



# LEVIATHAN

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## HIDE AND SEEK

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# CONTENTS

## 03 EDITOR IN CHIEF

## 04 MEET THE TEAM

## 06 AFRICA

06 Is Colonialism Returning to Mozambique?

*Will Francis*

07 Solidarity Gone Wrong

*Olivia Nolan*

09 Economy Behind the Civil War in South Sudan

*Robert Jacek Wlodarski*

## 11 ASIA-PACIFIC

11 Surveillance and Security in South Korea

*Kirby Fullerton*

12 Hidden Cracks in Singapore's Legitimacy Strategy

*William Paul*

13 Duterte's Deadly Drug War

*Jacob Milburn*

## 15 EUROPE & RUSSIA

15 Cover-ups in One of the World's Most Transparent Democracies

*Adam Frisk*

16 Profile Piece: The Erased in Slovenia

*Katia Nacevski*

## 18 LATIN AMERICA

18 A Bitter Aftertaste: Brazilian Sugar Industry, Land Grabs, and Deforestation

*Kattel Anè*

19 Mexico's Other Revolution: The Zapatista Uprising and the Hidden War in Chiapas

*Ewan Forrest*

20 Crypto-currency and the Venezuelan Crisis

*Dante Philip*

## 22 MIDDLE EAST & NORTH AFRICA

22 Veiled Collateral

*Aaron*

23 Should LGBT trust technology in the Middle East?

*Harry Martin*

24 Abdullah Ocalan: Hero, Terrorist, Enemy of the Turkish State

*Hannah Carlson*

## 26 NORTH AMERICA

26 Flawed Data Collection in the 2016 U.S Election

*Allyson Huntoon*

27 The Role of New Media in Social Movements

*Hannah Weissman*

28 Feminism and Transparency in the United States: Profile on NOW

*Gaia Scotto Di Minico*

## 30 INTERNATIONAL

30 'Oops'-Rise of Al-Qaeda as Post-Colonial Case Study

*Charlotte Dibb*

31 A Carbon Trade Fraud

*Monika Plozza*

### Front Cover Courtesy of:

Reuters - Asmaa Waguih

A supporter of deposed Egyptian President Mohamed Mursi hides under a barrier during clashes with riot police on the 6th October Bridge over the Ramsis square area in central Cairo July 15, 2013. Egyptian police and protesters clashed in central Cairo early on Tuesday after fights broke out between supporters of ousted Islamist President Mohamed Mursi and locals angered when they tried to block major thoroughfares crossing the River Nile.

### Photography By:

Andrew Perry

### References:

References for each article can be found in the same order as the print edition via QR codes or here:

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International



*I am thrilled to present you Leviathan's first issue of the 2017-2018 academic year, 'Hide & Seek'. This rather unconventional theme was chosen to challenge students to explore the overt as well as the covert aspects of international politics. Politics, in this issue, are perceived as a very real, and sometimes deadly, game of Hide and Seek, whose rules are being altered by new technologies. Whereas many predicted that the 21st century would be the one of transparency, the reality is less idyllic. As truth and lies become harder to distinguish, who really benefits from the technological revolution is still unclear.*

*As a few writers investigate in this issue, the international system is still ruled by long-established dynamics. But, all over the world, communities find alternative ways to challenge established institutions. Minorities can use unconventional means to gain economic and political power. For example, during the Venezuelan crisis, as Dante Philip writes, the bitcoin became a potent, albeit illegal, barrier against economic uncertainty.*

*To gain political power, media attention is crucial, especially for endangered minorities. In this issue, Aaron deplors and explains the silence of the Omani and Saudi media on the Yemeni refugee crisis; and Katja Nacevski brings our attention to the history of the Erased People of Slovenia. When traditional media fails, opposition forces learn to take advantage of social media. On the cover of this issue, a supporter of deposed Egyptian President Mohamed Mursi hides under a barrier during clashes with the riot police, on the 6th October Bridge over the Ramsis square area, in central Cairo on July 15th, 2013. The Arab Spring, though on the most striking example of the use of social media in politics, is not an isolated example. Hanna Weissman writes about how social media has been used more recently during the Dakota Pipelines protests.*

*Interestingly, two articles cover the potentials and dangers of social media for LGBT communities of South Korea (Kirby Fullerton) and of the Middle East (Harry Martin). Providing an outlet for communities which would otherwise remain silent, the internet also increases the visibility of LGBT individuals. It leaves them vulnerable to the actions of malevolent groups or repressive governments, who have mastered the use of new technologies to control individuals.*

