhara in regions of the country as they have seen the gradual erosion of their power and privilege.

The Oromo have resided in the East African region for millennia. They historically subsisted by pastoralist-nomadic and semi-agriculturist practices. They constitute about 35 percent of the Ethiopian population, making them the largest ethnic group in East Africa, but have endured enmity and violence with other groups.[8] The Oromo are divided into two main groups; the Barana Oromo inhabit southern Ethiopia and Kenya, while the Barentu Oromo are found in Oromio in Ethiopia, other areas of Ethiopia, and Somalia.[9] Their primary language is Afaan Oromo, though many speak other languages including Amharic, Tigrinya, Guarange, and the Omotic languages.[10]

The tension and hostility between different ethnic groups in Ethiopia dates back just as far. The struggle for political power in Ethiopia has always been framed and fragmented by religion, ethnicity, land, and language. For centuries, elites used land to maintain control and reinforce hegemony. In the late 1800s, Emperor Menelik II seized Oromo territory in search of productive arable land.[11] Emperor Haile Selassie likewise distributed Oromo land to nobility in exchange for political loyalty and support.[12] The government has consistently deprived Oromo of political rights and imprisoned many Oromo for supporting national movements.[13]

These historical clashes provoked the formation of an Oromo militia, called the Oromo Liberation Front (OLF), in 1973.[14] This organisation was created to resist the perceived hegemony of the Amhara people and Oromo marginalisation by the Ethiopian government.[15] This was necessary, as groups such as Africa Watch, Oromia Support Group, and Amnesty International have recorded numerous human rights abuses by the government against minorities, including the Oromo.[16]

Ethiopia has endured its share of tragedy. Though it is the singular African nation that was never fully colonised (making it the oldest independent

African nation),[17] it has nonetheless suffered through numerous instances of violence, war, and tragedy. The 1980s famine killed perhaps more than a million people.[18] Ethnic tensions have played a particularly significant role in Ethiopia's history.

Last year Oromo supporters formed mass riots and protests in about 200 cities nation-wide over expansion plans for Addis Adaba that will seize historical Oromo territory and displace thousands. These protests left many injured and dead, with both sides blaming the other. CNN reports that around 50 were killed by stampedes, while thousands have been arrested;[19] a recent report from the BBC notes that some perished in a fire at the prison.[20] This tragic event is another painful reminder of the costs marginalised groups endure in their struggle for equality. But when a group such as the Oromo demand equality, they are asking for the same opportunities and lives as others in their country. When the lives of the marginalised are filled with injustice and suffering, it is not surprising when these groups rise up in opposition to their persecution.

Recent history in Ethiopia has witnessed unprecedented stability and economic growth. These protests over human rights abuses and political equality are surprising considering Ethiopia's status as an inspiring success story among developing nations, and difficult to reconcile. Ethiopia has the highest economic growth rate in the world and is considered a paragon of security, stability, and progress.[21] Its reputation in the global community has remained mostly unscathed by the human rights crisis. Indeed, Ethiopia is the darling of development. Its economic growth has averaged 10.8 percent since 2003, making it the fastest-growing economy on Earth over that period.[22] It is also relatively stable and free from corruption.[23] Considering this region of the world is perhaps the most volatile on Earth – Ethiopia's neighbours include CAR, Eritrea, Somalia, Sudan, Libya, and others – Ethiopia serves the West as a valuable and critical security partner. It has been involved in peacekeeping, fighting Al-Shabab, and pursuing peace in South Sudan.[24] Its strong economic indicators and its relative stability as a security partner have perhaps shielded it from condemnation for its injustices and crimes, like a vaccination against censure.

So how could these violent events transpire in a country renowned for its growth and good governance? And from where has this oppression come? Surprisingly, none of this has changed Ethiopia's reputation, provoked international censure, or precipitated human rights proceedings in international courts. Some critics even accuse the USA and the West of enabling Ethiopia by maintaining trade, aid, and propitious relations.[25] By continuing friendly relations in the form of diplomacy and trade with Ethiopia, the international community has in a way excused (and perhaps reinforced) this behaviour.

From time immemorial, the status quo in Ethiopia has been the exclusion and oppression of the Oromo group and its people. This is a familiar pattern across the world, from Brazil to Burma, where multi-ethnic societies fragment across ethnic lines, forming hierarchies of power and wealth. The international community has not sufficiently engaged with this issue, possibly because Ethiopia has one of the highest economic growth rates in the world. But is this the right attitude to have?

Do development and wealth really matter if large sections of the society are excluded from them? The real question ought to be: why does the international community turn a blind eye to human rights abuses in developing nations as long as economic growth is high? Economic aid to Ethiopia has not suffered as a result of its human rights abuse – in fact it has increased – nor should it. Depriving Ethiopia of foreign aid will inevitably harm the population as well.[26] New investment into various sectors in Ethiopia, including garments, is making some people very wealthy, although they are mostly existing elites in the country and foreign owners.

Ethiopia is merely one example of a developing country with high economic growth that also happens to restrict civil liberties and commit human rights abuses. There are a number of very wealthy nations that severely restrict civil liberties. Countries like Brunei Darussalam are among the wealthiest in the world,[27] yet kill their citizens for a number of crimes: infidelity, homosexuality, etc.[28] These sorts of countries have become wealthy either through good fortune – oil in the case of Brunei – or prudent development efforts, like Ethiopia.

It is time that the international community expects more from countries than mere GDP growth, whether developing or not, and engages with them on human rights issues and marginalisation of groups. Economic growth should no longer be the singular quality upon which we judge progress. Political equality is a right that should be granted to all groups of people, and should not be subverted by economic performance concerns.

Matthew Pflaum is a post-graduate student studying MSc International Development and Africa

A Prison of Poverty

SOPHIE WATERS examines how Eritrean youth are challenging their government's oppressive conscription program

'We are just like slaves for them […] That's why we're leaving. It's one big prison for us'

– Kibrom, 24, who spent his entire adult life as a military conscript until escaping Eritrea in 2014.[1]

Throughout the small East African country of Eritrea, young men and women forced to participate in the state's mandatory conscription programme are abandoning their posts and fleeing to refugee camps across the continent. A recent spike in Eritrean refugees is a sign of increasing political discontent, and hence of potential political revolution within the notably repressive state. This article assesses whether the trials facing the regime will necessarily result in a change in the status quo. It will explore the various ways young people are challenging the status quo, with particular emphasis on those choosing to leave. It will also take into account other methods of dissent such as the actions of diasporas, and the implications of the rise of technology within the country. Finally, it will evaluate alternative reasons for a potential crumbling of the regime, and will conclude that although the crumbling of the Eritrean status quo is inevitable, the actions of young people are most likely to bring about change.

Ranked 186 out of 188 states on the UN Human Development Index, Eritrea has been in a state of 'economic impoverishment' for decades.[2] 69 percent of its residents live in poverty[3], and 68 percent of girls of official primary school age are out of school.[4] Yet, these are not the chief reason thousands are fleeing. Eritrea's first and only president, Isaias Afwerki, has been in power since 1993. Under his regime, dissent is not tolerated; according to the Committee to Protect Journalists, it is the most censored country in the world, hence its sobriquet, 'Africa's North Korea'.[5] In fact, only 5.6 percent of residents own a mobile phone, compared to 9.7 percent of North Koreans.[6] Many trace the origin of this harsh censorship back to the 30-year struggle for independence, culminating in the Ethiopian-Eritrean war at the end of the 20th Century. Despite both states spending hundreds of millions of dollars on the conflict, neither side considered itself a winner in the original border dispute.[7] Furthermore, it wreaked devastation throughout the horn of Africa, with a third of Eritrea's population displaced.[8] Afwerki has used this uneasy truce, with a potential to return to conflict, as justification for the absence of a constitution, a court system, free press, and elections, and as a

rallying cry for recruitment into the infamous indefinite national service. The President's regime has since been described in a UN report as, 'a pervasive control system used in absolute arbitrariness to keep the population in a state of permanent anxiety.'[9]

Crucially, this control system involves the government subjecting every adult Eritrean man and woman – with few exceptions – to military service, chiefly consisting of forced labour on government-owned farms and construction sites. Despite high-level officials claiming it lasts only eighteen months, conscription typically begins with the last year of school, usually at sixteen years old, and can end anywhere up to age 75.[10] Therefore, around one in twenty Eritreans at any time are subject to the whims and wishes of the government and military commanders.[11] They are often posted far away from family and friends, and have virtually no personal freedom prior to release. Females are, according to Human Rights Watch, frequently sexually abused by their commanders.[12] In addition, conscripts' monthly stipend of 500-750 nafkas – around £25 to £38 – is inadequate to support family members,[13] considering that one chicken costs 600 nafkas on the black market.[14] It is necessary to point out that opposition, no matter how small, results in harsh punishments; torture, deprivation, and disappearances are not uncommon for dissenting conscripts.[15]

It is not surprising that young people are seeking ways to challenge the existing status quo. Chiefly, they are leaving the country in droves. Indeed, a recent UN report estimated that up to 5,000 people are exiting its borders per month,[16] leading a professor of refugee studies at London's South-Bank University to describe Eritrea as the 'world's fastest emptying nation.'[17] Most remain in unequipped and over-populated refugee camps in Ethiopia or Sudan, but due to a, 'shortage of services and absence of self-reliance opportunities,'[18] in the camps, increasing numbers are embarking on the gruelling and perilous journey across the Mediterranean, a recent phenomenon that has worried the UNHCR. Since 2013, the number of Eritreans seeking asylum in European countries has tripled to 37,000 in 2016.[19] Eritreans have been the second-largest group to arrive on European shores by boat, after Syrians.[20] Crucially, 90 percent of Eritreans arriving are between eighteen and 24 years old,[21] supporting the UN's claim that most are fleeing an intensified recruitment drive into national service.[22] There is currently much debate surrounding migration, particularly immigration into Europe, about which aspect of Dr. Kuntz's 'push-pull' model explains the influx of people.[23] However, when looking at refugee flight from Eritrea to neighbouring countries there is, 'no indication, economic or otherwise, that pulled them to Sudan [and Ethiopia], except for the safety to be had across the international border,'[24] thus it is clear that the 'push' factors are overwhelming.

Additionally, a rapidly increasing diaspora – predominantly consisting of young people – is growing in popularity and confidence, pressuring the international community into action. Diaspora Eritreans have demonstrated outside Eritrean embassies in London, Paris, and Tel Aviv, and this summer thousands rallied outside of the European headquarters of the United Nations in Geneva to express their support for a UN report officially recognising the regime as having committed crimes against humanity.[25] Although these protests may have ostensibly achieved little, they show a growing boldness from the diaspora to defy the, 'long tentacles of the regime,'[26] as described by an Eritrean ex-journalist based in Canada – a significant step for those formerly oppressed by Afwerki's government.

There have, however, been suggestions that the recent spike in refugees, and ensuing growth of the Diaspora, is, in fact, by instruction of the government. After all, it is well documented that the young are more likely to be instilled with revolutionary fervour.[27] This, coupled with reports of a lack of enforcement of 'shoot-to-kill' rules on the Eritrean-Ethiopian border,[28] has led to some questioning whether the government is facilitating defection from military service by young people in order to create a more placid population.[29] Ultimately, due to the lack of information escaping the country, it is impossible to tell the government's intentions. Yet, in a developing nation it is unlikely to be in the regime's interest to purposefully deplete its own work force, nor does international pressure make it easier for the government to conduct its affairs.

As with all other countries, the impending increase of technology within Eritrea will be difficult for the regime to slow. Although only one percent of the population currently has access to the internet,[30] the government cannot keep Eritreans shut off from the world perpetually. Already there are signs of change: there has been a marked increase in mobile phone availability throughout the country, and the government has recently allowed those in the capital, Asmara, to use dial-up connections.[31] Although unaffordable to the vast majority of Eritreans, these advances have allowed the diaspora to permeate the regime's propaganda in the hope of igniting a revolutionary flame, and there are signs that it is working. In 2013, an underground newspaper was distributed on the streets of Asmara,[32] detailing diaspora-based resistance movements in an aim to reignite the flame of revolutionary spirit. The five-year-old Eritrean National Congress for Democratic Change (ENCDR) – an umbrella group of elected Eritrean delegates representing opposition groups, human rights activists, and other members of the diaspora – has also used these cracks to penetrate the system. Indeed, a well-known Eritrean activist residing in Canada, Dr. Habte Tesfamariam, claimed that the ENCDR, 'has managed to start an underground movement inside the country.'[33] There are concerns that, even if information is becoming more readily available, it is likely that the government will increase its monitoring – after all, all internet communications pass through the state provider, EriTel.[34] However, as seen with China and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, it is impossible for the government to retain all control over an information source like the internet.

In addition to, and regardless of, the actions of the young, it is generally accepted that no regime – authoritarian or otherwise – is everlasting.[35] There is little historical precedent of modern oppressive regimes lasting longer than a few centuries at most, and in this neoliberal world in particular it is difficult for a state to succeed without opening itself to the inter-state forces that accompany globalisation and capitalism. Furthermore, with the rise of global connectivity and ease of travel, the new generation is growing up less bound to nationalism than those before them.[36] And, although these specific trends do not per se apply to the infamously isolated Eritrea, there are movements that run in parallel. For example, there has been a documented generational gap between the older generation, who are supportive of Afwerki, and the young, who wish to see another form of governance; 'we would all leave tomorrow if we had the money,'[37] a 25-year-old Eritrean refugee in Sweden told a journalist working for The Guardian. In contrast, support for the regime among the older population is still as high as decades ago.[38] Consequently, it is clear that the status quo is changing, even without the help of the old.

In recent years, the perceived longevity of the Eritrean political landscape has been thrown into doubt. The spike in young people leaving the country prior to conscription into national service symbolises a change in attitudes among the Eritrean youth. As explored above, this is most likely due to the increase in intra- and inter-state communications, allowing opposition groups to disperse information within the previously isolated country. However, the increasing self-assurance of the diaspora may have implications for the government, particularly in regards to alleged crimes against humanity. The disintegration of the status quo seems inevitable, and the increasing number of young people defecting, combined with the empowerment of the diaspora and the expected connectivity explosion, can only accelerate this transformation.

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NOAH GIBBS | REGIONAL EDITOR

Developments in Asia and the Pacific are challenging the region's political landscape. The election of Rodrigo Duterte in the Philippines has called into question the stability of the US-Philippines alliance. Given Donald Trump's victory in the US presidential election, other US alliances in the region may be in jeopardy. Meanwhile, cross-strait relations between China and Taiwan have soured since the new Tsai Administration has refused to acknowledge 1992 consensus, which states that there is only one China. In Japan, a series of female politicians have broken though Japan's 'steel ceiling' to claim prominent positions, such as the governorship of Tokyo.

Further afield, the death of Uzbekistan's longtime leader, Islom Karimov, has raised many questions about this former Soviet state's future. What the future looks like will depend heavily on the results of Uzbekistan's upcoming presidential election. That said, Shavkat Mirziyoyev, who has been acting as the interim President of Uzbekistan since Karimov's death, has pursued a pro-reform agenda. Given that Mirziyoyev is the current favorite to win the upcoming election, this reform agenda is likely to continue.

India, on the other hand, has resisted social change to some degree. The continuing practice of endogamy, which bans inter-caste marriages, has helped the Indian caste system survive despite being officially outlawed by the government. Thus, marriage, though its reproductive role, has been responsible for the propagation of caste and the maintenance of the status quo. The entrenchment of endogamy has, in turn, dulled the effects of top-down government efforts to abolish caste. This is due to the grassroots nature of marriage which has so far resisted attempts at reform. Any future attempts to dislodge caste will need to address this.

Caste in Stone?

EMMA SEARLE explains why the caste system remains centrally important to life in India.

Despite its official abolition, the caste system remains entrenched in Indian culture. Caste can be defined as a form of stratification grounded upon the principles of endogamy, separation, and hierarchy.[1] Within the literature, there are several narratives with different views about caste's nature and relevance.[2] Of the theories asserting the irrelevance of caste, the most convincing is the caste-in-transformation narrative, which argues that caste has decentralised due to economic reforms and Affirmative Action (AA).[3] The caste-in-transformation narrative will be critiqued throughout this essay by analysing three challenges to caste norms, or 'Dalit assertions'. [4] This critique will be performed in order to prove that caste still remains central to life in India. It will be argued that, despite some positive changes to the dignity of Dalits, these assertions have been met with hostility. Despite the progressive Constitution, 'untouchability' is still practised due to the ability of caste to evolve and the dominance of endogamy: the backbone of caste. It is further argued that government support of inter-caste marriages may be a better way of tackling the intersectional nature of caste, rather than the Constitution's reservations approach.

The Indian Constitution's 1955 Protection of Civil Rights Act made the practice of 'untouchability' illegal and instituted AA 'reservations' for several groups of peoples deemed historically disadvantaged, including 'Scheduled Castes' or Dalits.[5] Thus, places in schools, government jobs, and the legislature are set aside for Dalits. These reservations have been regarded as a form of 'Dalit assertion' because Dalits are, arguably, empowered, making caste irrelevant. The merits of this argument appear plausible as Dalits now have, for example, greater political representation, as evidenced by the election of a Dalit, President Narayanan, in 1997.[6]

This modernist rendering of India suggests that caste is no longer central. Despite this progressive depiction of India, reservations are ineffective and harmful because they are often met with hostility, thereby perpetuating discrimination against Dalits. For example, Dalit school children still have disproportionately lower literacy levels and higher dropout-rates than upper-caste children.[7] This indicates that, despite 66 years of reservations in schools, Dalits remain stigmatised (as welfare recipients) and face rampant discrimination, which stunts their literacy rates.[8] Thus, caste is still a factor that influences individuals' educational attainment. This is because reservation discourse is the medium through which caste-ism is communicated.[9] Reservations are used by upper castes to shield their anti-Dalit biases. This is significant because it illustrates how reservations and the resentment they generate maintain the centrality of caste by keeping it in the public mind. Reservations are ineffective due to their top-down implementation strategy, which is inherently unable to address discriminatory attitudes and overlooks the complex intersectional nature of caste inequality.[10] For this reason, many Dalits have argued that India's growing economy provides a better route to emancipation.