*It should be noted that the stakes of this 'game' as we have put it, should not be taken lightly. And in this messy, tangled world, academics and journalists have an important role to play: however overused and abused the term is, the truth still matters. At our first event of the year, Richard Sambrook, former Director of the BBC World Service and Director of the Centre for Journalism at Cardiff University, explained that evidence-led research and critical thinking should be the basis of any work, in order to guarantee a level of truth and trust. Rather than understanding objectivity as a simulated absence of opinion, writers should acknowledge their own bias, and focus on examining facts. We have, for this issue, pushed students to work in this spirit.*

*I would like to thank these students, and hope they have enjoyed working with our newly formed team. It has already been a deeply enriching experience to work with students with such diverse backgrounds, opinions and experiences. I am looking forward to continue to lead and learn from this amazing team.*

*I am taking up this opportunity to personally thank our Deputy Editor in Chief, Bernardas Jurevicius, whose insightful and sharp perspective is more than valued; and Felix Birch, our Chief of Production. I would also like to thank my past Editor-in-Chief, Jessica Killeen, who gave me the first chance to participate in the creation of Leviathan two years ago, and has not stopped advising me since then; as well as my predecessor, Nicholas Pugh. Finally, the whole team would like to thank the School of Social and Political Sciences, as well as Edinburgh Political Union, for their continuing support.*

*I truly hope you will enjoy this first issue of the year,*

*Sincerely,*

Barbara Wojazer

## MEET THE TEAM



### Editor in Chief

Barbara is a fourth year student of Russian and Politics. From Paris, she is the first non-native English Speaker Editor in Chief. Coming back from her year abroad in Russia, she wants to lead the journal using what she learned about the importance of the journalism, free speech and diversity. Often travelling, she enjoys writing, wandering in and taking pictures of the places she visits.



### Deputy Editor in Chief

Bernardas has a passion for area studies as well as digital policy. Informed by his motherland's former status within the USSR, he has always had a keen interest in government surveillance as well as municipal governance. His heroes include Nestor Makhno for his defiance of the Red and White Armies during the Russian Civil War, Edward Snowden for his NSA leaks as well as Murray Bookchin for his contributions to political ecology in the 21st Century. His favourite region in contemporary history was Revolutionary Catalonia.



### Treasurer

Maria is a fourth-year student of Politics. Maria is Norwegian but grew up in Dubai, surrounded by a multitude of cultures. She has written for Leviathan twice and is now in charge of its funds. Her main interest is security studies, particularly within energy politics. She has interned for the Crop Trust and is also interested in the future of crop diversity. In addition to working with EPU, she is the Fundraising Coordinator for the Middle Eastern Society. Maria recommends a trip to Dean Village for an escape from the city center.



### Outreach Coordinator

Aila is a 2nd year International Relations student from Almaty, the south capital of Kazakhstan. She is particularly interested in the public policy matters, which she intends to study in the future. During her free time, she enjoys wandering around Royal Mile and Grassmarket in the Old Town.



### Digital Director

Dylan is a fourth year History student from Hertfordshire, but has lived across the U.K. and Ireland, before moving to Scotland at the age of sixteen. Dylan has a special interest in American Political History and British Political History in the 1980s. His interest in Politics comes from his longstanding passion for History, which is inherently politically charged, as well as from watching the weekly mudslinging and drama at Prime Minister's Questions. As well as his position at Leviathan, he is also active within the Buchanan Institute.



### Chief of Production

Felix is a second year Civil Engineering student from South West England, spending his free time listening to music and reading. After he graduates, Felix wants to explore the wider issues of sustainability and development closely linked to his degree by volunteering abroad.



### Production Team Member

Jason Kokkat is a MSc Comparative Public Policy student originally from the United States. His passion for politics came from his first campaign job and extended into his academic work finishing his first degree in Political Science. When he is not focusing on campaigns and labour market policy, he is out traveling. Or, he is sipping masala chai reading the latest adventures of Batman.



### Production Team Member

Migle is a final year International Relations student from Lithuania. Spending an interesting year in Washington, DC, she got many opportunities to participate in key political events. After observing the U.S. Presidential Election, attending the Inauguration, and rushing to the airports to help those stranded in the aftermath of the travel ban, she developed a particular interest in how civil society organizes itself, and reinforces democracy. In the future, she hopes to pursue a career in investigative and photojournalism.



### Africa Regional Editor

Sam is a third-year Politics student, originally from Seattle in the United States. He has a particular interest in approaches to organized crime and penology in the developing world. He has served previously as the Chief Copy Editor and Europe and Russia regional editor for the journal.



### Asia-Pacific Regional Editor

Lachlan Sands is a third-year student in politics and journalism. As an exchange student from Australia, he decided that there is such a thing as too much sun and came to Edinburgh to study among the cobblestone streets and cloudy skies. He is interested in the intersection of politics and the media, and how each informs the other, as well as public policy areas like climate change and agriculture.