Since independence, India's economy has experienced reforms and rapid growth.[11] This growth has led to a rise of a Dalit middle-class, which begs the following question: is capitalism a crusade against caste or a double-edged sword?[12]

There is an assumption articulated by Dalit entrepreneurial discourse that neo-liberal economics is the route to the demolishment of caste.[13] This is because economic developments and the 'green revolution', involving the upsurge of new agricultural technologies and production rates, have enabled a rise of a Dalit middle-class, who have been able to leave traditional agricultural jobs and migrate to cities for alternative employment.[14] It can be argued that neo-liberalism has allowed many Dalits to escape the landowner system of dependence by migrating to the city.[15] Simply put, economic developments have increased migration and thus provided a greater degree of anonymity and mobility for Dalits. Due to these changes, it can be argued that the existence of a Dalit middle-class is evidence of the replacement of caste by class.[16] This argument is an extension of modernisation theory; it assumes that caste will gradually disappear in parallel with the rise of economic development. Moreover, as stated by Dr. Kapur,[17] this line of argument asserts that economic class inequalities are more central than those of caste. While economic development has enabled changes, class has not replaced caste. This is illustrated by street-level instances whereby Dalit businesses continue to be branded by the owner's caste identity.[18] Additionally, discriminatory practices continue in other subtler ways, such as in job interviews where Dalit interviewees are often asked questions about their family background which are not caste-neutral.[19] These examples illustrate how in many cases caste identity still overshadows professional identity due to an engrained discrimination process. Despite economic growth, Dalits remain under-represented in the ownership of private enterprises, and the majority remain landless or have not obtained income-generating assets.[20] [21]

Weighing these two depictions of the Dalit middle-class phenomenon, caste has a material effect and can adapt to economic changes. While there have been important positive changes enabled by economic development, caste is still centrally important; moving to the

city does not rid people of their caste identities. This entrenchment of caste is maintained by the practice of endogamy.

Endogamy, which stresses that people should only marry within their caste, is a major caste principle.[22] Dr. Kumar argues that, in contemporary India, caste is now more symbolic, and is not important because endogamy is not widely obeyed.[23] Whilst on appearance this argument seems valid because endogamy has been deemed unconstitutional, endogamy still remains widely practised. This is clearly illustrated by matrimonial advertisement columns announcing caste identities in their descriptions.[24] The fact that caste identities are overtly announced in these advertisements indicates how endogamy dictates peoples' affairs. It is for this reason that inter-caste marriages implicitly disturb endogamy and, therefore, have been perceived as a form of Dalit assertion.[25]

Inter-caste marriages remain rare and make up only five percent of marriages in India.[26] This is because such marriages are met with disapproval, or, in extreme cases, with violence. Inter-marriages continue to be prohibited by regional customary law and are, in many cases, enforced through honour killings whereby endogamy offenders are killed on behalf of the community in order to restore honour.[27] According to the United Nations, one in five honour killings in the world occur in India.[28] While honour killings are extreme instances, it is clear that such acts of violence are a response to the disturbance of caste norms.

The persistence of endogamy and violent responses to inter-marriages show how central marriage is to the caste system. This is because honour killings occur with the purpose of settling caste issues that go beyond marriage, including material and hierarchical status. Thus marriage is the platform through which caste disturbances are crushed, thereby crystallising the central role of marriage as a maintainer of caste divisions. Therefore, the mere existence of honour killings shows us how, when caste is threatened by Dalit political, economic and social assertions, marriage is the realm through which control is exerted.[29] Hence, endogamy can be regarded as the backbone of caste. This is because marriage is the main way through which segregation is achieved. Marriage determines who enters a caste group and who receives the privileges attached to that caste. Thus, the intersectional nature of marriage with other aspects of life is what makes marriage essential to the maintenance of caste, as well as the key to its eradication.[30] Caste is still centrally important to life in India and will continue to be because endogamy remains widely practised and enforced.

Inter-caste marriages should be encouraged and identified as a more effective approach for decentralising caste. Marriage intersects with the political, economic, and social domains of life. Unlike reservations, marriage is more able to tackle the intersectional nature of caste inequality. This is because women are considered preservers of caste and are thus controlled (in extreme instances via honour killing) to preserve caste groupings.[31] Reservations should be re-evaluated, and more research needs to go into looking at the role of gender and how to increase the number of inter-caste marriages.

This article has argued that, despite the progressive Constitution, caste remains centrally important to life in India due to its ability to evolve and persist in the political, economic and social spheres of life. By analysing three Dalit assertions, it has been shown that reservations, the existence of a middle-class due to capitalism, and inter-caste marriages are not true assertions, because they are met with hostility. Furthermore, this essay concludes that fundamentally, caste persists because endogamy remains a dominant principle of life in India.

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Uzbekistan After Karimov

SAMUEL PHILLIPS argues that the forerunner in Uzbekistan's' presidential race will bring the country to its next stage of reform and liberalization

Uzbekistan has come to crossroads in its history. It now faces the first change of power in its brief history of independence. Since 1989 – a full two years prior to independence in 1991 – Uzbekistan has been ruled by Islom Karimov, an economist and ardent nationalist. Originally selected by the Communist Party to guide Uzbekistan through a period of intense political turbulence caused by the glasnost and perestroika reforms, Mr. Karimov soon outgrew his backers and came to dominate the country's political life for the next 27 years.[1] On 2 September, at the age of 78, Mr. Karimov died of a stroke after several days in Toshkent General Hospital; leaving behind his second wife, two daughters, and a nation that had never been without his rule.[2] After three days of mourning,[3] the country began the next chapter in its history, initiating the election proceedings to determine President Karimov's successor.[4] Currently, Shavkat Mirziyoyev, the long-serving Prime Minister and head of the caretaker government, seems likely to secure the presidency. The success of his interim administration, which has run the country since the death of Mr. Karimov, has earned him the trust of an electorate that seeks stability and continuity. Mr. Mirziyoyev's victory in the December elections is nowhere near certain. Sarvar Otamuratov of the 'National Revival' Democratic party is running a strong opposition campaign on a number of topical issues.[5] However, Mr. Mirziyoyev's victory is likely enough that envisioning Uzbekistan under a Mirziyoyev administration is useful for examining the 'new normal' in Uzbekistan.

In the chaotic week following the death of Uzbekistan's only leader, Mr. Mirziyoyev was only one of several candidates to lead the caretaker government. Ultimately the Speaker of the Senate, Nig'matilla Yo'ldashev, chose Mr. Mirziyoyev – from among the dozens of other qualified senior senators, deputies, and ministers – because, 'his work experience in senior positions,' promised that he could provide the continuity with the Karimov government demanded by both the conservative majority of the electorate and the entrenched political elite.[6] The credentials that earned him the trust of Mr. Yo'ldashev also played a large role in convincing the Liberal Democratic Party (O'zLiDeP) to nominate Mr. Mirziyoyev as their candidate in the upcoming elections. Having served as Prime Minister since 2003, an exceptionally long time in a system where officials are usually moved every few years to prevent them from establishing an independent power base,[7] Mr. Mirziyoyev arguably has more experience working with and implementing Mr. Karimov's policies than any other political figure; the rare exceptions being septuagenarian politicians like Abdulaziz Kamilov, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, who is generally considered too old to run for the presidency.[8] A plenum of O'zLiDeP members was convinced that Mr. Mirziyoyev's proximity to the centre of power would enable him, 'to provide the continuity and [...] to fully take responsibility for the successful implementation of measures aimed at strengthening independence, the prosperity of the Motherland, and ensuring stable economic growth and people's welfare.'[9] The support for his candidacy is based on his perceived ability to continue the policies, both foreign and domestic, of the Karimov administration, and to provide the security and stability which separates Uzbekistan from its eastern neighbours in Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, and the Kyrgyz Republic.[10] Should his caretaker administration falter through some international incident, domestic turmoil, or political infighting tarnishing the image of stability that Mr. Mirziyoyev claims to represent, the conservative mass of the Uzbekistani population may abandon him for the brash nationalism of Mr. Otamuratov or the Communist nostalgia of Hotamjon Ketmonov.

Islom Karimov's political career started in a period of intense turmoil; within his first term he had been kidnapped by radical Islamists in Namangan,[11] and had to prevent a civil war in Tajikistan from engulfing his country.[12] Perhaps because of this he built a state dominated by an omnipresent concern for security.[13] This was reflected through a massive security apparatus, constructed on the bones of the KGB and designed to root out all perceived threats to domestic stability.[14] The economic and social security of the population was no less important to Mr. Karimov, who strongly resisted the 'shock' liberalization undertaken by neighbouring republics after seeing the poverty and unemployment among older Russians and Kazakhstanis that these policies left in their wake.[15] As a result, many major businesses in Uzbekistan remain only partially privatized, with most essential services and the majority of agricultural output still controlled through joint-stock companies in which the government owns a majority.[16] Despite predicating his entire election campaign on the notion that he can maintain the political project started by Mr. Karimov, in only a few months of governing, Mr. Mirziyoyev has shown that his administration will diverge in significant ways from this status quo.

Mr. Mirziyoyev has shown himself willing to advance the policies of liberalization and reform espoused by O'zLiDeP in areas widely exempted from change during the Karimov government. Mr. Mirziyoyev has already taken steps to chip away at the most powerful of the law enforcement bodies and state-owned firms that buttressed the state system constructed by Mr. Karimov. In September alone, Mr. Mirziyoyev signed into law a bill that will rob the powerful Procuracy of the inspectoral powers that it had used to harass businesses into paying protection,[17] introduced penalties for police or MXX officers (Milliy Xavfsizlik Xizmati, the successor to the KGB) found wiretapping without a warrant,[18] and forced the Border Guards to withdraw from disputed territories.[19] Each one of these moves on their own would represent a significant move against the security forces and apparatchiks that featured prominently in the decision-making process of the Karimov government. Together these reforms reflect a determined effort to fight back against the abuse and rampant securitization that has followed the establishment of domestic tranquillity in the Republic. Mr. Mirziyoyev has also announced plans to break up state control over the core industries, promising to begin the process of privatization by selling off a minority of shares in strategic sectors – which had previously been exempt from privatization due to concerns of national resource security – including the state monopolies on electricity, railroads, natural gas, and oil, and the country's largest mining facilities and smelters.[20] Combined, the firms to be partially privatized make up the majority of Uzbekistani exports and a huge amount of national infrastructure which had previously been sacrosanct.[21] Together, the reforms of the security forces and the state-owned monopolies signal a major change in Uzbekistani politics: nothing is off limits. Whereas previously, omnipresent concerns about the country's security in the face of revolution in three of its six neighbours had prevented the powers-that-be from pursuing a broad-based reform process,[22] the actions of Mr. Mirziyoyev indicate a belief that Uzbekistan has survived the gauntlet of the 1990s and early 2000s and – with the existential threat of the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan finally dead [23] – is now ready to embark on the next stage of the gradual reform process envisioned by Mr. Karimov.

The radicalism of the reform process started — and temporarily suspended, presumably to not aggravate any other vested interests until after the December elections — by Mr. Mirziyoyev belies a substantial overlap and genuine ideological continuity with the nationalist thought of Mr. Karimov and other key thinkers in his government, such as the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Abdulaziz Kamilov.[24] The difference between the Karimov administration and the presumably soon-to-be Mirziyoyev government is that Mr. Mirziyoyev appears to believe that the goals of the Uzbekistani nationalism created by Mr. Karimov can be achieved in the current era. In Uzbekistan on the Threshold of the 21st Century and other official collections of his speeches and ideas, Mr. Karimov develops a conception of Uzbekistani nationhood based on a mythicized past,[25] the country's 'inevitable' march towards its future as a great power,[26] and the 'natural' morality (ma'naviyat) of the Uzbek people, contrasted to the corruption and immorality that often characterized urban life in the USSR.[27] This ideology propelled Mr. Karimov to undertake a reform process that left most of the Soviet-era institutions intact in the hope that gradual reform would allow not only economic change, but also societal change as the Uzbek people 'rediscovered' their ancient values and morals, thus avoiding the severe economic collapse and social strife that accompanied reform in the rest of the former Soviet Union.[28] By reusing the same language and rhetoric as Mr. Karimov, Mr. Mirziyoyev appears to be following the path for Uzbekistan constructed by Mr. Karimov, only Mr. Mirziyoyev is more willing to force Uzbekistan down its 'natural' path towards greatness.[29] By addressing the ills of corruption, incompetence, mismanagement, and unnecessary bureaucracy — and by identifying these as issues using the same rhetoric and framing as Mr. Karimov — Mr. Mirziyoyev is propelling Uzbekistan along the same trajectory as the previous government: away from its Soviet past of Kafkaesque bureaucracy, thieving apparatchik, and omnipresent police, and towards an 'authentically Uzbek' future of efficiency, stability, and pure intentions derived from a rediscovered 'natural morality' endemic to the culture and people of Uzbekistan.

In the run-up to the elections on 4 December, there will be only hints and glimpses of the new order that Mr. Mirziyoyev seeks to establish across Uzbekistan, as neither national nor international politics can become disquieted during his caretaker government lest he risk losing the public's faith in his ability to steer the country, a disaster that could potentially cost him the election. Undertaking massive reforms before the elections would be a sure-fire way to scare the public, anger powerful local elites under threat from anti-corruption purges, and drive voters into the arms of Sarvar Otamuratov, Hotamjon Ketmonov, or Narimon Umarov. Assuming that Mr. Mirziyoyev will win the presidential elections – a risky wager, as the conditions that made previous presidential elections uncompetitive were contingent on the participation of the late Mr. Karimov[30] – it will still likely take some weeks for any distinct changes in government policy to become manifest. The actors that Mr. Mirziyoyev seeks to move against as he guides Uzbekistan away from the last relics of its Soviet past are very powerful: the MXX, the national police, several government ministries, the Procuracy, and industrial leaders. Each must be reformed gradually and individually, lest they oppose his government through parliamentary action. The Prime Minister's visits to Jizzax province and the Mirzo Ulug'bek district of Toshkent City – during which he fired scores of officials for gross corruption and mismanagement – presage a campaign of similar visits to other areas of the country to be conducted when Mr. Mirziyoyev is secure in his power.[31] The brashness of Mr. Mirziyoyev's policies towards such major stakeholders in the political system during his interim administration suggest that he will not hold any punches if he does get into power. From the introduction of new checks on the power of law enforcement to an end of official toleration for low-level corruption, Mr. Mirziyoyev seems prepared to rid Uzbekistan of the 'unnatural' and 'foreign' abuses of power that persist as a legacy of colonial rule in flagrant contrast to the 'high ma'naviyat' of the Uzbekistani people.

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Permission to Develop or License to Dump?

FEIYANG SHI explains the importance of China's potential market economy status and the significance it has on causing divisions within the European Union

On 11 December 2016, China will mark the fifteen year anniversary of its accession to the World Trade Organisation (WTO).[1] While this date commemorates the start of trade liberalisation in the biggest economy in the world by PPP adjusted GDP,[2] it also marks the expiration of a fifteen-year protocol commitment.[3] This commitment was a prerequisite to China's accession to the WTO and defines China as a non-market economy. Defining China as a non-market economy allowed other WTO member states increased protection against the dumping of Chinese exports. The expiration of this protocol will give China a chance to become more active in global trade, as its new market economy status (MES) will reduce the number of anti-dumping duties imposed on it.[4] That said, many member states in the WTO, such as the EU, are concerned about the implications of a more open China. This article will explore the economic and political motivations of China and the EU in the MES debate. The related legal implications will be explained, and the challenges facing the EU will be examined. It will be argued that granting China MES would be a good option for the EU.

In February 2016, thousands of industrial workers protested in Brussels against MES for China.[5] As China's largest trading partner, the EU is sceptical about granting MES to China due to concerns over the impact of the existing trade deficit on the stability of European industries, such as steel production. However, there exists internal division over this issue. Economically stronger member states, such as Germany, Luxemburg, and Poland, have sounded their support for China's MES.[6] This is because these states are willing to take a liberal approach to open up trade. However, their willingness is countered by economically weaker, debt-bearing states such as Italy, France, and Hungary, who favour mercantilist protectionist approaches to safeguarding their domestic industry interests.[7] That said, the EU is also affected by many other external pressures. For instance, the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) has stagnated after fourteen rounds of fruitless negotiations.[8] Greece, which has debt now about two times the EU's average,[8] remains a problem for EU officials. The UK's exit from the EU still carries its momentum, and Italy may soon be on the edge of political and economic crises due to the referendum on constitutional reform.[10] Thus, granting China MES and implementing reforms of its trade deals may be the best chance for the EU to generate more economic growth in the long run and to better ensure its trade ties within the global market.

Considering the fact that currently the EU has imposed 56 anti-dumping duties on Chinese exports,[11] the potential impacts of a more open China is causing concerns. Dr. Robert E. Scott, a senior economist and Director of Trade and Manufacturing Policy Research, suggested that the granting of MES to China could potentially cost the EU 1.7 to 3.5 million jobs and 114.1 to 228 billion euros annually,[12] which may be too heavy to bear. However, as the European Parliament Directorate General for External Policies suggested, this data is rather unrepresentative because it is calculated based on the parameter of non-OECD countries' behaviour, without considering the adjustments in the labour and goods markets.[13] In fact, in 2014, only two percent of China's exports were subject to the EU's anti-dumping duties; the actual impact of granting MES to China on trade should be around half of the aforementioned estimations.[14] It is argued by the US and the EU Trade Commission that China has an over-production problem. Since Chinese steel production reached 822 million metric tons, with prices ranging from 20 to 50 percent lower than other competitors, the EU and the US have asserted that it is now largely threatening the EU's steel market and the US' interest in exports to the EU.[15] Yet, this factor is not crucial enough to take China's MES off the table. As the Chinese President, Xi Jinping, addressed in September this year, the 'most forceful' steps are being taken to reduce Chinese steel production.[16] An agreement between China and the US was also reached in June 2016 to settle over-production disputes.[17] Thus, for the EU, a parallel formal dialogue could well be initiated along with the negotiation of the MES to tackle the over-production issue.