#### Europe and Russia Regional Editor

Emilie Bruun Sandbye is a postgrad student in International & European Politics. Previously she has worked in the European Parliament and for Danish and Swedish media. Born and raised in Copenhagen, Denmark, she has managed to find her way to Edinburgh in the quest for the only place where it is more rainy and windy.



#### Latin America Regional Editor

Abraham Assaily is a third year International Relations Student. A Lebanese-American from New York City, he has become interested in how culture and ideas effect how different states and people interact. He has been influenced by the theories of Antonio Gramsci, the Frankfurt School, Guy Debord and the Autonomist movement. In addition he has been influenced by national liberation movements, such as Thomas Sankara's Burkina Faso, and their ability to reject the status quo.



#### Middle East and North Africa Regional Editor

Alexis Kroot comes to Scotland from Maine, by way of Washington, D.C. She is pursuing a Masters of Science in International Relations of the Middle East with Arabic. Alexis spent her summer doing Arabic immersion in the Middle East, and was surprised to find it possible to miss Edinburgh's rain and clouds.



#### North America Regional Editor

Hannah Carlson is a postgraduate student in Nationalism Studies. Previously, she taught in French schools and worked at Belt Magazine and Press. Originally from Cleveland, Ohio, she is particularly interested in the current issues affecting the American Rust Belt. She was drawn away from Paris by the promise of good whisky in Edinburgh.



#### International Regional Editor

Sarah-Luna is a third year student of International Relations & Law from the United States and Egypt. She was evacuated to Washington, D.C. in 2011 due to the Egyptian Revolution, and upon her return she took part in the 2013 revolution that followed, hence why her passion for politics soared. She spent the summer in London, interning in DHL UK's corporate affairs department, working on matters regarding Brexit and public affairs. She is also a student ambassador for the University of Edinburgh.



#### Chief Copy Editor

Lora is a fourth year International Relations student. She is originally from Kansas City in the United States. This is her second year with Leviathan's copyediting team. Previously, Lora has worked for the International Relations Council of Kansas City and spent time teaching English as a second language. Lora is mainly interested in European politics and history. She loves to travel and learn about other cultures, which originally sparked her interest in politics and global studies.



#### Copy Editor

Dhruvi Chakravarthi is an undergraduate student in Sustainable Development, Politics and Anthropology. Having previously worked in extraordinarily international environments and gained dynamic global outlooks, she looks forward to using her panoramic perspectives to generate a fresh focus on rebuilding socio-economic frameworks.



#### Copy Editor

Charlotte is a fourth year student in International Relations, from Connecticut, U.S.A. She previously worked in the United States Department of State in the Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs, and in the office of U.S. Senator Chris Murphy. Her interest in politics comes from an outspoken political family, and an inability to do maths. Her interest is largely in Middle Eastern affairs, specifically in countersurgency and counterterrorism efforts post 2003. She came to Edinburgh to finally find a place where the people outnumbered the cows for a change.



#### Copy Editor

Will Francis is a second year student of Economics and Economic History from Shropshire, England. He is interested in the modern international trade dynamics and their impact on the future of the nation-state. A keen follower of British politics, Will has written for Leviathan twice and enjoys discussing topics with fellow students. He chose to study in Edinburgh because of the city's magnificent architecture and rich history.

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We would like to thank our partners and sponsors as well as a special thank you to Dr. Sara Dorman, for her continued support.





*The politics of Africa are too often left unreported, or else left concealed behind a canopy of stereotypical assumptions and biases. In this media environment, discovering the truth requires an investigative instinct. In this issue, our authors seek to identify and explain the hidden motives, powerful special interests, and dynamic actors behind political developments south of the Sahara.*

*Hidden away from public eyes, corruption in Africa -- as everywhere -- poisons the best intentions of men. Pointing out how corporate interests and private greed have influenced government planning,*

*Will Francis shines a light on the unacknowledged costs of Mozambique's newest development strategy.*

*In his analysis of the political economy of the prematurely war ravaged state in South Sudan, Robert Jacek Wlodarski reveals the coterie of special interests and foreign powers that supply the weapons and credit allowing the world's youngest state to throw itself into a devastating and costly civil war.*

*Olivia Nolan uncovers the major role played by a South African trade union, and its associated lobbying group, in preventing the government from changing the discriminatory and exploitative labor relations of the Apartheid era, a system in which the trade union has hidden roots.*

## Is Colonialism Returning to Mozambique?

*WILL FRANCIS assesses the role of international corporations in Mozambique's poverty reduction strategy.*

Having won its independence as recently as 1975, Mozambique still shows the marks of colonialism and its abuse. It is perhaps in light of this that the issue of land purchases has come to the forefront of Mozambican national politics. To increase agricultural productivity and reduce rural poverty, Mozambique has been encouraging land investment from international corporations. Surrounded by secrecy, it is unclear whether these corporations share Mozambique's commitment to improving the living standards of farmers as they claim,<sup>1</sup> or whether their motives are really about exploiting an under-developed region for profit.

Mozambique is characterised by economic instability, with 46 percent of the population living in poverty,<sup>2</sup> and one-third of government revenue coming from foreign aid.<sup>3</sup> The roots of this poverty lie in the country's fifteen-year civil war, which hampered development and caused damage of up to twenty million dollars.<sup>4</sup> After independence, the Mozambique Liberation Front (FRELIMO) established itself as the state's dominant political force, nationalised the land,<sup>5</sup> and attempted to secularise the country.<sup>6</sup> Political violence with the Mozambican National Resistance (RENAMO) erupted two years later, and the country was swallowed by a civil war until 1992, when the Marxist one-party state gave way to a democratic republic.<sup>7</sup> A brief return to violence in 2013 after FRELIMO raided RENAMO headquarters demonstrates that tensions between the two parties remain.<sup>8</sup> Although a resumption of civil war is unlikely, the disruption is recognised as, 'undermining economic activity.'<sup>9</sup> With FRELIMO often distracted by these political tensions, many of the problems the country faced after independence, such as uneven regional development and generally poor regional infrastructure,<sup>10</sup> continue to burden Mozambique today.

It is in this environment of economic underdevelopment and political volatility that Mozambique is attempting to increase agricultural productivity. In its 2011 'Action Plan for the Reduction of Absolute Poverty', the government commits to inclusive economic growth,<sup>11</sup> and suggests that adopting new technology, improving storage and transport infrastructure, investing in electricity, and devolving power and funding to local administrations will diversify the economy, attract international investment, and promote the creation of small businesses.<sup>12</sup> It is unclear whether Mozambique is in a position to implement these policies or achieve these goals. While recent growth has been as high as 7.4 percent,<sup>13</sup> FRELIMO - distracted by ever-present political tensions -

has been unable to ensure that it was inclusive.<sup>14</sup> Furthermore, the local administrations tasked with implementing much of the plan are largely under-trained and underpaid.<sup>15</sup> Poor communications infrastructure will also limit the ability of central government to coordinate with these local authorities.<sup>16</sup> Mozambique's 'Action Plan' thus faces a number of logistical difficulties in boosting agricultural productivity. Indeed, as of 2014, only 44 percent of agricultural productivity targets have been met.<sup>17</sup>

One reason that Mozambique is attracting international investment in its agriculture could be because it recognises that international corporations will have greater success in raising productivity. Without having to worry about political tensions or funding issues, international corporations will be able to focus on actually carrying out their investments and generating returns. As profit-motivated entities, they will also be able to avoid the inefficiencies to which the state is subject. The more likely reason, however, is that corrupt government officials wish to personally benefit from this investment. Corruption is a major constraint on economic development in Mozambique,<sup>18</sup> and is common on both a regional level - where underpaid teachers, police, and nurses are susceptible to bribery - and nationally, where public procurement, licensing, taxation, customs, and the judicial system suffer political interference from FRELIMO.<sup>19</sup> Serious corruption was recently exposed when an investigation revealed that licenses for ruby mining had been illegally awarded to generals and party members.<sup>20</sup>

In the absence of private ownership, Mozambique's government plays an important role in distributing land to the 81 percent of the population working in the agricultural sector.<sup>21</sup> This is done through a system of 50-year leases known as DUATs.<sup>22</sup> The allegations of land grabs and the lack of transparency surrounding them raise questions over how land distribution has been conducted. Many farmers certainly do not trust that the government will protect their land rights or distribute land in their interests.

ProSavana is one such investment project surrounded by controversy and unpopularity. A joint venture of the governments of Mozambique, Brazil, and Japan thought to cost \$4.2 billion,<sup>23</sup> it aims to improve the productivity of existing family agriculture in the Nacala Corridor through better technology and infrastructure. This, it claims, will commercialise the agricultural sector and increase production of soy, cotton, maize, and sugar, thereby increasing the income of these farming families and improving living standards.<sup>24</sup> Acknowledging the accusations of land grabs by similar projects, ProSavana's 'Master Plan' claims it will pay fair compensation for land,<sup>25</sup> and, 'never promote private investments that require the possession of large portions of land.'<sup>26</sup> Many of the benefits advertised by the project have already been delivered. Mozambique's agriculture minister claims that 600,000 farmers have already benefitted from incorporating new technology into production.<sup>27</sup> In May 2017, a 900 kilometre 'integrated logistics corridor' in the Nacala Corridor,

consisting of a railway and a port, was completed.<sup>28</sup> This created 2,000 local jobs and trained 1,000 young people.<sup>29</sup> The infrastructure will also increase productivity and improve communications along the Corridor. This project, like ProSavana, was backed by corporations from Brazil and Japan,<sup>30</sup> suggesting that perhaps the two were related. International funding for future infrastructure development projects will likely be conditional on further land purchases. Investors will not risk their capital in constructing railways, for example, without the guarantee that they will be used.