From a legal perspective, the ambiguity of the provisions in Article Fifteen of China's accession into the WTO allows different interpretations and flexibility for questioning what exactly would happen after December. While China insists that MES will be granted in December, the EU, instead of seeing the ending of the protocol as an automatic change of market status, refers to its original five criteria of accession. By doing this, the EU will make Chinese eligibility for MES easier to reject.[18] The EU also proposed an alternative, suggested by the European Trade Commissioner, Ms. Malmstrom, called 'Country Neutral Methodology', which protects the EU's non-discriminatory trading image and allows them to set new rules concerning dumping which apply to all states.[19] Yet, the 'country neutral' alternative requires the abolition of the old five MES-defining criteria, giving China the opportunity to challenge. It also requires the European Council's approval, which has been pending since 2013 due to lack of consensus among members.[20] That said, EU anti-dumping duties cannot remain in place after December, since otherwise the EU may face charges for violation of WTO rules.[21] Moreover, rejecting China's MES after the protocol expires gives China the right to file a formal complaint, as well as a chance to impose its own retaliatory duties.[22] China may also reconsider its engagement with the Sino-European Bilateral Investment Treaty, which affects a large share of Foreign Direct Investment to produce immediate good for the EU market in China.[23]

While the Chinese MES is contentious, some members of the G20, like Brazil and Australia,[24] have already sounded support for MES for China in the belief that China can boost trade and promote mutual growth. Indeed, China's market reforms have already helped it to become the world's top exporter – its close trading relationship with the EU is worth one billion euros a day.[25] Its investment over the last decade in the EU in particular is worth over $168 billion.[26] It also is the largest developing country in terms of outward foreign direct investment with the yuan now a global reserve currency with 10.92 percent weighting in IMF's benchmark Special Drawing Right currency basket,[27] an international reserve asset to supplement IMF member states' official reserves. Chinese exports are often subject to high anti-dumping duties due to the accession protocol commitment; in 2013 alone, $100 billion worth of exports, around a third of China's total exports, were subject to such duties.[28] If China's MES is permitted in December, then anti-dumping duties may have to be loosened and the volume of Chinese exports may increase. The potential growth resulting from trade expansion may also attract and benefit foreign investors.

China is determined to obtain MES and has legal, economic, and political countermeasures at hand in case of rejection. However, the situation may not be as intimidating as it appears. A tighter partnership between China and the EU can potentially generate more economic benefits. Concerning the EU's fear of increase in Chinese exports, the anti-dumping duty is not the only protection measure states can acquire. With countervailing duties and anti-dumping duties imposed simultaneously, even if China had the MES, the EU is still entitled to act in the event of unfair trade.[29] With pressure coming from both within and without, revision of its trading policies may thus be the EU's best chance to stabilise its trade ties and generate economic activity. Granting MES to China and further formalising trading deals may benefit China's economy, boost economic dynamics in the EU market, and protect global market integration simultaneously.

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IMA BISHOP | REGIONAL EDITOR

Europe is changing. The crisis and shocks of the last two years are redefining the continent, with regard to both internal and external relations.

The EU is facing a crisis of hegemony. The United Kingdom made history in June as the only country that has ever chosen to leave the union while Hungary's Migrant Quota Referendum in October 2016 represented a direct internal challenge the EU's Common European Asylum Policy. The subversion of the EU's power and policy has never before been witnessed in this manner. Of course, the apparent undermining of EU dominance reflects external concerns manifesting within European countries. Immigration discourses have long plagued political dialogues within Europe. However the fact that the refugee crisis has threatened of a humanitarian disaster on Europe's doorstep, has forced a reappraisal of European cooperation under crisis. As well as forcing adaption at the EUlevel this has driven fears and prejudice amongst member states' populations. The shadow of terror looms also looms over the continent, with prominent attacks in France and Germany reminding us that terrorism is no longer a distant menace. It will be interesting to observe whether European integration will ride out this turbulent period or usher in a new form of inter-state cooperation.

Within European countries political dialogues are changing. Yet the crucial change lies in who is driving debate. Populism has surged on both ends of the political spectrum and is reshaping Europe's political landscape. Jordan Lee argues that left-wing populism has altered Spain and Greece's democracies and provides the promise of a new representative voice for the people. On the other hand immigration and terror threats fuel the power of the far-right in many European countries. This is particularly the case in France whose direct experience of terror means that an emergency state has become the new norm. Alexander Brotman explores how France's direct terror threat has played into the hands of the National Front and dragged the much of the country's mainstream politicians in a hard-right direction. Without doubt, Europe's political establishments are being forced to adapt to the people's demands and fears. Indeed, the damage done by the far-right AfD to Angela Merkel's Christian Democratic Union in the recent Berlin state elections reflects the danger populists pose to leaders who seemingly favour their own agendas over the people's interests.

The United Kingdom has undergone a great deal of political shock. In addition to its historic vote to leave the EU, Britain's fine internal power balance is shifting. Will Francis examines the challenges posed to Britain's neoliberal political norms by the re-election of Jeremy Corbyn as the Labour Party leader. Regarding devolution, the EU referendum result has highlighted that Scotland and England's political beliefs are increasingly incompatible. With the continuity of the SNP's dominance in Scotland tensions are rising and Britain's stability is becoming progressively more strained.

Yet, from the ashes of this tumultuous period in European history, a new status quo is emerging. Political contention rather than stability is increasingly the norm and the political establishment at both the national and supranational level must adapt to maintain its previous authority.

The Ambivalent Promises of Populism

JORDAN LEE argues that Europe's radical left populists represent a legitimate and meaningful challenge to the status quo of Europe's political systems.

Across Western Europe, populism is the buzzword of the moment, as an array of anti-establishment movements and parties challenging the status quo have pushed the concept to centre stage. The term is mostly associated with parties and leaders of the radical right; figures like Marine Le Pen in France or Geert Wilders in Holland dominate the European imagination on populism. Radical left populism is less familiar but has achieved greater prominence in recent years, particularly in Greece and Spain. These left-wing parties are (considered) populist as their rhetoric presents society as ultimately separated into two antagonistic groups, 'the people' versus 'the corrupt elite,' and further argues that politics should be an expression of the general will of the people.[1] Nevertheless, they remain left-wing in their espousal of egalitarianism and socialist ideas.

In contrast to the inchoate European left populism, radical right populism has been a prominent phenomenon in Europe for several decades now. This disparity has shaped Europe's perception of populism, cementing its reputation as dangerous, while ensuring that conflation between left-wing populism and the xenophobic and racist forms of populism from the Right is frequent. This distorted story hides the potential of Western Europe's radical left populists to provide a legitimate and meaningful challenge to the status quo. Europe's recent upsurge in left populism deserves to be better understood.

This populist growth has to be contextualised within a broader decline of representative democracy. For many years, there has been a confluence of negative and remarkably consistent trends within Western European democracies. Every indicator available demonstrates a decline in conventional political participation over the last several decades, starting in the late 1970s and accelerating from the 1990s onward.[2] Party membership has collapsed and parties have given up any pretence of being mass movements.[3] Levels of trust have dramatically declined for all representatives of traditional democracy whether politicians, parties, governments or institutions.[4]

Simultaneously, as voters retreat, elites do the same, moving into the state and away from their representative functions. Distant supranational and international elites like the IMF and EU are increasingly important decision-makers.[5] Mainstream parties are both less able and less willing to change policies. Ideological convergence is common, reducing the scope for debate and prompting the familiar cry of, 'they're all the same.'[6] Social Democrats in particular have largely given up anything more than a timid critique of capitalism. Instead, the social democratic shift to the right, exemplified in the 'third way' philosophy of Tony Blair's New Labour project and others, has seen social democrats oversee rising inequality and mass privatisation with few protests.[7] The cumulative outcome is the depoliticisation of decision-making and its replacement with technocratic and managerial politics.[8]

The economic crisis that began in 2008 has very likely contributed to the growth of populism[9] but it is not reducible to it. If the increased prominence of populism can be reduced to narrow economic concerns, it will be nothing more than a passing fad that is due to disappear when economic growth returns. However, the growth of populism started well before the Great Recession and exists in all regions of Europe, including those that were not hit particularly hard by the crisis such as Germany and Sweden. Any reductionist account of populism as a 'backlash' or 'protest' against austerity ignores its deeper roots in the concurrent withdrawal of elites and the mass of the population from traditional politics.

The rise of populism is then, at least in large part, a reflection of this malaise in representative democracy. For a wide range of populist movements, diverse in their location and characteristics, this is the key common denominator: a widening disconnect between elites and the majority of the population. The mutual withdrawal of elites and the population has left the existence of the political class itself as a source of contention. While the growth and proliferation of new social movements suggests that democracy may be relatively vibrant in some areas, in the realm of representative party democracy something has clearly gone wrong.

In this context, many see left populism as a productive force, one that could serve as a catalyst for the revitalisation of democracy. Central

to their message is the notion that politics has left democratic control and must be taken back. Left-populists can step into the vacuum left by elites to re-politicise important issues that have been ignored or overlooked. Prominent examples of radical left populists like Syriza and Podemos in Greece and Spain respectively, seek to combine a democratic socialist ideological core with a populist style. They use populism as a discursive and stylistic device to articulate popular anger and unite different groups in a struggle against what they see as neoliberal hegemony and political corruption.

In Spain we see this dynamic clearly in action. Opinion polls have shown a sharp decrease in support for the main democratic institutions and actors over the last few years.[10] Spanish politics has been blighted by clientelism and revolving doors between governments and corporations, [11] as well as a blatant absence of transparency within an elitist political culture.[12] Since 2011, both mainstream parties, the PP and PSOE, have suffered major corruption scandals dominating public attention and affecting the highest levels of both parties.[13] Levels of public distrust and dissatisfaction were so high that voters saw the mainstream parties themselves as one of the biggest problems facing the country.[14]

Podemos, founded only in January 2014, grew out of anti-austerity and anti-corruption movements to become rapidly a major contender in Spanish politics. It achieved 21.1 percent of the vote in the 2016 national election, an astonishing result for a party founded just two years earlier.[15] Until the emergence of Podemos, the main beneficiaries of the political and economic crisis were abstentions and blank votes as voters recoiled from the established parties.[16] Central to Podemos' strategy was the quintessentially populist evocation of an antagonism between la caste (the elite) and la gente (the people).[17] It further popularised a new discourse in Spain around the 'old politics,' represented by the elite, versus the hope of a 'new politics,' represented by Podemos.[18] By attacking the establishment in this way, Podemos was able to open up a broad popular alliance that overcame the enervated allegiances of existing left-wing politics. Such populist terminology helped them win over many who do not normally identify with the left. Podemos filled a vacuum by resonating with dissatisfied voters whose sentiments were not being addressed. The democratic promise of Podemos lay in giving these feelings a constructive institutional representation.

Similarly, in Greece, the massive upheaval caused by the economic crisis fed into a political crisis that led to disillusionment and distrust on an epic scale, as ordinary Greeks fled the mainstream parties. Syriza's broad populist appeal connected with these new floating voters searching for outlets within which to express their frustrations at the incredibly corrupt, clientelistic Greek establishment. Using these appeals, Syriza experienced unprecedented success for a party of the radical left, winning 36.3 percent of the vote and entering government in the January 2015 elections.[19]

Nonetheless, populism is a much-maligned concept. Far from a corrective, it is usually linked with being challenging or even threatening to democracy. It is frequently used as an insult to imply demagoguery, irresponsibility and irrationality. One central critique of populism that bears this thinking outlies in populisms' conception of 'the people.' Critics argue that it denies pluralism by imposing a false homogeneity onto the people; a homogeneity that denies the conflicts of interests and beliefs that exist within communities.[20] By positing 'the people' as a unified entity, populists fail to appreciate the complexity of the communities we live in. This homogenous conception of 'the people' can have illiberal consequences. Groups that do not fit in can be demonized. The moral element of populism posits the people as pure and those that stand in its way are as corrupt as the elites. This creates a form of 'majoritarian extremism' that threatens the rights of minorities and where power for the people denigrates to mean power for a particular section of the people.[21]

What this picture of 'pluralism versus populism' gets wrong is a misunderstanding of 'the people' in the conceptions of parties like Syriza and Podemos. Here we have to make an essential distinction between the inclusionary populism of parties like Podemos and Syriza and the exclusionary populism of figures such as Donald Trump and Marine Le Pen. Left populism is vertical: a simple configuration of the people looking up against the elites. Right-wing populism is triadic: it maintains the former relationship but adds a third group of 'the other' to be looked down at. This is usually immigrants but also typically entails Muslims or other religions, ethnic minorities or anyone else who does not fit in the definition of the 'real people'.[22] For someone like Donald Trump, 'the people' tends to mean white, god-fearing, 'patriots' from the 'heartland'.[23] It is a conception characterised by racism and xenophobia: constructing the unity of the people by excluding the 'out group'. For a group like Syriza or Podemos the conception of the people is not limited by race, nationality, religion or sexuality. It is open-ended and flexible. Both parties have been consistent advocates of immigrants' rights, as well as LGBTQ and gender equality, as important aspects of their programme.[24] The goal for left populists in using this language is to hold various heterogeneous groups together in a common democratic struggle. It includes all those who had lost out or were marginalized by the processes of economic neoliberalism or political corruption. This includes many marginalised groups who are brought into 'the people' as equal subjects against privileged and powerful elite actors like transnational corporations or government elites. This difference reflects their respective interests. Right-wing populism is primarily concerned with socio-cultural issues and the re-politicisation of the consensus over multi-ethnic societies, whilst left-wing populism focuses on socio-economic issues and the re-politicisation of neoliberal economic reforms. We can ask why 'the people,' given this plurality, should not simply be regarded as 'united' instead of the loaded term 'homogenous.' Ascribing a homogenising aspect to all forms of populism does not stand up to empirical scrutiny.

These differences are not trivial. Only one is compatible with a modern, pluralist democracy. The other claims to exclusively represent the one authentic people. At times, this can give the impression that the inflationary use of populism is a rather convenient method for dismissing ideas that do not fit within appropriate political boundaries. Syriza is thus lumped in with the Neo-Nazi Greek party Golden Dawn under the banner of 'populist.' The false equivalence is one small step from labelling Syriza itself as dangerous.[25] The equivocation of neo-Nazism and what are essentially attempts to renew social democracy from the left, show the need to understand the diversity of populist appeals. This could be a case for dropping the word 'populism' entirely or for sticking with the concept to reclaim it from its extreme right associations. At the very least, it shows the necessity of understanding the complexity and variety of populism in its different forms.

None of this is to say that left populism is without its problems. The 'dark side' of left populism can result in a cult of personality or fears of authoritarianism and centralisation as demonstrated by Hugo Chavez in Venezuela.[26] However, this is not predestined. Dangerous populisms of both left and right need to be taken seriously but they do not exhaust the variety of populist articulations. The left populists in Greece, Spain and elsewhere have demonstrated an ambiguous promise for democracy. Left populism is not a panacea for the problems of democracy in Europe, but they are a symptom of our democratic malaise, not a cause. They may even be part of the cure.

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A Political Struggle Under a State of Emergency in France

ALEXANDER BROTMAN argues that voters will determine whether France moves to the right under the continued threat of terrorism.

On 26 July, two men pledging allegiance to the Islamic State attacked a small church in Normandy, France. An 85-year-old priest, Jacques Hamel, was killed at the altar and two nuns were held hostage for several hours.[1] It was not a high profile, mass casualty event like the Bastille Day attack in Nice two weeks before, yet it shook the French state for the seventh time in a year. That evening on France 24, one discussion led to the headline: 'France is becoming like Israel, a state under permanent threat.'[2] Although Europe is at risk of changing dramatically, France has remained stable despite the threat of terror attacks permeating daily life. France is learning to live in a state of constant threat, and the political primaries on both the centre-right and far-right are responding to voters' frustration with the status quo.

France is one of six states in the world which has currently declared a state of emergency—in place since the Paris terror attacks of November 2015. Turkey, Tunisia, Mali, Venezuela, and Ethiopia are the other five states, with circumstances ranging from a failed coup attempt to Islamist attacks, chronic food shortages and widespread anti-government protests.[4] The ongoing terror threat has led to heated political debates ahead of the November primaries for the centre-right party, The Republicans. The frontrunners are Nicolas Sarkozy, the former President, and Alain Juppè, the former Prime Minister, who has maintained a significant lead in opinion polls. While Sarkozy has taken a tough line on immigration and French national identity, Juppè has offered a more conciliatory approach, reserving his hard-line stances to the UK's Brexit negotiations instead of domestic issues surrounding the headscarf and national security.[5] The smaller yet increasingly significant far-right party led by Marine Le Pen, National Front, is also set to play a large role in the 2017 elections, with its core of support based on anti-immigrant, eurosceptic views and, some would argue, xenophobic and Islamophobic values.[6]

The situation in France described by politicians like Sarkozy, Juppè and Le Pen is less dire than Donald Trump's vision of a dystopian, violence-ridden America. Nevertheless, there is a nativist and anti-immigration wave of rhetoric that is remarkably similar. Only Juppè has adopted a more moderate and tolerant stance. Sarkozy has gone so far as to say immigrants must, 'live like the French,' and accept that their, 'ancestors are the Gauls.'[7] Sarkozy has further alienated France's large Muslim community and created a sense of 'otherness' with those immigrants who are already living in economically deprived banlieues on the outskirts of Paris. Sarkozy has also contemplated banning Muslim headscarves in France and pre-emptively detaining those suspected of carrying out a terrorist attack.[8] This has the potential to break down the already weak trust between the law enforcement community and residents of the banlieues.

It is easy for Sarkozy, the former mayor of Neuilly-sur-Seine—one of the wealthiest suburbs of Paris—to say that an immigrant from North Africa should, 'live like the French,' when circumstances are often far different in the segregated, impoverished communes of Clichy-sous-Bois and Seine-Saint-Denis—the same community where riots began in 2005 and where the risk of radicalisation remains high.[9] The recent spate of terror attacks in France has revived the thorny issue of multiculturalism, which surfaced during the riots over a decade ago and harks back to difficult moments in France's colonial history, such as the treatment of Algerians and other North Africans. Even today, many immigrants and French citizens of North African descent are ghettoised, living in banlieues that in some cases have no direct links to the city of Paris.

Over the summer, one of the most divisive issues in France pertained to the 'burkini', a swimsuit worn by Muslim women that covers the entire body with the exception of the face, hands and feet. Thirty French towns along the Mediterranean banned the burkini, citing concerns over terrorism. An incident in Nice caused further outrage; armed police surrounded a woman on the beach and ordered her to remove her clothing. The woman was charged with, not 'wearing an outfit respecting good morals and secularism,'.[10]

In early September, a French court overturned the burkini ban in Nice citing, 'no proven risks of disruption to public order.'[11] The burkini has become a prominent symbol of the debate over religious freedom in a secular state. Rights groups cited the decision to ban the swimwear as patent Islamophobia and a distraction from more serious issues such as economic and social inequalities amongst France's Muslim population. President Francois Hollande and his Socialist Party called for unity and toleration of Islam in the wake of the incident. In contrast, many of the mayors who vowed to uphold the ban on the burkini belong to either The Republicans or the National Front.[12]

Alain Juppè, campaigning from a position of strength in the most recent opinion polls and after the first primary debate for The Republicans' ticket, promotes a unified France that does not denigrate based on religion while urging more happiness in a country rocked by terror. In contrast to Sarkozy, he opposes a ban on the burkini and advocated for reconciliation with the Muslim community.[13]Juppè's vision has led his rivals to label him an idealist. His platform stands in sharp contrast to Sarkozy in his own party, as well as that of socialist President Francois Hollande, who has become somewhat of a wartime leader, constantly reassuring French citizens of the need to remain vigilant in televised speeches after every attack. Yet Hollande has been criticised by Sarkozy and other members of The Republicans party for being too soft in the fight against terrorism, struggling to enforce the civil liberties required under the constitution while living under a state of emergency that requires vast resources and monitoring activities to prevent attacks. Close to seven hundred French nationals are fighting in Iraq and Syria as of September 2016 and a further 15,000 are being monitored for radicalisation, according to the French Government.[14]

As politicians debate correct tactics and how best to maintain security, children are being told to prepare for attacks in their classrooms.[15] It is common to see soldiers armed with assault rifles on the streets of Paris guarding train stations, sporting venues and other facilities, but the prospect of a terrorist targeting a pre-school is yet another sign of the sense of urgency that comes with the multi-faceted threat that France is facing. France faces the risk of both Islamic State directed attacks from Raqqa, Syria and Islamic State inspired attacks from lone-wolf individuals. Moreover, to the French people, churches and schools, airports, train stations and sporting events are all potential targets. While the French police have foiled many plots,[16] public officials such as Prime Minister Manuel Valls do not mince words when they say more attacks are to be expected.

To some on the right, such as Sarkozy, the populist rhetoric of controlling borders, getting tough on immigration and battling the elites is an enticing way to run a campaign. At times, he even sounds like Donald Trump, offering to be a voice for the 'silent majority' in his quest to, 'resurrect the French people.'[17] Yet Alain Juppè, the sensitive idealist, is currently in the lead with 42 percent of votes compared to Sarkozy's 28 percent in the first round primary contest, according to polling done for Le Figaro and RTL.[18] Unlike Sarkozy, Juppè has not called for public referendums on controversial subjects like preventive jailing for terror suspects and the resettlement of immigrant families, offering the most centrist, and moderate conservative platform within his party.

Under the current status quo of fear, terrorism and populist anger, the people of France face one of the most consequential European leadership elections in recent memory, coming in the wake of the Brexit vote and

divided visions on the European project. The Socialist Party under the leadership of Francois Hollande has suffered from low approval ratings, while France still faces a stagnant economy and a significant risk of terror attacks. President Hollande may be slow to act and allocate the level of resources needed to protect France during a state of emergency, but there are systemic institutionalised problems that also need to be addressed when it comes to the economic and social standards of France's large Muslim population, who are truly living in a different republic.

The Republicans, meanwhile, have lurched even further to the right, and Sarkozy has said he shares, 'common values,' with the far-right National Front on the urgency that is needed to unify the state and protect its citizens.[19] The primary battle, like so many other political battles across the West this year, is waged on fear, and it remains to be seen whether Juppè's vision of a France that embraces multiculturalism can win enough support.

The National Front will not gain control of the Èlysèe Palace, according to most opinion polls, but they are stronger than ever in the wake of the Brexit vote, continued terror attacks, and the flow of migrants from North Africa and the Middle East. Of course, these consequences do not exclusively effect France, as the Alternative for Germany party and other groups across the continent have gained additional parliamentary seats. Whether the Republicans and the National Front have enough in common to form a united front and collaborate on reforms and legislation will be the true test of how far right the French electorate is willing to advance.

If we accept the premise that France is a state under permanent threat, it follows that European policies as a whole regarding migration, enlargement and integration are also under threat. While a 'Frexit', or French exit from the European Union remains unlikely, the French election in 2017 is a vital referendum for one of the union's most important member states on whether populist, reactionary politics are the solution to both a 'democratic deficit' and state of emergency both within and outside of France.

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Jeremy Corbyn: Saviour or Destroyer of the Labour Party?

WILL FRANCIS argues that The Labour Party's status quo must be challenged to re-establish its credibility. He suggests however, that the approaches of Labour leader, Jeremy Corbyn, do not present an alternative that can restore the party's successes.

The Labour Party in the UK is suffering a self-identified crisis. The party has lost the last two General Elections,[1,2] campaigned on the losing side of the European Union referendum,[3] and has lagged behind the Conservatives in virtually every opinion poll for over a year.[4] Jeremy Corbyn, MP for Islington North since 1983,[5] has been recently re-elected as party leader and charged with bringing Labour back from the brink of crisis.

Jeremy Corbyn's supporters see him as the answer to Britain's problems. His outsider status has bought him huge popularity and allowed him to reconnect with thousands of voters left feeling alienated by modern politics. His honest and principled demeanour and policies contrast with those of the 'post-truth' political establishment,[6] and his particular brand of social democracy has not been seen in Britain since the 1970s. It is this promise of change that puts him in an ideal position to challenge the increasingly unpopular and unrepresentative Labour image. However, while it was important to challenge the 'status quo', the alternative Mr. Corbyn proposes may not be the remedy Labour needs. Moreover, he has the potential to damage rather than aid Labour, as evidenced by the divided reaction to his left-wing principles within the party itself. As it stands, Corbyn is dangerously close to tearing apart the party to whom he has devoted his political life. Yet, in spite of 172 of the MPs who cast a vote of no confidence in him,[7] and the risk of a party split,[8] Corbyn seems not to have deviated from his controversial trajectory.

Corbyn's rise owes much to the flaws of New Labour's 'status quo'. Despite its landslide victory in 1997 and ongoing popularity in the early 2000s, New Labour appears to have grown complacent. At the last two general elections Labour lacked the support of key groups and struggled to adapt to economic and political changes such as the financial crisis and Euroscepticism. Additionally, during their respective tenures as party leader, Gordon Brown and Ed Miliband were unable to shake the narrative that Labour's spending had damaged the British economy. The party was thus defined by its failures rather than its successes, triggering an identity crisis for Labour that prevented it from appealing to either of its electoral bases that had existed from 1997: the traditional left-wing and the middle classes. Middle class voters perceived the party as economically incompetent and failing to serve their interests, while the traditional left-wing felt increasingly isolated from New Labour's progressively more neoliberal agenda.[9] Neither of these views are especially accurate, but perception is everything in campaigning. Labour's seemingly out of touch 'metropolitan elite' leaders failed to portray an alternative and cohesive message.[10, 11]

Jeremy Corbyn's new style of leadership and new policies offer a fresh start for Labour after the general election losses of 2010 and 2015.[12] His clear left-wing image and message indicate to voters where the party stands. However, this image placates the traditional left-wing at the expense of the moderate-centre voters. Once again, doubts are cast upon Labour's chances of electoral success. Corbyn is thus right to have challenged Labour's establishment, but his alternative course of action may not necessarily be what the party needs to combat a political establishment and electorate who are leaning more towards the right in England, or towards the nationalist movement in Labour's traditional catchment area of Scotland.

Corbyn's rise to the position of party leader was an unlikely event. Having only secured the 35 MP nominations necessary for participation in Labour's 2015 leadership election minutes before the deadline,[13] his candidacy initially aimed at, 'broadening the debate,'[14] over the party's image and direction, rather than winning the leadership election. The self-proclaimed Marxist was very much the anti-establishment candidate,[15] having voted against New Labour 428 times.[16] This outsider, underdog status allowed him to speak honestly, present his alternative vision for Labour, and connect with thousands across the UK who were similarly disillusioned with New Labour's 'status quo'. Over 100,000 people joined Labour before the election, many to vote for Corbyn; after winning with almost 60 percent of the vote,[17] a further 50,000 joined.[18] Corbyn's outsider appearance continued to help him win his second leadership victory, over Owen Smith in the 2016 election. Smith had the potential to be a strong opposing candidate because he was perceived as left-wing enough to attract Corbyn's grassroots supporters. Yet Corbyn won the leadership with over 60 percent partly because Smith,[19] who had previously worked as a special advisor and lobbyist,[20] was regarded as the establishment candidate.

Nevertheless, Corbyn's image presents him with many challenges. While inducing popularity in some circles, he equally affronts others. Many voters may find it hard to picture Corbyn as the Prime Minister,

given his history of anti-establishment behaviour—to include choosing not to sing the national anthem,[21] and refusing to kneel before the queen.[22] Hitherto a backbencher, it seemed hard to imagine Corbyn having such a prominent role in front-line politics. He is arguably more comfortable protesting than building consensuses in parliament, and is more practised at picketing than policy-making. Since elected, Corbyn has surrounded himself with his allies while making little progress with alienated, centrist MPs within his parliamentary party. At Prime Minister's Questions he has often appeared open to personal attack from heavyweight establishment politicians, infamously being told to, 'put on a proper suit, do up your tie, and sing the national anthem,' by David Cameron.[23] Clearly, the political establishment struggles to see him as a leader and this is not the image that Labour needs to project if it is to advance from the opposition benches. Corbyn can be praised for shifting power towards party members and developing the party's internal democracy. This goes beyond New Labour's lack of connection with people other than through 'market research' and focus groups.[24] However, he must also learn to work with MPs who ultimately represent the voice of a wider range of people. Failing to cooperate with Labour MPs or reason with the establishment in a constructive manner risks sending a fractured image to voters and undermining the party's stability. Currently, Corbyn seems reluctant to accept that he must negotiate, rather than fight with, Britain's political establishment to rebuild Labour's credibility.

As with his persona and leadership style, Corbyn's policies appeal to some but antagonise others. The policies also risk being outdated and ineffective. Decisions taken by post-War Labour governments to adopt a Keynesian intervention strategy, nationalise key industries, raise taxes, and allow trade unions greater power may have been suited to the time of crisis and the need to compensate the public after the Second World War. They are not, however, as compatible with modern Britain's aging population, service based economy, or £1.7 trillion national debt.[25] The policies were explicitly rejected in the 1980s and 1990s due to the inflation, unemployment, and excessive trade union power they generated during the 1960s and 1970s.[26] Given the more neoliberal angle of modern British politics and the increasingly centre-right alignment of many British voters, these policies may not have widespread appeal amongst the wider public.[27] There is a belief that these policies would cause interference in, 'individual lives,'[28] and economic decline.[29] Therefore, they are not the best solution to improving Labour's electoral chances.

To bring in new moderate supporters and unify his party, Corbyn will need to incorporate both his own, and New Labour's ideas, with a fresh approach. He need not abandon his left-wing values as the Left is still a potent force in British politics. By focusing on social mobility, economic reform and credible leadership, Labour stands to gain a new, strong identity that replicates the successes of New Labour without its flaws. A dynamic, forward-looking party will appeal to a wider section of the British public and reunite the party. However to do so, Corbyn must adapt.

New Labour's policies had mixed success, but by taking the good and leaving the bad, Corbyn can prove that Labour is proactive and adaptable. However, currently he appears to be continuing the bad. Dan Corry admitted that high public spending, funded by high borrowing, worsened the impact of the 2008 financial crisis. Yet Corbyn has pledged a 50 percent top tax rate and £500 billion of extra spending. While public services and wealth redistribution are central to his ideology, the lessons of the past suggest that raising taxes substantially is not popular among the middle class, a group from whom he desperately needs support. Moreover, Gordon Brown's policy of the personal tax-free allowance was highly effective; however, Corbyn has frequently voted against such measures. By adapting his tax policies, Corbyn would further the successes of New Labour while still signifying a clean break, potentially converting voters who may become disillusioned with the current government.

Corbyn's challenge to Labour's status quo is long overdue. Breaking from the New Labour years presents the party with the opportunity to create new policies and bring in new voters. Considering that Corbyn has been the MP for Islington North since 1983, the belief that he is unpopular amongst voters and entirely unelectable is unfounded.

However, to be the saviour rather than the destroyer of The Labour Party, Jeremy Corbyn must make changes to his approach and image. Only by taking the best of past, leaving the worst, and creating a new, moderate image for the party can he hope to turn Labour into an effective opposition and government in waiting.

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LATIN AMERICA

RAFAEL ROSALES | REGIONAL EDITOR

Everyday life for the people of Latin America and the region's image throughout the world are likely to be affected by changes currently taking place there. Although everyday violence has been the status quo of millions of Latin Americans for decades and there are reports that, particularly in Central America, the situation is getting worse, there are signs of hope that change is coming to a region that deserves a better reputation.

Juan Manuel Santos, president of Colombia, was met with scepticism when it came to light that his government was taking part in peace talks with the FARC in Havana, Cuba. The FARC (Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionadas de Colombia) have been the main actor in an ideological guerrilla civil war in Colombia, and the conflict there is deeply entrenched in Colombian society. A referendum on a Peace Treaty with the FARC was narrowly rejected in October of this year, but hope for peace has never been higher and may have received a boost after Santos won the Nobel Peace Prize for his efforts towards an end to the conflict in Colombia.

Under more peaceful circumstances, Costa Rica has reached an agreement with the United States where it will receive refugees from neighbouring countries before they are transferred to the United States in the backdrop of a more integratory youth in the country. Latin America is currently faced with an incredible diversity of national contexts, but the existence of hope for change in the region's most infamous conflicts is very promising.

Profile of Juan Manuel Santos

LOCHLANN J. ATACK uses Mill´s Utilitarianism in Establishing the Moral Case for Santos´ Peace Deal in Colombia

On 2 October of this year, the Colombian people voted against a treaty that would have ended a 52-year-long civil war between the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) – the most formidable rebel militia in Colombia – and the government.[1] According to the wording on the ballot paper of the plebiscite, the majority of voters, almost thirteen million Colombians, do not 'support the final agreement to end the conflict and build a stable and lasting peace'.[2] The 'conflict' has resulted in over 200,000 deaths and displaced nearly seven million people.[3]

Juan Manuel Santos, the architect of the treaty, was elected president in 2010 and promised to continue his predecessor Alvaro Uribe's policies in combatting the FARC. Santos had played a central role in Uribe's tactics against the FARC as his defence minister since 2006.[4] Uribe's 'Patriot Plan' of 2004-2005, which took government forces to the heart of FARC territory, escalated violence but also brought the rebel group to the table and was followed by reduced battle-deaths.[5] Contrary to Uribe, Santos's policy as president has emphasised a diplomatic resolution from the offset, with talks officially beginning in 2012 in Norway and continuing in Cuba for four years.[6] Santos's agenda has been to negotiate for far-reaching reforms as the basis of a ceasefire instead of a militarily-coerced surrender.[7] His aim was to make reintegration into Colombian society an attractive prospect for the approximately 7,000 remaining FARC fighters,[8] and the peace talks resulted in Santos and the leader of the FARC, 'Timochenko', signing a peace deal in Havana this September. Despite virulent condemnation from the Uribe camp,[9] the agreement was hailed by the UN and experts such as the United States Institute of Peace as a promising framework to a lasting peace.[10] This positive reception was signified by Santos being personally awarded the Nobel Peace Prize days after the plebiscite. Santos' success runs counter to three decades of failed diplomatic processes with the FARC; while a ceasefire with the FARC was previously achieved in 1984, the peace quickly deteriorated, and later peace talks, in 1998, collapsed once the FARC hijacked a commercial plane.[11] The talks resulting from Uribe's 'Patriot Plan' had also failed, arguably due to the FARC's terms, including demands for 500 government-held rebels in exchange for 62 hostages.[12] Parallel to the talks, the FARC continued carrying out acts of guerrilla warfare, leading Uribe to accuse the FARC of destroying negotiations. The FARC's actions and Uribe's rhetoric contributed to a diminished prospect for peace.[13]

The slim majority of 54,000 votes and a voter turnout of less than 40 percent make the democratic legitimacy of the election result questionable,[14] and show that the Colombian people are divided by this issue. However, would a result to accept the deal have been morally desirable? John Stuart Mill, in Utilitarianism, would have argued that the deal was the morally superior alternative. Mill's utilitarian doctrine is that maximising the pleasure and absence of pain in society, or 'utility', ought to be the object of any moral agent.[15] Utilitarianism is defined by its giving precedence to the ultimate utility we can bring to society over the principle of social and distributive justice, where we treat others in accordance with their own actions.[16] However, for such a contingent situation as the conflict in Colombia, it can be difficult to find a conclusive answer. Santos has attempted a compromise with the FARC in order to end the conflict, whereas Uribe maintains that they should be treated more harshly, and that to do otherwise is an injustice to the Colombian people.