The project, however, faces widespread hostility from farmers, unions, NGOs, and anti-corporate campaigns in Mozambique. The Southern African Campaign to Dismantle Corporate Power frames opposition to the project as emblematic of the struggle for self-determination against neo-colonialism,<sup>31</sup> perhaps attempting to appeal to Mozambique's national distrust of international interference. Among these groups, there are three points of opposition to the project.

The primary reason is the fear of uncompensated land grabs. With countless allegations of this occurring under similar projects, ProSavana's claims that it will protect the land rights of farmers are not seen as credible; it is thought that thousands of farming families have already been displaced in Mozambique.<sup>32</sup> AgroMoz, another joint Mozambican-Brazilian-Japanese venture, was granted a DUAT for 10,000 hectares for soy production,<sup>33</sup> and in 2012 displaced over 1,000 farmers from Wakhua with little compensation.<sup>34</sup> Corporations from South Africa and Japan, including Alfa Agricultura and Nitro Holdings, have also come into conflict with local farmers after being granted DUATS for cashew and cotton production.<sup>35</sup> Land is central to the livelihoods of family farmers, and its loss will cause the decline of communities across Mozambique. The government, as the distributor of land, is complicit in this displacement, and farmers do not trust that they will receive sufficient support in the event of being displaced.

The second reason is uncertainty over where the profits and agricultural produce will go. With the finance, technology, expertise, and export markets provided by Brazil and Japan,<sup>36</sup> it is hard to believe that all of the profits from increased agricultural productivity will remain in Mozambique. Indeed, in providing the land and labour, Mozambique is providing the least productive factors of production. It is the human capital and technology that will increase agricultural production the most, and, with these being provided by Brazil and Japan, it is doubtful that Mozambican farmers will keep much of the profit at all. Furthermore, if the project intends to export its produce to China and Japan, it is unlikely that it will contribute to Mozambique's food security, as ProSavana claims.<sup>37</sup>

The third reason is the fear that the project, contrary to its claims,<sup>38</sup> will cause a decline in agricultural employment. There are a number of reasons for this. The first is that greater productivity will make agriculture less labour-intensive. Greater use of capital will increase agricultural efficiency and reduce the number of farmers needed to produce a given yield. As land is a fixed resource, growth in productivity will necessitate a fall in employment. The second cause of unemployment is evident in Paraguay, which underwent a similar process of international investment to become the world's fourth largest soy producer.<sup>39</sup> This investment had two effects: to increase productivity, which drove down the price of soy, and to increase value of land, which drove up rents.<sup>40</sup> Facing falling revenue and increasing costs, Paraguayan farmers found it harder to make a decent profit in agriculture, and over 100,000 are thought to have migrated to cities.<sup>41</sup> If investment in Mozambique increases both the productivity of agriculture and the value of land, it too will see rising agricultural unemployment. There is little evidence that the government is preparing for this wave of urbanisation, or that the economy is strong

enough to deliver new jobs and housing in cities.<sup>42</sup>

While the poverty-reducing motives of Mozambique's government must be assumed to be genuine, there is no need to assume the same of international corporations buying land in Mozambique. The likelihood that land grabs will occur, agricultural unemployment will rise, and farmers will receive little extra income suggests the investment's effects on Mozambique will mostly be negative. While infrastructure development and limited job creation will improve the living standards of some nearby producers, it is unlikely that these are primary aims of the corporations. It is safe to conclude that 'hidden motives', mainly the exploitation of land for profit, exist for both the corporations and the government.

*Will Francis is a Second Year Economics and Economic History student at the University of Edinburgh.*

## Solidarity Gone Wrong

*OLIVIA NOLAN argues that NGO advocacy in South African trade unions is culpable for black workers still living in circumstances reminiscent of the Apartheid era.*

On 19 October, the National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa (NUMSA), which represents upwards of 100,000 'unskilled' black workers, confirmed that 150 of their members working at the Venpac Plastics plant in Kwa-Zulu Natal had gone on strike.<sup>1</sup> According to NUMSA's statement, these workers were striking in protest of the rampant amounts of sexual assault, physical harassment, racial discrimination, and illegal working conditions they were experiencing at the plant.<sup>2</sup> Unfortunately, strikes due to horrific working conditions are commonplace in South Africa, especially in the experience of members of trade unions such as NUMSA, whose representatives report hearing claims of misconduct from their members on a weekly basis.<sup>3</sup>

One of the most powerful trade unions in South Africa, Solidariteit (meaning 'Solidarity' in Afrikaans), reported involvement in over 35 lawsuits as of last month, all concerning malpractice claims made by their members.<sup>4</sup> Solidariteit, as opposed to NUMSA and most other trade unions in the country, can afford to take these cases to court. This privilege is due to their close ties to the 'civil rights advocacy group', Afriforum. Afriforum is an NGO which rakes in 10 million rand – the equivalent of over half a million pounds – per month from membership payments and donations alone.<sup>5</sup> Afriforum defines themselves as an organisation working to ensure equal rights and freedoms for Afrikaners in South African society, which they see as growing continually hostile towards Afrikaners and other citizens of European descent.<sup>6</sup> It is no surprise, then, that the court cases filed by Solidariteit and Afriforum are of a different nature than the complaints of malpractice made by NUMSA members; Solidariteit's lawsuits are all concerning claims against what the union refers to as 'black economic empowerment' policies.<sup>7</sup> The success of the coalition between Solidariteit and Afriforum serves to demonstrate a greater issue at hand in the underground workings of South African labour disputes. While there is a greater trend of trade unions and third-party advocacy groups working together, not only in South Africa but in many European and American countries as well, Solidariteit and Afriforum's relationship is one of the most successful examples of this trend. This dynamic duo works together to help push

a conservative and nationalist political agenda, and they are, in many ways, responsible for the reason the majority of black workers in South Africa still suffer under conditions similar to those seen during the Apartheid era.

Back in 2007, Solidariteit and NUMSA members collaboratively took part in a massive strike across the metalworking and engineering sectors of the country.<sup>8</sup> While over 85 percent of workers represented by NUMSA are 'unskilled' black workers,<sup>9</sup> over 90 percent of workers represented by Solidariteit are white, with over 75 percent of that group being classes as 'skilled' workers.<sup>10</sup> At first, it seemed like these two disparate groups may be on the same side, both supporting their workers during the 2007 strike, but before long, Solidariteit representatives took part in negotiations with the employers – separate from the other striking unions – and made a deal behind closed doors, promising employees would return to work if pay was raised.<sup>11</sup> The raises they agreed upon were limited almost entirely to 'skilled' workers in the industry, with 'unskilled' workers receiving only a fraction of what was granted to their 'skilled' counterparts.<sup>12</sup> Almost all other unions taking part in the strike rejected these negotiations, but once the picket line had been broken, it was impossible for the strike to continue. Many workers who attempted to continue the strike lost their jobs, while the rest agreed to go back to work despite the meagre pay raise.<sup>13</sup> This is a prime example of how Solidariteit have worked against other unions to improve working conditions for their own members, even when Solidariteit members are already experiencing far better conditions than their 'unskilled' counterparts on the picket line. Not only does Solidariteit care nothing for the inferior working conditions experienced by 'unskilled' black workers, they actively work against changing these conditions.

Solidariteit has made it their mission to fight against what they have labelled 'black economic empowerment' policies coming into practice in South Africa, not only on a local level, but also on the international stage, and have even gone so far as to visit the United Nations (UN) multiple times to enlist international support in these efforts. In their reports presented at the UN's Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, Solidariteit representatives made the argument that due to employment inequality, violence in the workplace, and agricultural land grabbing, crime against Afrikaners is proportionately far higher than crime against black South Africans. They quoted the murder rate of white South Africans as 48 per 100,000 citizens, extraordinarily high when compared with the European averages of two murders per 100,000 citizens,<sup>14</sup> but failed to mention that the overall murder rate in South Africa is 53 per 100,000, with the murder rate of black South Africans at 50 per 100,000.<sup>15</sup> National statistics also show that white South Africans still hold a majority of the 'skilled' jobs in the manufacturing, communications, service, and agricultural sectors of the economy, four of the biggest contributing industries to South Africa's economy.<sup>16</sup> This is despite the fact that Afrikaners only account for ten percent of South Africa's population, while the other 90 percent (made up of 79 percent black, nine percent mixed race and two percent Indian) still squabble at the bottom ranks of these industries for the 'unskilled' positions, which are often the only option for employment.<sup>17</sup> Solidariteit, and their ever-present backers Afriforum, seem to be under the impression that Afrikaner citizens are facing the majority of discrimination taking place in South Africa. In reality, the national statistics show that black South Africans are still at a disadvantaged in many ways by institutional racism, and still experience discrimination as an effect of this on a daily basis, both inside and outside the workplace; far more discrimination than that faced by Afrikaners living in South Africa.