Many have speculated that Uribe's uncompromising attitude towards the FARC, both in and out of office, is a, 'personal vendetta,'[17] because his father was killed by the FARC in the early 1980s.[18] Uribe, who was the leader of the 'No' campaign against the peace deal, claims that the deal is unjust because it does not sufficiently punish the FARC.[19] This notion of, 'giving to each what they deserve,' is endorsed by Mill as the core of, 'social and distributive justice.'[20] This is when we reward 'good' acts with 'good' or desirable responses such as Nobel Peace Prizes, and we condemn 'evil' acts with 'evil' or undesirable responses such as a life sentence in prison. Uribe's claim is that Santos's proposal for a transitional justice grossly violates distributive justice by rewarding the evil acts of the FARC with 'good.' For example, one of the conditions of the deal is that FARC leaders will not necessarily be imprisoned because of their cooperation in the negotiations. Timochenko has been accused of committing some of the, 'bloodiest and deadliest acts carried out by the FARC,' including the murder of a governor and the bombing of a social club,[21] so, according to social and distributive justice, it is morally unjustifiable to not imprison him. Another condition of the deal was that the FARC would be guaranteed a fraction of seats in parliament until 2022, regardless of how many votes they will receive, and that for the next two terms, even, 'combatants who are found guilty of war crimes or crimes against humanity will still be eligible to run for office.'[22] These conditions seem opposed to the principle of distributive justice – Santos appears to have done away with the 'stick' altogether and offered only the 'carrot' when it comes to dealing with the FARC. Reactions of outrage and confusion are in this case explained by the principle of distributive justice, which Mill himself champions, that, 'we should treat all equally well [...] who have deserved equally well of us.'[23] Uribe's unequivocal subscription to distributive justice and his 'bex talionis' ('an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth') approach was evidently effective in convincing the moral consciences of millions of Colombians.[24]

This moral standpoint crucially neglects the crux of Mill's utilitarianism. Mill points out that, 'it is one thing to believe that we have natural feelings of justice, and another to acknowledge them as an ultimate criterion of conduct.'[25] In other words, the intuitively satisfying standard of justice is not necessarily the one that should determine our morality, yet it is precisely this standard of justice that Uribe champions as the morally superior alternative to the peace deal. Uribe is calling for a deal brought about with heavy use of the stick. The problem here is that harsher terms are very likely to make the FARC leave the table. Santos's break-through was that he dealt with the FARC not as bona fide war criminals, but human beings who have committed war crimes. Herein lies the vindication of Mill's utilitarianism in Santos's peace deal. The crucial caveat that Mill adds to distributive justice is that we should adhere to the standard of distributive justice, 'except when some recognised social expediency requires the reverse.'[26] In other words, the limit of Mill's argument for distributive justice is that we ought to act in accordance with distributive justice, except when to do so would reduce the general good in our society. For example, if convicting a murderer would cause the deaths of ten people, dealing the murderer a life sentence would be acting in accordance with distributive justice, but would be jeopardising the general good by causing ten deaths. According to Mill, the right thing to do here would be to not convict the murder in order to protect the general good. By these standards, to convict the murderer, and hence cause the ten deaths, would not only be morally irresponsible, but morally heinous.

If we subscribe to Mill's doctrine that we ought to strive to maximise the general good in our society, or ensure that we incur the least amount of pain upon our society, then it follows that we ought to side with the most probable means in achieving this end. By implementing Santos's

peace deal and thus ending the war, it is possible that more pain could be avoided than if it were not signed and the war continued. By the standards of the Peace Accords Matrix, a database that, 'compares the implementation record of 34 comprehensive peace agreements since 1989,' the peace deal led by Santos is exceptionally promising on paper in terms of implementing a lasting peace.[27] A key distinction between this deal and others is that Santos and his team have gone to such scrupulous lengths to provide a framework that accounts for factors, 'that go to the heart of the issues behind so many years of violence.'[28] For example, the failure of a 2012 Philippines peace deal is attributed to its failure to provide transitional structures for the demobilised rebels to enter politics.[29] Similarly, while the FARC's numbers have diminished considerably since the early 2000s,[30] this does not mean that they will become less active. In fact, the reduced numerical strength of the FARC could lead to increased violence and pain for the Colombian people. Attacks as recent as June of 2015 have left 500,000 people without power, and in the same month resulted in 400,000 gallons of crude oil spilling into water sources - the worst environmental disaster in Colombia in a decade.[31] The fact that the group who holds large responsibility for the preceding half-century of civil war are now embracing the prospect of demobilisation should not be taken for granted. Mill would consider these indicators as a compelling utilitarian case for ending the conflict, for the simple fact that by ending conflict we could avoid significant amounts of pain that would otherwise be incurred.

Mill acknowledges that, if we want to be morally responsible in terms of the 'general good', it is impossible to consider acts in isolation. In the same way, Santos' deal does not take the acts of the FARC in a vacuum, but in context. Uribe's moral standpoint of clinging to distributive justice runs counter to Mill's utilitarianism, because it is analogous to focussing on convicting the murderer and disregarding the ten consequent deaths. Contrarily, Santos and his team appear to have done their utmost to strike a balance between convicting the murderer and preventing the ten consequent deaths. Santos has attempted to formulate a standard of justice that will maximise the pleasure and avoidance of pain for his society, the Colombian state, by recognising the potential for future suffering if the FARC do not demobilise now. So while Mill would recognise some merit to Uribe's desire for distributive justice, he would see Santos' peace deal as the more likely means of securing a better future for the Colombian people, and hence consider support of the deal as the more morally justifiable alternative.

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Repeating History

MARK WILSON argues Colombia's attempts at peace with FARC could fail to resolve the country's longstanding violence.

On 26 August 2016, the New York Times published an article titled 'Colombia's Milestone in World Peace.'[1] Co-written by psychologist Steven Pinker and the President of Colombia, Juan Manuel Santo, the article was optimistic and echoed the justification of the Norwegian Nobel Committee when they granted Juan Manuel Santos the Nobel Peace Prize for his efforts at ending Colombia's sixty-year conflict with Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia, or FARC.[2] Yet on 2 October 2016, that optimism died. By a margin of 0.4 percent,[3] the Colombian people voted to reject the peace deal that Santos had signed with FARC, thus discarding Colombia's most promising chance at peace in recent history.

For the time being, FARC continues their commitment to the ceasefire and Santos continues his to the peace process,[4] but it is a mistake to presume that the incentives of FARC's leadership and the interests of the organisation are the same. For instance, FARC leaders pushed for a clause in the peace deal that would not only provide the organisation with political legitimacy, but that would guarantee them ten seats in Colombia's legislature (five in each house).[5] As the Colombian government cannot place a restriction on who would hold the seats, such seats would most likely be held by FARC leaders or their representatives. Under such circumstances, FARC leadership would then control five percent of the vote in Colombia's senate and three percent in the House of Representatives, and thus be able to expand their political influence.[6] However, there is a disconnect between the influence that individuals within FARC might yield under such circumstances and the potential for policy that would actually benefit the broader constituent members of the organisation. Moreover, the Colombian government, recognising the implications of such a clause, also attempted to placate the several thousand active FARC fighters,[6] agreeing to pay a salary of 90 percent of Colombia's minimum wage to all former combatants as a part of the defeated peace deal.[8]

If the peace process is to continue, the peace deal will need to undergo revision to make it acceptable to the majority of the Colombian public, which will likely result in the exclusion of the widely criticised wage clause.[9] [10] This means that foot soldiers would have much less to gain from the continuing peace process, and that the resources that FARC is using to support them would be constricted because the terms of the ceasefire prohibit the production of the cocaine that has long funded the organisation.[11] Furthermore, the longer the peace process continues, the higher the likelihood that FARC fighters might join other gangs. Those fighters would then become a massive liability in the aftermath of the conflict because they have few prospects outside of fighting, thus contributing to the country's long-term instability.[12] Without a sense that FARC and peace would benefit them, there exists a high likelihood that they would choose to join one of the numerous other criminal organisations in Colombia, such as the left-wing Ejército de Liberación Nacional (ELN). As an example, Los Urabenos, the largest drug cartel in Colombia, is already offering money to FARC fighters willing to join them.[13]

Additionally, former FARC fighters are liable to join one of the several splinter groups which are continuing FARC's drug running operations. FARC is structured into several divisions, and, in an attempt to grab power and maintain revenue, many leaders have violated the ceasefire to operate independently.[14] This is problematic because any eventual peace deal between FARC and the Colombian government would be undermined by the continued operations of FARC subgroups that could fill the vacuum left by the organisation as a whole.

To further cement the negative implications of the peace agreement, there is historical precedent for the limited efficacy of peace deals in Colombia. In 2005, the Government of Alvaro Uribe passed the Justice and Peace Law, which provided right-wing paramilitary organisations with the option of demobilisation and also provided former fighters with compensation to limit their propensity to return to conflict.[15] This provided the impetus for the demobilisation of the largest paramilitary organisation at that time, the Autodefensas Unidas de Colombia (AUC).[16] Many former fighters and leaders within the organisation were unwilling to accept the deal, and splintered into the multiple drug-running organisations that currently comprise a substantial portion of Colombia's cocaine production. Notably, it is from those ranks that Los Urabenos grew into the largest producer of cocaine in Colombia and the most populated in terms of membership.[17] There is thus substantial

reason to believe that FARC's demobilisation would result in similar outcomes as the demobilisation of the AUC. The organisation has direct competitors, such as the ELN,[18] who could easily claim control of FARC territory, in addition to the many splinter groups that are already continuing their operations.

Perhaps the most significant factor in the Colombian Government's willingness to provide concessions to FARC, despite its upper hand in conflict, is that FARC operates in regions that have little government influence or infrastructure.[19] They are entrenched, making it impossible to eradicate the organisation, but also allowing them to pursue a highly lucrative drug operation with little government interference. To this day, Colombia has one of the worst infrastructure networks in the world despite a comparatively high GDP, and the majority of failed roads are in areas dominated by drug cartels.[20] This is evidence of limited government investment in rural regions, a role that drug cartels have been all too willing to fill. The highly lucrative production of coca has allowed Colombian farmers in these areas to live above subsistence and ensured that local governments have funding.[21] Those farmers are unconvinced by government attempts to replace the crop that has consistently provided good revenue,[22] and, as a consequence, it is easy for new organisations to gain control of coca-producing land and grow from obscurity to dominance.

The violence in Colombia may have originated with FARC, but its persistence has little to do with the organisation and is a consequence of the substantial financial incentives to produce cocaine. It is the direct competition between increasingly fragmented drug cartels that has driven increases in gang violence in Mexico.[23] The removal of the central structure of FARC is analogous to the killing of gang leaders in Mexico; both actions create uncertainty by removing a traditional source of authority. It is reasonable, then, to assume that Colombian violence will increase if groups are incentivized to lay claim to the same territory and competition becomes fiercer. Disorganized splinter groups could play an important part in increasing violence as they attempt to establish a hierarchy in the absence of the centralising control of FARC leadership. This trend is likely to worsen as the peace deal remains unresolved because uncertainty creates incentives amongst FARC fighters, and faction leaders could use that uncertainty to gain power and control. If historical evidence tells us anything, it's that there is more to Colombian violence than the individual gangs that perpetrate it.

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Breaking down asylum policy trends in Central America

SOLEIL WESTENDORF discusses how Costa Rica is increasing refugee protection, and why this could strengthen human rights perceptions of the State.

On 26 July, the Government of Costa Rica entered an agreement with the United States (US), the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), and the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) as part of a joint effort to better address complex regional migration flows.[1] Concluded by the US and Costa Rica with the support of the UNHCR and IOM, the new Protection Transfer Agreement (PTA) offers temporary protection for asylum seekers in Guatemala, Honduras and El Salvador[2] – countries collectively known as The Northern Triangle; [3]'the world's most dangerous region outside an official war zone.'[4]

Given the rise in violence in the Triangle, immigration flows to the US have increased. Now on the agenda, the US is now talking of managing migration. The overall goal of the PTA gets to the heart of this: it provides protection for those seeking to claim asylum in the US by guaranteeing their safety in a third country during the asylum process. It does this by transferring the most vulnerable in need of immediate protection from the Northern Triangle to Costa Rica while they wait for their applications to be processed before resettlement.[5] [6]

The agreement is the first of its kind in Latin American history,[7] and represents Costa Rica's commitment as a third state to step up and share the responsibility to protect migrants in the region. This means at any time, Costa Rica will accept 200 pre-screened asylum seekers.[8] In comparison to the scale of those being subjected to violence in the Triangle, only a small number of people that will receive immediate protection, but the US envisages that this will ease flows, and provide greater protection for migrants attempting to make a dangerous journey to the US via illegal routes.[9] Secondly, the agreement has also been key a development in immigration policy on both sides towards a wider recognition of the insecurity of populations living in the Triangle.[10]

Interestingly, though this is a bilateral agreement initiated by the Obama Administration, it is Costa Rica that is seen to be the 'champion' of the deal.[11] Costa Rica is the most economically and politically stable country in the region, and competes for the title of 'Switzerland of Latin America;'[12] after the country's civil war in 1948,[13] it officially abolished its military in a symbolic move by President Jose Figueres Ferrer. Just over 65 years later, with the conclusion of this agreement, Costa Rica is now in the limelight and entrenching the status quo as the leading regional power committed to human rights and liberal refugee policies. Today, the superhero argument seems to be that though the country may not be the first port of asylum for some, it has acknowledged the needs of its neighbours by recognising its ability as a third county to help populations of the triangle, whilst dealing with a record numbers of asylum applications on its own.[14] Support for this comes with its geographical proximity as well as its economic and political stability. Whilst on the other hand the US has in some cases, been blamed for its involvement in the Central American Crisis and attempts at avoiding responsibility by outsourcing responsibility.

So, if we trace back a policy timeline, what accounts for the inception of the new PTA? How has Costa Rica changed internally to open up externally? This historical agreement is a first step in a new direction for a region that has seen a rise in the number of people fleeing from increased violence in The Northern Triangle.[15] But what does this agreement actually envisage beyond its legal content and what can it actually achieve? What does this mean for Costa Rica and its neighbours? And finally, how has the conclusion of the PTA contributed to strengthening the perception of Costa Rica as a global leader in human rights?

It is necessary first to examine the history of migration to Costa Rica. The country has often been subject to waves of migration from Nicaragua,[16] and Cuba,[17] Africa,[18] and Colombia by persons seeking to transit through Costa Rica to make it to the US.[19] There have been varying flows of migration in Central America, which increased during the Central American Crisis in 1970s to the late 1980s. Migration flows began steadily increasing when Honduras entered into a US-backed war with Nicaragua, setting off a stream of violence, political unrest, and human rights abuses.[20] These offenses included forced disappearances and even extrajudicial killings by the government, and those persecuted fled.[21] Similarly, during this time Guatemala was engaged in a 36-year civil war that claimed 200,000 lives,[22] and has since witnessed a soaring murder rate. Additionally, El Salvador also entered into a twelve-year civil war between a US-led counter-insurgency and left wing guerrilla fighters.[23,24]

Since then, there has been an increase in crime that has undoubtedly contributed to El Salvador's label as the homicide capital of the world.[25] Today the growing homicide rates of Central America are reflective of such political and economic instability; in 2011 the homicide rate in Central America reached an average of 43.3 per 100,000, above the global average of 6.9.[26] Given the rise of structural causes of violence,[27] ranging from social-cultural and political to economic – including high unemployment levels,[28] and weak conflict management mechanisms which have led to a rise in police killings and massacres, and gang and gender based violence[29,30] – it is clear that people in the Northern Triangle are struggling to overcome the repercussions of the Central American Crisis. Vulnerable populations are thus attempting to escape persecution and large-scale violence by fleeing to neighbouring countries.

Most people fleeing from the Northern Triangle are seeking to go the US. Some already have relatives there and hope that by joining them they will have a better life free from persecution and violence.[31] This perception has put the safety of asylum-seekers in jeopardy,[32] as many fleeing the Northern Triangle risk their lives in a bid to get to the US trying to cross through Mexico.[33] Today Mexico hosts 3,448 refugees,[32] and last year the country saw a dramatic increase of 164 percent in asylum claims – mainly from Honduras and El Salvador – compared to 2013.[35] Additionally, the US apprehended 120,700 people coming from the Northern Triangle earlier this year. Most asylum claims are directed towards Mexico and the US, but to complicate matters, processing asylum claims under the 1951 Geneva Convention is difficult and lengthy. It may be difficult to meet the threshold to grant refugee status if there is not enough evidence for the asylum-seeker to prove a well-founded fear of persecution according to a specific category including race, religion, political opinion or membership of a particular social group.[36] Despite being subjected to violence, an application may be refused if it doesn't amount to persecution, and this is problematic.

Both the US and Mexico have introduced more restrictive policies. This has contributed to an increase in deportations, with a total of 106,420 being deported from the US back to the Northern Triangle in 2013.[37] Additionally, this heightens the backlog of asylum applications, which consequently means an increase in the amount of time an asylum seeker waits in a dangerous situation before being settled in the US.[38] To this, The San Jose Joint Action Agreement recognised these problems that asylum seekers in the region face by stressing 'the importance of timely identification and documentation of people in need of protection, and of unhindered access to fair and efficient procedures for protection.' [39]

Though Costa Rica has attracted media attention for its efforts, what seems to be ignored is the Central American power's unique history of changing restrictive immigration policies, and the bureaucratic and social welfare deficiencies that undercut open refugee policies.[40] The question is whether the country's commitment to refugee protection can be sustained under increasing pressure. These questions have emerged from its past history of a struggling social welfare system in the 70s, during intense periods of labour migration prompting stricter immigration policies and greater state involvement with refugee policy.[41] In the past it has subscribed to different trends, moving from an open liberal immigration policy, dictated by the labour market, towards a more restrictive policy-stance driven by national security and economic concerns on the one hand, and external relations with the US on the other.[42] Such policies were not only restrictive, they were also discriminatory,[43] affecting Nicaraguan and Honduran nationals differently.[44] Today, 'asylum applications to Costa Rica have quadrupled,'[45] putting the country increasingly under social pressure. It currently hosts 3,616 refugees[46] and has seen a 176 percent increase in asylum claims from 2013 to 2015.[47]

Costa Rica has been known to set clear goals for integration and open refugee policies.[48] These policies have provided refugees with access to advanced education and health care facilities. However, the country has been criticised for struggling to actually realise these goals by prioritising citizens under the Labour Code.[49] This system places employment restrictions over non-nationals, and makes it difficult to tackle xenophobia.

There are, however, some positives to note. Limited progress is what set the groundwork for the new PTA. Interestingly, youth groups are taking significant steps on the ground to tackle issues of xenophobia and racism that have driven a barrier between the local populations, immigrants, and refugees.[50] The initiative of such groups has further been recognised by the UNHCR for efforts and achievements in taking responsibility for social integration by promoting better attitudes of social inclusion from the ground up. From this perspective, it appears that it is a combination of both the political and social actors in the country that are paving the way for a stronger Costa Rica to take the lead in international refugee protection.