This is why both the African National Congress (ANC) and many

international bodies, including the UN and Amnesty International, see affirmative action in South Africa as not only necessary but of paramount importance when working to close the gap between black and white South African workers and dismantle the strongly institutionalised discrimination which black workers throughout South Africa still face in the aftermath of Apartheid-era policies. While Solidariteit and Afriforum's campaign to the UN to help dismantle the ANC's affirmative action policies was unsuccessful, as was an appeal made to Amnesty International to support this cause, their campaign against what they see as racial discrimination against the Afrikaner population has not lost momentum and continues to be incredibly successful back home. Their work in court to dismantle affirmative action in the workplace has seen great success, with Afrikaner complainants winning over 90 percent of their court cases when backed by Solidariteit and Afriforum.<sup>18</sup> Affirmative action policies have been slowly introduced to the ANC's labour legislation for the past twenty years. However, every time a new affirmative action policy is signed into law, it is met with protest from the Afrikaner population.<sup>19</sup> Solidariteit and Afriforum both see it as their mission to bring as many cases of discrimination and malpractice to the courts as possible, in order to find faults and loopholes in every affirmative action policy that has been introduced.<sup>20</sup>

While it is increasingly obvious that Solidariteit and Afriforum are intent on continuing the discrimination and hardship faced by black South African workers today, there is abundant evidence that the union itself still has close ties with the pro-Apartheid movement and its supporters. Before 2002, Solidariteit was known as Mynwerkersunie, or the Mineworkers Union, and was one of South Africa's many 'whites-only' trade unions, refusing membership to non-white workers.<sup>21</sup> Dirk Hermann and Flip Buys were two prominent leaders of Mynwerkersunie, and are now the Chief Executive and Chairman of Solidariteit, respectively.<sup>22</sup> Both Hermann and Buys were strong pro-Apartheid campaigners before Nelson Mandela was elected in 1994, the first time suffrage was granted to black citizens of the country.<sup>23</sup> They both strongly believed that a democratised South Africa would be disastrous for Afrikaners and must be stopped at all costs.<sup>24</sup> In 2014, Hermann spoke at South Africa's Annual Labour Law Conference on, 'the tyranny of representivity', and how the democratisation of South Africa and the current government's use of affirmative action in its labour policies was unfair and wrong.<sup>25</sup>

Solidariteit and its leaders have been consistently met with criticism from other trade unions and their leaders. Mtutuzeli Tom, president of NUMSA, made it very clear how he felt about Solidariteit after they ended the 2007 strike early with back-door resolutions. Tom claimed: 'The metal industry in South Africa remains largely untransformed through racist management which is supported by the privileged positions of Solidarity members in the industry.'<sup>26</sup> The Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU), the governing body of all nationally recognised trade unions in South Africa, including NUMSA and Solidariteit, seconded his views. COSATU published a statement calling Solidariteit 'anti-black', and saying that they clearly were only concerned with representing, 'white workers who were beneficiaries of the racist white-only job reservation policy', of the Apartheid era.<sup>27</sup> Coming from both COSATU, an authority body for trade unions in South Africa and NUMSA, a union who has had to work alongside Solidariteit in the past, these claims make explicitly clear that Solidariteit is purposefully attempting to maintain Apartheid-era labour divisions to the detriment of black workers.

Solidariteit's success in achieving this goal has only grown since Afriforum was created in 2006, as the NGO has become increasingly rich and powerful over the last decade. Afriforum now boasts a



membership of over 50,000, with membership costing a minimum of 85 rand per month -- when added with the costs of being a member of Solidariteit -- while most other trade unions average half that amount.<sup>28</sup> The organisation is headed up by CEO Ernest Roets, a contemporary of Hermann and Buys. He shares similar political views, having been quoted as referring to Apartheid as a, 'woolly concept,' in a television appearance last year.<sup>29</sup> The organisation holds its finances very close to its chest, only revealing a financial report to South African journalist Pinky Khoabane after she filed a request under the Promotion of Access to Information Act.<sup>30</sup> Khoabane found that Afriforum makes over 10 million rand a month from membership payments and private donations alone, with the majority of this income being spent on Solidariteit's court cases, international trips, and propaganda campaigns against 'black economic empowerment policies.'<sup>31</sup>

To improve their already stellar record in the courtroom, Afriforum announced in February 2016 that it had established its own private prosecution unit within the organisation, and that Advocate Gerrie Nel – one of South Africa's most well-known State Prosecutors – was planning to leave his life as a civil servant to lead the new unit.<sup>32</sup> Gerrie Nel is known for being one of the most skilled prosecuting lawyers in the world today, having gained international praise for his 'bull dog style' court demeanour.<sup>33</sup> There is no doubt that the addition of Nel will only improve Afriforum's already strong record of upholding Afrikaner advocacy in court. It also makes it even clearer that the growing strength and power of Afriforum is largely responsible for Solidariteit's success at alienating black workers and keeping them under the yolk of Apartheid-era labour policy.