Whilst the PTA cannot address the root causes of the refugee flows that began in the 70s and 80s, the region is seeing the beginnings of a potential short-term solution to efficiently provide protection for the most vulnerable persons. Historically the country has suffered from frustrations with the way refugee policy was managed.[51] However, the question of whether the emerging power will be able to sustain its commitment to the agreement is still yet to be answered. Will a trend of stricter immigration policies globally rub off onto new asylum policies to see the end of the PTA and Costa Rica's identity as a longstanding safe haven for asylum seekers and refugees? For now, though it may not be a perfect policy model,[52] Costa Rica is reasserting the lost status quo as a diverse and cultural melting pot, and above all, a historical safe haven for those seeking refuge from the violence of the Northern Triangle.

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MIDDLE EAST & NORTH AFRICA

The Arab Spring was a revolutionary movement that spread across the Middle East and North Africa in the hopes to reshape the political status-quo to represent a more legitimate and democratic form of government. The spread of the Arab uprisings may have demonstrated the strong bonds among Arabs in different countries, but the demand on the street was for change within national frontiers, not the abolition of the modern state. As the Syrian civil war broke out, the optimism behind the Arab Spring quickly dissipated. Regional hegemons principally Turkey, Saudi Arabia and Iran seeked to increase their influence by sponsoring various opposing factions in the civil war. Sectarian militias have often served as proxies for these states in the conflict making sectarian lines all the more salient in the Middle East. Russia intervention on behalf of the Assad regime has not only worsened the humanitarian crisis, it has further deteriorated relations with the United States, who is backing rebel forces. Conservative Arab regimes such as the Gulf monarchies are threatened by what they perceive to be an emboldened Iran supporting a Shia-axis of Alawite Assad and the Hezbollah. The Syrian and Yemeni civil wars coupled with the collapse of the Iraqi state following the rise of ISIS has casted doubts on the applicability of the Westphalian state system in the Middle East. Yet, amongst the chaos, Morocco held elections, Michel Aoun and Saad Harriri became Lebanon's president and prime minister respectively and Jordan held parliamentary elections.

Hafez al-Assad: a misleading stability.

BARBARA WOJAZER argues that Hafez al-Assad gave rise to a seemingly powerful Syria, but the way he maintained the political status quo guaranteed an only ephemeral stability.

The coup that carried Hafez al-Assad to power was the last of an apparently unending series of upheavals since Syria's independence from France in 1946.[1] After 24 years of uncertainty in Syria, Assad's reign was seen as a cherished time of political stability, modernisation, and empowerment. However, rather than solving the deeply rooted problems of his country, he suppressed them. It was only a matter of time until they resurfaced.

Hafez al-Assad was born in October 1930 in a village in the Ansariya Mountains, on the Mediterranean coast. His family was part of the Alawite community, an impoverished religious minority. Assad's future was not mapped out for him, but he was a bright student and benefitted from the colonial educational system.[2] He went onto secondary school and to military school, where his political instincts matured. He then had a meteoric career in politics and became part of the government of 1966, which he and his allies overthrew in 1970. He ruled Syria from then until his death, on the 10 June 2000.[3]

Hafez al-Assad certainly left a legacy in regional and international politics. Before his rule, Syria was 'a political football' caught between Cairo and Baghdad.[4] Moreover, two wars with Israel, in 1973 and 1982, had shown the weaknesses of the Syrian army.[5] Assad, a primary witness to these weaknesses from the beginning of his career, focused on military power, investing dramatically in the army.[6] By the end of his life, the country was a 'powerhouse in the Middle East,'[7] dominating Lebanon and influencing the Jordanian government.[8]

Assad used the Israeli conflicts and peace negotiations to position himself as a key interlocutor in the Middle East.[9] During the Cold War, he had become the USSR's main ally in the region; in the 1970s, the USSR relied mainly on Egypt, and only secondarily on Iraq and Syria, to maintain its influence in the Middle East. Sadat's arrival to power in Egypt in 1972 resulted in a sudden rejection of Soviet influence.[10] When Iraq invaded Iran, Syria became the only viable interlocutor for the USSR, and the country emerged as a powerful actor in the region.[11]While the country's influence could have been affected by the fall of the USSR in 1991, Saddam Hussein's decision to invade Kuwait in 1991 proved to be extremely convenient for Assad, who joined the US-led coalition.[12] The country did not deploy many troops,[13] but the symbolic weight of an Arab nationalist state on their side was enough. Billions in aid flew from the Gulf States to Syria.[14] In addition, American-Syrian relations developed so much that, for the first time ever, Syria agreed to meet with the Israelis during the American effort to build an Arab-Israeli Peace Treaty.[15] From that point, it also became clear that no common Arab-Israeli peace was possible without Assad's assent — which he would not give.[16] He thus established a regional status quo, difficult to alter while he was in power.[17]

Assad would not have been able to achieve this had he not managed to unite and modernise a dramatically fragmented country. Hence his reputation, expressed by friends and enemies alike as 'the most skilful politician in the Middle East.'[18] He maintained unity by relying on two components of the Syrian society: the military and the Alawite minority.

It is no coincidence that Assad's regime was heavily military-focused. Military concerns permeated the Syrian government, as they had permeated Assad's education in the military and his early years in power. He rose to power at the hands of the army, and with the advantage of a Syrian military defeat.[19] The military population is estimated to have tripled during Assad's rule, reaching around eighteen percent in 2000.[20] This military rule is felt in every strata of the Syrian social structure, as officers occupy an almost aristocratic status.[21]

Fear and insecurity had historically shaped the Alawite identity in Syria because of the persecutions and discrimination the community had faced for centuries and the community had become isolated in the Syrian mountains.[22] Assad's rise to power marked a turning point. Never in Alawite history had one of their members reached such a powerful position, and his rule increased hopes for equality in Syrian society.[23] Indeed, the Alawite community became the keystone of the regime's stability. Although other minorities were included in the power structure,[24] general nepotism and placements to important posts in the executive and military reinforced the general opinion that Alawites were being unfairly favoured.[25] Moreover, Sunnis felt that policies went against their interests: socialism reduced their wealth, and atheism went against their faith.[26] The partial modernisation that occurred in Syria did not benefit the whole population, as the prosperity of the 1970s was mostly carried by revenues from oil production.[27] Nevertheless, when oil prices fell in the 1980s, the gap widened between the rich and poor, and the population grew ever more frustrated.[28]

Logically, Sunnis and other components of the Syrian society started to contest Assad's rule. Assad's reaction ensured him at the same time total control, and the irreversible alienation and distrust of an entire segment of the population.

After seizing power, Assad made sure he dominated and supervised the national security forces. His predecessor Salah Jadid had already centralized the control of intelligence services, the Mukhabarat.[29] Assad established a sophisticated network, consisting of fifteen agencies which competed fiercely for favour,[30] held in check only by the knowledge that conflict would undermine the system they rested upon.[31]

Additionally, Assad declared a state of emergency in 1963 and never lifted it.[32] This enabled him to lead a zero-tolerance policy towards dissent, criminalising freedom of expression and association even though it was enshrined in the Syrian Constitution. Human Rights Watch cited recurring cases of dissidents convicted of charges as vague as 'opposing the goals of the Revolution', 'publishing false information with the aim of causing disorder and shaking the confidence of the masses in the aims of the Revolution', and 'membership in secret organisations.'[33] Torture was commonplace in Syrian prisons, and released prisoners faced continuing punishment, such as the typical ten-year deprivation of civil rights.[34] Assad sent a clear message to political opponents: he would crush any tentative political contestation, let alone uprising.

The most emblematic episode of repression, however, followed the Hama Uprising. In 1982, the Muslim Brotherhood, weakened by Assad, attempted a last resort. They attacked a local official from the ruling Baath party and declared Hama a 'free city'.[35] The regime's answer was quick and implacable. The city was sealed off by military units for four weeks, during which Assad's men slaughtered between 10,000 and 20,000 men and women.[36] Almost all of the dead were Sunni, yet there was no immediate support from the Sunni community: every Syrian city issued a copied statement supporting Assad and blaming the rebels.[37] Throughout the crisis, Assad portrayed himself as the protector of the country's stability. However, this event is often considered as pivotal in the history of the country. Nikolaos Van Dam, a retired Dutch diplomat specialising in the Baath Party and Alawi Leadership, wrote that, 'the massive repression [...] may very well have sown the seeds of future strife and revenge.'[38]

Robert Fisk, who was in Hama in February 1982, comments that, 'history comes full circle in Syria.'[39] On the 5 July 2011, Sunni rebels

stormed Hama and killed families of Baath party members.[40] This time, the uprising was not confined to Hama, and the slaughter was part of the widespread uprising against Hafez al-Assad's son, Bashar, who has ruled Syria since his father's death in 2000.[41] The cycle of violence and fear that has been building since Hafez al-Assad took power has been unleashed, and the depth of the tensions dividing Syria are beginning to show.

Rousseau once wrote that, 'the strongest is never strong enough to be always the master unless he transforms strength into right, and obedience into duty.'[42] Incapable of turning strength into legitimacy, Hafez al-Assad left a weak country to his son, who followed his father's path.

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SAMIN AHBAB analyses the implications of decreasing cost of education and technology for the Middle East

The accumulation of human capital is an important concept in the 21st Century. It rep-resents the skills, knowledge, and experience within an economy.[1] This is typically done through schooling; as countries add educated workers to their labour force, they employ an increasingly intricate relationship with the capital that they own, and they can thus use it more efficiently.[2] The implementation of more complex technology then becomes more profitable, and these benefits have positive impacts on the level of wealth that the citizens of a country can enjoy. There has been tremendous effort in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region to increase the efficacy of its education systems. Countries in the region have experienced significant improvements in the past four decades. Notable examples are Algeria, Yemen and Libya, where average years of schooling exceeded 400 percent between 1970-2010.[3] Yemen increased its average years of schooling from 0.06 to 3.7;[4] an astounding rate of change. Govern-ment support and policies played an important role in shaping these outcomes and in-deed. With average public investment in education at a rate of 5.3 percent of GDP,[5] governments have strong commitment and significant resources to improve the educa-tion stock in their countries. Thus far, for basic education, the complexities of this chal-lenge have been manageable. However, region must take advantage of innovation in education and technology if it is to make further improvements.

The harrowing truth for the region is that, upon closer examination of these increases relative to the amount spent, marginal costs have risen. Yet for many other regions, similar increases in the education stock have been achieved with much less per capita government spending.[6] As governments in MENA pursue higher and more complex programmes, these costs are likely to increase.[7] Furthermore, the increase in school-ing has not necessarily resulted in learning; international standardised tests reveal that eighth grade maths scores are below the level expected given the region's per capita income. [8]

The growth of online education presents an interesting opportunity for the region. For example, there are fewer building costs, fewer staff to employ. Moreover, while it may cost more to design courses, this can be mitigated by enrolling a larger number of students to the programme than physical institutions would be able to sustain.[9] Many industries rapidly changed as a result of a product transformation from physical services or objects to digital goods; education, it seems, may also follow this path. This is demonstrated by astounding enrolment rates in other developing parts of the world. In India, over 60,000 students are being enrolled into Coursera every month,[10] and the Chinese Massive Open Online Course (MOOC) platform XuetangX has crossed five million learners, adding over one million learners in the last month alone.[11]

Developed economies are also starting to take advantage of MOOCs, and emerging literature suggests that low cost, high quality online education is likely to increase the number of students earning computer science degrees every year in the United States by as much as seven percent.[12] Even elite institutions such as Harvard and MIT, along-side many Russell Group universities,[13] have been offering free comprehensive online courses. To authorities in the MENA region, the most difficult part of educating young adults is over; the courses themselves are already in circulation. While such courses may take a significant amount of money to create, this cost is recouped by enrolling a large number of students.[14] Therefore, extending existing courses to MENA is much cheaper than attempting to build a bespoke online educational system. To illustrate a potential example: the possibility of offering translated versions of existing courses as part of government-led initiatives is not an altogether implausible plan, and could be implemented much faster than the creation of physical institutions with their own pro-grammes.

Historically, for developing countries, the low prevalence of technology in classrooms has been its cost.[15] However, this is no longer an issue; the cost of basic computers has drastically reduced in the last decade, providing a cost effective aid in the learning process. The African continent has not been shy in taking advantage of cheap person-al computing. The 'Raspberry Pi', for example, has seen a growing share of its sales there, and 'hack spaces' have been founded in countries such as Nigeria, where there are programs in place for primary school children to learn to code.[16]

Education is an incredibly important right; it allows those with less to achieve a better life with the knowledge they gain. The implications of lower computing costs and online educational material for MENA mean that governments do not have to rely solely upon themselves to organise a higher standard of education. The decreasing costs of tech-nology and the increasing prevalence of MOOCs mean that they can, in a sense, sub-contract the most difficult aspects of teaching to those with the most experience. Devel-oped economies have a comparative advantage in education through practice and tenure, and it is time for MENA to exploit their innovations through the online education sphere. This form of training has begun to be considered seriously; Algeria records the ninth highest participation in online English language learning courses organised by the British Council.[17] In the past four years the EdEx MENA initiative, as a voice for the region, has widened discourse in what online education has to offer at all levels.[18] But to make a substantial change the governments of MENA must get involved. They are committing a large amount of GDP to this end already, but they have a large amount of work to do. Ultimately, every penny spent must be efficient and produce the best gain. In a region where such relatively high levels of spending are not being translating into learning, online education presents a promising path.

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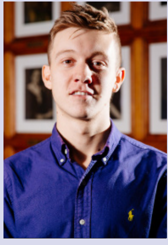
JOHNATHAN RIDDICK | REGIONAL EDITOR



At the time of writing, the United States presidential election is entering its final three days; few events embody the current wave of populism against status quo 'establishment' politics more effectively. After the shock of Brexit five months ago, and the rise of the far-right across Europe, the world's largest economy stands a genuine chance of electing a reality TV-star who has never held public office into the White House. The ramifications will be enormous if this scenario comes to fruition: his rhetoric and policy proposals are well outside the norms of liberal western democracy and have the potential to place America's economy and global alliances into a tailspin. His opponent, despite her gender, has come to represent business-as-usual to many Americans. The antipathy felt towards either candidate by swathes of the population has left a scar on the American psyche that is unlikely to heal quickly after November 8th.

This immense polarization has lead many to question how viable the options are beyond the two major parties. Sam Taylor addresses this in his profile of Green Party candidate Jill Stein, who seeks to draw in progressives unhappy with the Democratic nominee, and lay the groundwork for a future movement that will challenge America's two-party system. Whether she will be anything more than a 'spoiler' candidate in 2016 remains to be seen.

Beyond the all-encompassing presence of the election, American foreign policy remains characterised by hegemony despite a growing desire for isolationism domestically. Kareen Movsesyan explores the history of this disconnect as well as its sustainability. And in the realm of technology, Connor Hounslow discusses the concept of 'cultural democracy' as espoused by founding father Thomas Paine, and how it applies to contemporary debates concerning privacy and national security.

Paine-ful Deliberation and American 'Cultural Democracy' in the 21st Century

CONNOR HOUNSLOW explores how the FBI and Apple legal in the context of an American political and cultural democratic environment characterised by a lack of cooperation within American political institutions

'Paine does have a legacy, a place where his values prosper and are validated millions of times a day: the Internet.'[1] Jon Katz recognises that new media empowers citizens as much as Paine saw media leading up to the American Revolution: as a means for citizens to practice their fundamental right and duty to challenge government. The essence of new media, (e.g. social networks), seems to have the promise depicted by Paine. However, how the American citizenry acts on current discourse concerning the 'cultural democracy' of free speech, and the relationship between citizens and their political institutions remains to be seen.

The Apple and FBI legal dispute regarding the privacy of the San Bernardino terrorist has reignited the debate which followed the Snowden revelations of the National Security Agency's digital monitoring program. President Obama has welcomed the revelations with the belief that this debate on the interplay between personal privacy and national security is a healthy one for our democracy.[2] Yet, he has supported the FBI and rejected the 'absolutist' approach of the technology community.[3] Apple's CEO, Tim Cook, called attention to the, 'unprecedented use of the All Writs Act of 1789,' which allows government to reach into anyone's phone and request access to the data. The main concern also was founded on First and Fourth Amendment constitutional grounds.[4] Even more, Cook's appeal to American traditional principles of privacy and free expression highlights the broader debate that such technology is forcing the American public to have.

Apple's case was dependent on, 'whether a judge sees the programming as predominantly "expressive" conduct like writing a book or singing a song—which receive a high-level of protection—or merely functional, such as machine outputs.'[5] This decision relates to Jeff Balkin's analysis on the 'cultural democracy' element of the Constitution, and specifically the free speech right of the First Amendment. Balkin states that, 'to participate in culture,'[6] is, 'a civil as well as a political freedom […] [that] helps legitimate political self-governance,'.[7] He goes on to argue that cultural democracy, and therefore cultural freedom, is a necessary component of a free society. Platforms such as Google, Twitter, Instagram, and Facebook allow citizens to broadcast, 'their lives, likes, and dislikes.'[8] With such modern technology operating within this traditional cultural democracy, Balkin elaborates: 'people can use their freedom of speech to talk back to, comment on, parody, appropriate, remix, and alter the cultural forms, values and mores of the world in which they live. In fact, freedom of expression may be the only remedy that most people have for living within forms of cultural power that they find oppressive or unjust.'[9]

This way in which consumers as citizens engage within the public sphere explains the support by grassroots organisations, such as #BlackLivesMatter, for Apple. Malkia Cyril of the Center for Media Justice states that the fact that Apple is a major consumer company, 'takes the debate out of a very narrow environment – the universe of technologies and policy wonks – into the realm of consumers where barriers like the specific language of Washington and the technology industry begins to fall away.'[10] Yet Balkin's cultural democracy brings the debate back into the political sphere. Citizens, or consumers, view such technological devices and these online platforms as a crucial means of personally connecting with cultural communities and, by default, engaging in civil society. Any attempt to suppress this civic right is ultimately perceived as an unjust affront on constitutional democratic principles.

Public opinion expresses concern for citizens' civil liberties and culture: more Americans disapprove (53 percent) than approve (37 percent) of the government's data collection programs from US telephone companies and internet providers.[11] At the same time, Americans recognise the importance of public security, with 51 percent believing that Apple should have unlocked the iPhone for the purposes of assisting the investigation.[12] Where and by whom the boundary between a culturally-engendered First Amendment and a penumbral right to privacy and public security is drawn will decide the future of American 'cultural democracy'. The question for the public and for legislators is whether, 'the social cost of those unsolved cases,'[13] which approximated to 111 search warrants for smartphones (potentially containing information on cases of sex trafficking and cybercrime),[14] is something to be accepted in exchange for the privacy and personal security gained from smartphones that even its makers can't unlock.[15] Vance's argument, finding constitutional grounds for regulation on the Commerce Clause of the U.S. Constitution,[16] along with recent Supreme Court and Congressional action, offers a possible framework for how the American public will define the rules and culture to shape its adapted cultural democracy.

Legislators have taken, as a result of the Apple/FBI dispute, to drafting new legislation. Senator Mark Warner of Virginia, in an NPR interview,

commented that the use of the All Writs Act shows a need to update our jurisprudence on the issue.[17] The Going Dark, Going Forward report on the McCaul-Werner Commission acknowledges that the, 'best way for Congress and the nation to proceed at this juncture is to formally convene a commission of experts,'[18] ranging from civil liberties communities to the intelligence community.[19] They should then, 'thoughtfully examine not just the matter of encryption and law enforcement, but law enforcement's duty in a world of rapidly evolving digital technology.'[20]

The decision from Elonis v. U.S. points to future uncertainty of an adapted legal foundation to a new 21st Century 'cultural democracy'. The case concerned, 'the conviction of a Pennsylvanian who directed brutally violent language (online) against his estranged wife,'[21] which was subsequently overturned. The traditional boundaries of, 'privacy as a binary option of public or private,'[22] found in the legal framework doesn't reflect our current 'cultural democracy' where, 'our everyday experiences remind us that virtually all information that matters exists in intermediate states between these two extremes.'[23] The dissenting opinion in Elonis reflects that, 'this failure to decide,'[24] on such standards of intent and criminality, 'throws everyone from appellate judges to everyday Facebook users into a state of uncertainty.'[25] Questions raised by this case over intent and unprotected 'true threats' speech, along with questions raised over consumer privacy and civil liberties within the cyber public sphere, remain pertinent to determining the legal and civic boundaries of civil liberties in online communication and public security.

The extent to which we can return to, 'caring for one's identity, needs and beliefs without degrading someone else's in the process,' which is central to 'cultural democracy' and American civic virtues, is the extent to which we can restore civility in American democracy, both within its institutions and the online public sphere. Jane Mansbridge offers cautionary guidance that any attempt to solve issues in a democracy via public deliberation is, 'likely to backfire, especially in cases of deep conflict.'[26] Instead, 'people should negotiate a proportional division of resources or means to power.'[27] Since such social media platforms are surrounded by an uncivil and polarised political environment, cultural expression in this regard is unlikely to foster productive deliberation by citizens on cultural expression and public safety. The interplay between citizens with their representative systems perhaps will be the most viable means of moving beyond the current uncertainty, with the latter formulating the legal rules for free expression and public safety, and the former legitimising the new cultural guidelines accompanying such rules.

Ultimately, '[Justice Louis] Brandeis reminded us long ago in his eloquent written opinion that civil liberties are an active process on the part of citizens.'[28] Such a process will certainly be ongoing, for all the aforementioned reasons, and how the American public chooses to engage through social media and political institutions will decide whether it can, 'keep the republic and uphold republican self-government,' by fostering new terms and conditions. These new terms will offer citizens who now constantly engage, both as consumers and citizens, on Facebook or Twitter via their iPhone or any other technology an American cultural democracy they feel they belong to and are proud of.

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Democratising Casus Belli: A Question of U.S. Hegemony

KAREEN MOVSESYAN discusses the disconnect between US hegemony abroad and domestic opinion on the matter.

While the United States' presidential election looms, Aleppo remains under siege and Russia engages in military brinkmanship to pressure the West and mobilise domestic support.[1] Increasingly, scholars and statesmen alike call for greater U.S. military intervention to end the humanitarian crisis in Syria: some going as far as declaring that, '[t]he world will not forgive us for our inaction.'[2] But would such an escalation be in keeping with public opinion, both domestically and abroad? While many foreign nations frequently rate the U.S. favourably,[3] attitudes towards its global 'policeman' status are much more harrowing.

Survey takers in the United Kingdom, China, and Russia found all expressed vehement dislike of U.S. interventionism.[4,5,6] Moreover, Middle Eastern nations project U.S. favourability ratings of around 25 to 50 percent[7] – a reflection of historical grievances over the U.S.'s prior invasions in the region, its support of Israel, and its use of drones and torture.[8] Even domestically, American respondents report general dissatisfaction with the U.S.'s global position and historic tendency towards interventionism, instead preferring foreign nations to deal with their own problems.[9]

Although domestic and foreign public opinion is apprehensive or hostile to greater U.S. intervention, elite opinion differs on the issue. While President Barack Obama continues to exercise restraint on the question of greater military deployment, foreign policy experts in Washington are beginning to see fragmentation of the liberal world order, calling for, 'more-aggressive American action to constrain Iran, rein in the chaos in the Middle East and check Russia in Europe,'[10] These experts – including officials from the Obama, George W. Bush, and Bill Clinton administrations – are already preparing to shape the foreign policy agenda of the next U.S. president who, should Hillary Clinton be chosen, would be an invaluable ally to the Washington establishment – noting her continued advocacy of a no-fly zone in Syria during the third presidential debate.[11] In contrast, Donald Trump's comments on NATO's role and pay-structure,[12] is inconsistent and unclear foreign policy positions,[13] and his protectionist trade ideology,[14] put him at direct odds with the Washington consensus.[15]

This American expert consensus is further corroborated by elites abroad, including U.K. Foreign Secretary Boris Johnson's recent declaration that he would entertain, 'more kinetic options, the military options' in Syria given recent changes in public opinion,[16] even though a recent October survey listed that a bare minimum of 53 percent of Britons supported intervention.[17]

Thus, the only community that will not forgive American inaction in Syria is the West's foreign policy establishment. While this support of Western hegemony is noncontroversial, it nevertheless reflects on decades of history where, in the U.S.'s case, the use of hegemonic force was employed in spite of, rather than in light of, public opinion.[18] More distressingly, the doctrine for most of the U.S.'s major Cold War interventions involved the galvanisation of public opinion through misleading information and incidents, including the 1964 Gulf of Tonkin incident,[19] the 1990 Nayirah testimony,[20] and alarm over weapons of mass destruction in Iraq in 2003.[21]

Adam J. Berinsky, a political scientist from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, published a 2007 article that compellingly argues through reference to World War II and the second Iraq War that elite discourse is what has ultimately shaped public opinion concerning war.[22] Specifically, whether a public is unified or divided over an international conflict is merely a reflection of the unity or division among elites themselves, as Berinsky finds that the general public tends to fail at making independent complex cost/benefit analyses of military engagements. Although the

merits of this causal relationship are debatable, present polls and the historic 'rally-around-the-flag' tendencies of the public to support engagement post-hoc seem to corroborate Berinksy's theory.[23] It is therefore worth stating that the expert consensus surrounding Syrian intervention may not be so benign – instead foreshadowing the inevitable mobilisation of troops in the region, and the escalation of conflict under a new U.S. presidency, regardless of the attainability of public consent. To some readers, this may come off as an affront to democratic ideals, and unless democratic constraints are implemented, the status quo of elite-issued hegemonic force will continue to trump public opinion.

Yet a hegemonic U.S. military has historically functioned out of pragmatic rather than democratic concern, especially to battle the Soviet Union which it perceived as an existential threat – a 'hostile design.' – under the Truman doctrine.[24] Despite the covert and sometimes manipulative tactics with which the United States often conducted its interventions, many figures, including military historian Max Boot, justify the ends of U.S. hegemony as a factor that has been, 'the greatest force for good in the world during the past century [...] defeat[ing] communism and Nazism and [...] interven[ing] against the Taliban and Serbian ethnic cleansing.'[25] Clearly, this is a complicated issue, as many conflicts have been started by less-than democratic means, yet arguably the U.S. accomplished the cessation of deadly hostilities – much like the 1999 U.S.-led NATO bombing of Yugoslavia which violated both the U.N. Charter and the decision by the U.N. Security Council.[26]

But rather than dwell on the onerous task of evaluating the record of U.S. hegemony in stopping conflict and spreading global prosperity, a less explored question will be answered: what restricts public opinion as a democratic constraint to military force in hegemonic America, and what solutions exist to remedy its present failings? To preface, critics may immediately defend the status quo by drawing attention to the general public's inability at making complex cost/benefit analyses regarding military engagements, thereby justifying the delegation of said authority to experts.[27] While this is a perfectly reasonable argument in theory, the U.S.'s precedent of manipulating public opinion to start wars that are often described as mistakes in retrospect question this theory in practice.

If nothing else, expert and public opinion should work as complements, especially since experts have often been proven wrong in their estimations of war and its long-term repercussions. I therefore do not advocate for an absolute, legally binding public check on military action – but rather, a more tempered system with which to better inform experts and hold them accountable, simultaneously. Additionally, critics may evoke the time-sensitive nature of military action as a counter to any proposed measure of stringent democratic accountability, and while I agree with this position for limited military operations (including most U.N. peacekeeping, drones, and the selective assassinations of terrorists), overt declarations of war and 'boots on the ground' tactics are long-duration scenarios that have a much more direct impact on public life, elevating the need for proper checks.

But for public opinion to condition military engagement in a democratic society, it must be both coherent and proactive. Unfortunately, rarely is either characteristic observed for a variety of reasons. Chief among these faults, political apathy has the parasitic effect of leaving countless citizens with an inchoate knowledge of politics and civic engagement. For example, during the Vietnam War, where anti-war rhetoric was at its peak, the resulting Vietnam Syndrome – the aversion to overseas intervention – was thought to have successfully changed U.S. foreign policy for good.[28] However, in just over a decade, the U.S. would continue to intervene abroad: first in invading Granada in 1983,[29] to funding Mujahedeen fighters in Afghanistan to fight the Soviets,[30] and providing chemical weapons material to Iraq during the Iraq-Iran War. [31] Even if public opinion is coherent, it is certainly not temporally consistent. Other factors like increasing public polarisation following consumers' self-segregation with their media consumption,[32] the public's susceptibility to emotional and patriotic appeals and frames,[33] and the media's economic preference of tabloid journalism over investigative reporting,[34] have all constrained the deterrent potential of public opinion.

These various proclivities are further compounded by the U.S.'s track record of using misleading narratives to support various wars including the Gulf of Tonkin incident to mobilise support for Vietnam,[35] and the declaration of WMDs in Iraq in 2003.[36] Moreover, misleading mid-war accounts, such as President George W. Bush's famous 'Mission Accomplished' speech aboard the USS Abraham Lincoln in 2003, have prevented the public from having the information necessary to appropriately evaluate military success.[37] Instead, academics observe a 'rally-around-the-flag' process of support as the public becomes more attuned with the government-framed reasoning for intervention.[38] Of course, many experts qualified these controversies as outcomes of faulty intelligence and genuine mistakes, rather than deliberate attempts at deceiving the public,[39] and even if this is accurate, it does not diminish the need for greater accountability to avoid detrimental wars like those in Vietnam and Iraq.

After all, the primary tool of democratic accountability, the ballot box, is an inefficient means of holding Congress and the president accountable for the exercise of military operations. Long wars – such as the Vietnam War, have lasted beyond the terms of the presidents who instigated them, and large-scale military engagements are often embraced by bipartisan Congressional support.[40] It would require an electoral pushback against the majority of Congressional members to make a noticeable impact – an obviously unrealistic proposition. However, it should be possible to condition a hegemon's military engagements through democratic institutions without having to alter the political, educational and media preferences of an entire electorate – the otherwise ideal solution to a placated public.

Drawing inspiration from Canada's 2001 Romanow Commission, the United States can institutionalise a system of ad hoc government-run focus groups where community representatives provide non-legally binding feedback on pending major military interventions.[41] This could provide one avenue with which to not only better gauge public sentiment towards war at a more intimate, policy-rooted level, but it would provide the public a useful platform from which it can hold the government accountable. Canada's Romanow Commission, for instance found that elites were surprised by the Canadian public's accommodative stance on policy trade-offs, in addition their adamant regard for greater policy transparency and dialogue.[42] Here, the existence of ad hoc civilian focus groups offers another opportunity. Should the government egregiously defy the recommendations of these meetings, the public is then at liberty to demand the empowerment of this institution – allowing for an organic development process that far surpasses the public's alternative of demanding public servants to make promises on unsubstantiated accountability solutions.

Of course, this proposal is no panacea to the larger issue of the undemocratic use of hegemonic force. But in the absence of realistic solutions to the crises of political apathy, polarisation, lacking education, misinformation, tabloid journalism, and the failure of the media to debunk these inaccuracies promptly, the ability to make even incremental reform should be appreciated. The U.S.'s history as a democratic hegemon has proven that the democratic wishes of public opinion have failed to contain its hegemonic tendencies over other sovereign nations. It is therefore imperative that other democracies take note of America's example by performing the steps necessary to curtail these problems should the U.S.

hegemony finally wane in the future and shift the balance of power, lest the status quo of unbridled hegemonic force without sufficient public checks continue as the standard of power politics for years to come.

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Jill Stein Profile:

SAM TAYLOR evaluates a third-party candidate, Jill Stein, and her campaign to upend the two-party system and draw disaffected progressives into a new movement spearheaded by the Greens.

Green Party presidential candidate, Jill Stein, is seeking to challenge the two-party system in a big way. A dot in the 2016 election cycle when first announcing her candidacy for the presidency in 2012, Stein has since garnered significant publicity and is framing her campaign as an alternative for disillusioned 'Bernie or Bust' activists and other progressives unwilling to support the Democratic nominee. Sanders' success in the Democratic primaries showed an appetite for Stein's policy agenda on the left of the Democrat's base, amongst younger voters and within activist groups. However, the U.S. electoral conventions and the electoral college system are two major constraints independent candidates face running outside of the Democrat-Republican nexus, and Stein will ultimately be greatly shackled by these in November. However, the prospect of public financing for the 2020 election, America's changing demography, and voters' increasing enthusiasm for some of her proposals could establish an alternative to America's current political orthodoxy. Stein's represents a challenge to the status quo that is unlikely to subside after 2016.

Stein has undergone a colourful and unorthodox route into politics, and this journey is a core element of her appeal to progressive voters. Graduating magna cum laude from Harvard College in 1973 after studying psychology, sociology and anthropology, Stein went onto further study at the Harvard Medical School, eventually graduating in 1979.[1] A practising physician thereafter, Stein became aware of the relationship between localised toxic exposures and illness during the 1990s.[2] Stein's concern for the health issues posed by poorly-regulated manufacturing kick-started her extensive record of campaigning on environmental issues, the most significant of which was Stein's fight to clean up the 'Filthy Five' coal plants in Massachusetts, thus setting a new standard for sanitary coal plants and waste disposal.[3] Whilst a practicing physician and teacher at Harvard Medical School, Stein was also a prominent activist and campaigner, helping rewrite Massachusetts' fish advisories to better protect Native Americans, immigrants, women and children from mercury contamination and working alongside a variety of non-profit environmental groups. In addition to her qualifications regarding environmental issues, Stein's enthusiasm for activism was a powerful force for change in Massachusetts during the 1990s.

Stein's forays into politics did not stop at environmental activism and support of environment non-profits. On the back of the Democrats' refusal to kill campaign finance reform in Massachusetts, Stein entered her home state's political arena for the first time, running as the Green Party nominee for President in 2002.[4] Since acquiring 3.5 percent of the vote in 2002, Stein has run as a Massachusetts House of Representatives candidate in 2004, Massachusetts Secretary of the Commonwealth candidate in 2006, and governor of Massachusetts once again in 2010.[5] Her polling results have been mixed, and her best electoral showing to date, as Secretary of the Commonwealth candidate in 2004, saw Stein obtain eighteen percent of the vote.[6] Despite failing to win any of the various state elections in which she has run as Green Party candidate, Stein remained insistent that change to the political agenda did not just take place during election years, but was to be built upon between election cycles, necessitating constant campaigning.[7] Her realisation that the Massachusetts electorate were, 'hungry for discussion,'[8] regarding the status quo forms the basis of Stein's persistence, in spite of her limited electoral success to date.

After a decade of campaigning for various roles within Massachusetts state politics, Stein decided to run for the U.S. presidency in 2012. Gaining short of 500,000 votes and failing to reach the five percent popular vote threshold needed for greater public funding at the 2016 election, most commentators obsessing over the zero-sum nature of an election result viewed Stein's campaign as a damning failure.[9] For Stein, however, to assume a sum-zero game is to miss the point of her candidacy. By virtue of Stein's presence on presidential ballots for the foreseeable future, the Green Party can gain electoral legitimacy as a credible alternative to the Republican-Democrat nexus.[10] For Stein, the more votes the Green Party obtains, the more pressure it can force on the mainstream parties. This process has continued during the 2016 election, and Stein hopes to continue to challenge the status quo beyond[8] November regardless of the results.

Stein seeks to offer a distinctive brand of progressivism, distinguishable from the agenda established at the Democratic National Convention (DNC) in July. Amongst Stein's key policy initiatives are the introduction of a 'Green New Deal' creating 20 million new jobs via a complete energy transition to renewables by 2030; establishing a 'Medicaid for All' single-payer public health programme; and eliminating tuition fees at all levels of public education.[11] On these issues, the vast majority of Democrats do not cross policy swords with Stein, and she considers the progressive leaders within the Democratic Party as too institutionalised to affect real change. To Stein, the darling of the DNC's progressive wing, Senator Elizabeth Warren, is a politician with adequate Wall Street regulation proposals but who lacks the necessary impetus on health reform and who is too aligned with Hillary Clinton's perceived 'war hawk' mentality.[12] Even Sanders, Stein asserts, is too institutionalised within the current workings of Washington D.C. to take seriously the need for viable third parties.[13] Stein's radically progressive policy proposals, in conjunction with the anti-establishment mood sweeping across the United States and the possibility of greater campaign funding for the Green Party in 2020, mean her policies may necessitate a Democratic response in the near future.

However, the structural features of the electoral college as well as presidential campaign regulations restrict the impact Stein and the Greens can ever truly have, and the presidency remains an impossibility. Stein's lack of any substantive financial donations to help push her campaign forward will not provide the Green Party with the growth it needs. Currently, Stein's Campaign Committee has raised a total of 3.5 million dollars,[14] a sharp contrast to the Clinton campaign's 1.14 billion dollars at the end of September.[15] Unlike Stein, Sanders was able to broadcast his progressive policy proposals through the framework of a major party, using a small donations funding infrastructure supported and managed by the DNC itself. Stein's lack of financial security and absence of support from a major party machine leaves her unable to progress beyond the low percentage points she currently sits at in the polls.

The capacity for Stein to influence the direction of the election, though, is not fatalistically aligned to campaign funding. Stein's 'Bernie or Bust' stunt at the DNC National Convention highlighted her willingness to upset the formal nomination of Clinton. Her 'Time to Reject the Lesser Evil for the Greater Good' speech, followed by a walkout from the convention showed her pulling power for disillusioned Sanders backers.[16] They are ultimately attracted to her unwillingness to compromise. Furthermore,

the Green Party is standing in 47 states, a record high that surpasses the 46 states Ralph Nader was on for the 2000 election.[17] Even though the electoral college does not have any proportionally representative features and the Green Party are only polling at 2.1 percent nationally,[18] the ability for the Green Party to sway Democrat voters away from Clinton in key states portends to their electoral significance. The example set by the Green Party's candidate in 2000, Ralph Nader, shows that Stein and the Green Party can still influence the outcome of the election by upsetting the DNC's voter base. In 2000, Nader won 2.7 million votes nationwide and arguably prevented Democratic candidate, Al Gore, from winning Florida, which would have given the Democrats an election victory.[19] Stein's unwillingness to compromise with a Clinton presidency, the likelihood of the Green Party having a greater national presence than ever before, and the ability for the Green Party to tip the election balance out of the Democrats' favour could portend to her surprising influence on this electoral cycle.

However, it must be emphasised how Stein's campaign is limited by the electoral college. The plurality system used in all states works greatly to the disadvantage of independent parties in gaining legislative representation, as it often fails to take into account the popular vote with regard to determining seats in Congress. To win representation, a candidate must win states, not just votes. Additionally, that Donald Trump is running as Republican candidate ultimately weakens Stein's capacity to bring disillusioned Sanders supporters over to the Greens. Most Sanders supporters are intent on keeping Trump out of office, and a vote for Clinton is a worthwhile sacrifice.[20] The 'stop Trump' narrative works strongly against Stein and facilitates labelling her as nothing more than a 'spoiler' candidate.[21] As a result, there has been a general convergence of progressive voters towards Trump's only real competitor: Clinton.[22] Sanders's endorsement exemplifies how terrified progressives are of a Trump presidency.

Jill Stein's presence in the current presidential race is a positive force challenging the status quo of American politics. Despite the structural limits on Stein, she is helping to open the eyes of the American electorate to the possibility of a future outside of the Democratic Party and Grand Old Party (GOP), and ultimately to a more left-wing vision of the United States. A Gallup poll taken in 2016 shows 58 percent of Americans desire a viable third party,[23] and in a globalised age in which information, communication, and ideas will only flow more freely and quickly, November eighth is unlikely to represent the zenith of the Green Party's electoral performance. Stein's journey to this point has not been one of an orthodox politician, and as America becomes a more fragmented, diverse society, it seems likely that such journeys will become more frequent. Stein is symptomatic of a new era of American politics that is increasingly resistant to institutions and the establishment, and the status quo it embodies.

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INTERNATIONAL

Bernardas Jerevicius| Regional

All four corners of the globe are standing on a precipice, a momentous point in time amidst social upheaval, technological progress, and growing scepticism towards cooperation. This year in politics has been marked by numerous shocks: in July, we saw the victory of the 'Leave' campaign in the British referendum; the American political system buckling under the rise of populism through Donald Trump, as well as the pandemonium of unending assault of Hillary Clinton's past by numerous Wikileaks disclosures. The Philippines have been turned upside down by Rodrigo 'Rody' Duterte: a fierce populist actively encouraging vigilantism as well as fostering a boorish outlook towards international co-operation. South Korea's political system is gradually fragmenting in the wake of allegations towards its current President's collusion with cultist figures. 'The times they are' indeed 'a changin'.

In this section, Julio explores the waning power of traditional media in the wake of new information platforms through a discussion of just how much both it and the new 'fifth estate' truly influence politics. Jeff and Camilla tackle a discussion on the fate of global liberal democracy and whether it will survive the coming tide of populism, with Jeff foreshadowing a death knell to the concept as a whole, and Camilla arguing for this being but a flash in the pan. Abrahim takes us through the life and works of the newly-elected United Nations Secterary-General, Antonio Gutteres, and how he challenges the status quo pervading throughout the organisation whilst forging a new era for humanism.

Liberal Democracy is Dead, Long Live Liberal Democracy!

CAMILLA HALLMAN argues that movements to pull out of international organisations are just a phase and that liberal democracy has nothing to fear.

The status quo present for the past 70 years, that of a liberal outlook valuing the absolute gains of states, has begun a regression to pre-World War I thinking.[1] Before World War II, and especially before World War I, liberal democracy was the exception, with few successful efforts at building general international organisations.[2] In recent months, a rise of populism and nationalism in states such as the United States, the United Kingdom, and the Philippines, show movements to pull from cooperative engagements and pursue self-interest out of a sense of lost sovereignty.[3] These cooperative engagements include the European Union, the United Nations, and alliances between states, such as between the United States and the Philippines. This, however, is a phase that will culminate in renewed international cooperation, albeit with continued distrust and restlessness brewing beneath the surface. The reality of interdependence, global norms, and the costs of going it alone are all factors to be considered.

Dissatisfaction with the status quo is a constant throughout history; according to modern social contract theory, living under the rule of a sovereign assembly of persons, as in liberal democracy, is better than the alternative – a state of nature where war is perpetual and unavoidable.[4] Dissatisfaction is to be expected in international organisations attempting to govern state behaviour, such as the European Union (EU) and the United Nations (UN). The EU and the UN have different systems, and sentiments against them have different groundings. However, both organisations work towards absolute gains that frustrate states when relative interests are not met. Although my colleague argues this dissatisfaction will lead to major change against liberal democracy and the international cooperation that results, states will choose to remain in cooperative engagements despite their dissatisfaction, preserving

liberal democracy.

When the United Kingdom (UK) voted to leave the European Union, 'leave' voters were concerned with sovereignty - the central message being taking back control.[5] British interests, Euroscepticism, and exploitation of public fears of immigration led to the narrowly-decided leave vote.[6] Yet, following David Cameron's resignation, Prime Minister Theresa May and her cabinet, understanding the costs of Brexit, continue to pander towards the 'establishment' of the EU - with disagreements on whether, and how, to remain economically integrated with Europe whilst maintaining distance.[7] Article 50 of the Lisbon Treaty determines that states wishing to leave the Union have two years to negotiate the process, which can be extended with a vote by the European Council.[8] If Theresa May and her successor lengthen the process enough, it could leave room for continued cooperation despite the loss of direct UK influence in EU decision making. Following the 3 November High Court decision, specifying that the UK government does not have the power to trigger Article 50 without parliamentary approval, it is evident the strength of liberal democracy is found in resilient institutions.[9]

In the United States, there has been growing resentment against involvement in the United Nations, resulting in the proposal of the 'American Sovereignty Restoration Act'. The Act 'repeals the United Nations Participation Act of 1945 and other specified related laws [and] directs the President to terminate U.S. membership in the United Nations.'[10] Congressman Mike Rogers (R-Alabama), who introduced this bill, stated, 'Why should the American taxpayer bankroll an international organisation that works against America's interests around the world? The time is now to restore and protect American sovereignty and get out of the United Nations.'[11] This act has been sitting in the House Foreign Affairs Committee for over a year and is unlikely to make it to the House floor, as the Committee is overwhelmingly in favour for continued participation in the United Nations, and other pressing matters of international cooperation, such as the Iran Deal - where the US negotiated terms to limit Iran's nuclear program – take precedence.[12] This speaks to the strength of liberal democracy and its institutions, which can weather challenges through adaptation and, in this case, political venting.

The United States has had ongoing debates concerning immigrants and undocumented workers, a focal point in this election season. Donald Trump and the 'anti-establishment' sentiment behind him have become a catalyst for the immigration issue, with his standalone point of view to deport undocumented immigrants and build a wall between the United States and Mexico. With this sentiment there has been increased rhetoric indicating a need to close down borders and regulate immigrant workers, echoing rhetoric of 'leave' voters in the United Kingdom. Yet, Trump is not the issue presented here – he is a voice for reform rather than revolution; something liberal democracy is uniquely good at. Immigration has been debated throughout the history of the United States, with most recent reforms coming with the passing of the Immigration and Naturalisation Act of 1965 (following the Civil Rights Movement), and amnesty for undocumented aliens in the mid-1980s.[13] The group backing Trump's current radical policies is portrayed as larger than they are – only seventeen percent of Republicans in Iowa, eighteen percent in South Carolina, and twenty percent in New Hampshire consider anything less than mass deportation a deal breaker.[14] At least six out of ten Republicans in those states want immigration reform to include a pathway to legal status instead.[15] Since this group is not large enough to cause major change, their voices will only serve to incite reform. This is not a threat to liberal democracy; it is liberal democracy. Like the voter base voting for 'Brexit', Trump's following has become frustrated with the lack of accountability the 'establishment' has for doing little to help workers experiencing 'the sting of globalisation.'[16] This voter base realises they need to elect a candidate to the 'establishment' in order to get their views represented.

A third example of a movement against international cooperation and liberal democratic order is the recent pronouncement of Philippine prsident Rodrigo Duterte, and his plans to 'separate' from the United States.[17] Duterte made it clear he was grasping at sovereignty: 'I am no American puppet,' he said on 5 September, 'I am the president of a sovereign country and I am not answerable to anyone except the Filipino people […].'[18] His statements were vague in how this would take place; and afterwards he went back to say he was merely pursuing an 'independent foreign policy.'[19] It would make sense that he would backtrack – the US and the Philippines have a long alliance valuable to both states. Over $25 billion in goods and services are traded between them each year, and the Philippines are the US' third-largest trading partner in the Asian Pacific.[20] If the Philippines were to 'separate' from the US, they could also lose $150 million in development aid.[21] The United States values the Philippines greatly for economic and strategic purposes – the US hoped to create a more permanent military presence in the country in the wake of the South China Sea negotiations.[22] Although sovereignty is a point of sensitivity for the Philippines, the relationship with the US is beneficial and cannot be cut off without considerable economic and international costs (such as those of security, in the case of the numerous conflicts surrounding the Philippines, directly aided by US military assistance).[23] Additionally, Duterte's move from liberal democratic norms both externally with the 'separation' and internally with his counter-drug policies have already cost him his political benefactor, former President Fidel Ramos, and others are also pointing to a growing backlash.[24] While the Philippine government has successfully thrown out principles of liberal democracy through hard populism, the necessity of international cooperation and the nation's current dependence on the United States mean that this will be temporary. In order for both states to preserve the benefits of cooperation, the Philippines will likely, due to realist principles, see the system of liberal democracy that benefits both nations prevail: the status quo preserved.

In the examples above, especially in the case of 'Brexit', relative state interests are not met and concerns over competition are driving states to consider backing out of cooperative engagements. Economic interdependence and its regulations alter the meaning of what sovereignty is today, in that states have lost some of their more traditional sense of sovereignty in order to work together in achieving absolute gains.[25] While international cooperation exists, Kenneth Waltz's neorealism nevertheless accurately describes the lack of trust and openness that is still prevalent amongst states.[26] Nations are driven by self-interest, and they seek to maximise their own power to feel secure; there exists an inequality of power among states. Though the world exists in anarchy, and states seek their own relative gains, international cooperation and organisations seeking absolute gains do work.[27] As long as states are in a balance of power, or in a system that can adapt, insecurity and competition can be kept at manageable levels.

Yes, international cooperation is in its mid-life crisis – states are becoming frustrated with the loss of sovereignty and unequal gains experienced in international cooperation. By engaging in forums where sovereignty is equal, even among smaller and less powerful states, and especially in instances, like the European Union, where majority voting applies, states can feel their interests are being neglected and they are not gaining from participating in this type of cooperation. Although dissatisfaction has increased to where states are pulling away, this is a phase; an opportunity for the inherent nature of liberal democracy to consider all political voices, and to adapt. International cooperation is necessary in an increasingly globalised world to preserve peace-making efforts such as the United Nations or the European Union, and due to interdependence. Liberal democracy will prevail.

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António Guterres: A New Secretary-General for a New Era of International Relations

ABRAHIM ASSAILY argues that the election of Antonio Guterres is a major shift in the status quo of the modern UN and shows that there is a significant push for reform.

It has been nine years since Ban Ki-moon took over the office of Secretary-General of the United Nations in 2007, and he is now preparing to step down.[1] The role of Secretary-General is one of, according to Franklin Delano Roosevelt (former President of the United States), 'a world moderator.'[2] UN Secretary-Generals are seen as a neutral actor who oversees the United Nations' administration and works to keep the UN functioning and in order. They are key in setting policy agendas for the General Assembly of the United Nations and often set the trends of international policy that the UN will take for the years they are in command. António Guterres was chosen as the new Secretary-General of the United Nations on 13 October 2016. His victory was a surprise as many thought the position would go to a woman or to a national of an Eastern European country as these were the two groups that have yet to have held the role of Secretary-General.[3] With this new appointment, the question now is who is António Guterres, and what does his administration have in store for the United Nations?

Guterres is a former Prime Minister of Portugal, and has worked within the United Nations as the UN High Commissioner for Refugees.[4] For the past ten years, Guterres has worked to improve the lives of many around the world. As he accepted his appointment to the post of Secretary-General, Guterres said, 'over the last ten years, I have witnessed, first hand, the suffering of the most vulnerable people on earth, I have visited war zones and refugee camps where one might legitimately ask, 'What has happened to the dignity and worth of the human person?'[5] It is clear that Guterres will be a break from the current status quo of role of Secretary-General, as he may likely push for a more progressive and people-oriented United Nations.

António Guterres was born in Lisbon, Portugal in 1949 during the height of António de Oliveira Salazar's rule as Prime Minister, a position that Guterres himself would eventually hold.[6] Salazar ruled Portugal with an iron fist from 1932 until 1968, when he died and was replaced by Marcello Caetano, who continued Salazar's oppressive rule.[7] Both Salazar and Caetano were leading figures of the Estado Novo, or 'New State' regime in Portugal, which was defined by dictatorial rule and a strong conservative Catholic ethos.[8] This national political situation would have a clear impact on the young Guterres, who was working as a professor by the time of the fall of the Estado Novo regime in 1974. The fall of the regime was part of the 'colours revolutions' of the 1970s and 1980s which saw the end of many authoritarian regimes particularly in southern Europe, which would lead many of these nations towards the European Union.[9] The Portuguese uprising was known as the Carnation Revolution and saw the Army side with popular uprisings bring democracy and social reforms to Portugal.[10] At this point Guterres became involved with the Socialist Party of Portugal, which was growing following the revolution, and would head down a path which would lead him to become leader of the Party and eventually Prime Minister.[11] As Prime Minister, Guterres pushed for better relations with Portugal and its former colonies, focusing on trying to fix the problems that he saw his nation having caused in the past. His tenure was known for its liberalisation of many social policies and a move towards a more modern culture for his nation. During this time Guterres served as President of Socialist International helping to redefine socialism after the fall of the Soviet Union.[12] This allowed him to try to spread his views on humanitarianism through the socialist organisation and set him to be a leader in the field.

During his youth growing up in post-World War II Portugal, Guterres witnessed the large number of refugees who found their way into Portugal following the war. Later crises would see many refugees come from the Portuguese colonial empire as civil strife rose during the waning years of colonial rule. This problem would be exacerbated following the Carnation Revolution as the rapid decolonisation brought large political and social upheaval.[13] One example of this was following the Portuguese withdrawal from East Timor, the Indonesian government invaded the new country and proceeded to commit Human Rights atrocities, causing many Timorese to flee into Portugal.[14] Another example of the crisis that occurred in Portugal's former colonies was the civil war in Mozambique which displaced 5.7 million Mozambicans, a large minority of which would flee to Portugal.[15] This has allowed him to witness first-hand how refugees are treated in countries and how much of the time they are treated in horrid conditions. These events enabled Guterres to solidify his views on ethics.

After serving as Prime Minster of Portugal in the 1990s, Guterres joined the UN High Commission for Refugees. He would sit as commissioner from 2005 to 2015 overseeing many refugee crises including the post Yugoslavian War crisis, The Iraq War, the ethnic conflicts in the Congo, and the Syrian Crisis.[16] He was in command right after the Iraq War and oversaw much of the UN work to aid the displaced people following the war. He claimed that during his time as commissioner the world was seeing the 'highest level of displacement since the Second World War' and that thus many structural reforms were required in order to bring the humanitarian aid that these people needed.[17] Towards the end of his tenure as commissioner he has been key in the fight for the rights of the Syrian Civil War refugees and other in the European Refugee crisis.[18] He pushed for bigger efforts to be made to help the refugees in order to stop the disorganised flow of people that harms both sides greatly.[19] He calls for more international unilateralism to try to amend the issue in an effective and humane way, recognising the needs of both the refugees and the people of the nations they are fleeing to.[20]

We have seen that he has made a strong push towards a peace deal in Syria as he sees it as the only way forward. This strong stance seems to show that he is not going to back down in international relations.[21] From these we can see that Guterres stands to be one of the more controversial figures in the coming years as he stands opposed to the current status quo in the United Nations. His focus on the human side of the international field is a fresh and welcomed feel for many in the UN as the strong political divisions which have divided the world in recent years have, in the eyes of many, left the need of the global population behind.[22] This is likely why Guterres was chosen to be the next Secretary-General despite many wishing a woman or a representative from an Eastern European country, as this is considered the one global region that has never been represented in the role of Secretary General. His election, maybe the beginning of a shift in UN policy, as the world becomes more interconnected, the need for openness and interactions with the population as a whole become crucial to keep legitimacy. He brings the equipment needed to answer some of the most pressing world issues to the table. In many ways, Guterres is a reaction against the current norms. He demonstrates a way of setting a new direction for the United Nations, and though it is impossible to tell what will happen in the future, this new direction looks promising as it brings the change that many want to see.

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