In a world of liberal capitalist democracies, it is not unusual that a lobbyist organisation has been able to wield such power. It is even less unusual that this should occur in South Africa, a country with a young government, a strongly privatised economy, and whose history is rife with racial violence and still bears the visible footprints of colonialism. Until the work of Afriforum and Solidariteit to repeal, weaken, and prevent the implementation of anti-discrimination legislation is seen for what it is and is sanctioned for its racist agenda, the Venpac strikers will just be grouped together with the rest of the black worker population made to suffer daily Apartheid-era labour policy.

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## Economy Behind the Civil War in South Sudan

**ROBERT JACEK WLODARSKI** argues that the key economic reason for South Sudan's lasting civil war is the involvement of foreign powers.

South Sudan has not experienced much peace since its 2011 secession from Sudan. In December 2013, the country fell into a brutal civil war. President Kiir accused the Vice-President, Riek Machar, of attempting a coup d'état, and the world's youngest state was soon divided between government forces and various rebel groups.<sup>1</sup> The largest opposition group is the Sudan's Liberation Movement Army – In Opposition (SLMA-IO), which supports and represents the Nuer ethnic minority.<sup>2</sup> The second opposition faction is the National Salvation Front

(NSF), which has attracted many military figures from both government and SLMA-IO.<sup>3</sup> In addition, the country is shattered by manifold, minor, independent paramilitary groups. The conflict has caused a humanitarian crisis that has killed approximately 50,000 people,<sup>4</sup> and displaced four million more.<sup>5</sup> The war has had a low media coverage around the world. In 2016, President Obama said: 'I feel responsible for murder and slaughter that's taken place in South Sudan that's being not reported on.'<sup>6</sup> Similarly, Pope Francis referred to the conflict as a 'silent drama,' this month.<sup>7</sup>

South Sudan comes 152nd in Nominal GDP country rankings,<sup>8</sup> making it one of the least developed nations in Sub-Saharan Africa. In a country where approximately half of the population lives below the poverty line,<sup>9</sup> sustaining the prolonged civil war has only been made possible by the support of foreign powers. South Sudan's economy, based on oil and agriculture, and natural resources are not sufficient to sustain a conflict. The Juba government's finances, as well as analysis of the arms supply to South Sudan, both prove that foreign help is necessary for the Kiir government. Despite low income from oil, inefficient agriculture, and insufficient tax revenues,<sup>10</sup> South Sudan is capable of fighting a disastrous, brutal, and senseless civil war thanks to the foreign involvement of countries such as China, Iran, Israel, and Sudan.

The rebel soldiers fighting in civil wars across the world's least developed nations are usually not paid.<sup>11</sup> Their main income comes from looting, bribes, and other illegal activity.<sup>12</sup> Rebel groups like SPLM-IO, which claim that oil revenues fund the authoritarian government,<sup>13</sup> often choose oil-drilling companies as the targets of their attacks to stop production and thus weaken Kiir's government.<sup>14</sup> This year alone, rebels kidnapped four oil workers in an attempt to force Chinese and Malaysian business interests from the country.<sup>15</sup>

While the government certainly benefits from oil extraction, the profits are not enough to fight a long civil war. When South Sudan became an independent nation in 2011, its oil revenues constituted 98 percent of its economy.<sup>16</sup> Importantly, Juba still uses Sudan's pipelines, which forces both states to split the revenue.<sup>17</sup> In 2012, the government suspended oil production for over a year due to a dispute with Khartoum over fees for oil transportation.<sup>18</sup> Moreover, the civil war has resulted in decreased oil production. Before the conflict South Sudan generated 350,000 barrels a day; in 2014, this fell to 165,000.<sup>19</sup> It is clear from this that oil production is unstable, with much of the potential revenue lost due to Khartoum. Oil extraction is operated by the The Greater Nile Petroleum Operating Company, which is dominated by China (40 percent), Malaysia (30 percent) and India (25 percent).<sup>20</sup> South Sudan's state-owned Nilepet holds only five percent of its shares.<sup>21</sup> China imports approximately 60 percent of South Sudan's oil,<sup>22</sup> which distinctly presents Juba's overdependence on China as an export market. Revenue from oil extraction, which in the last five months of 2013 was \$1.3 billion,<sup>23</sup> is mainly spent on 'loyalty payments' to local tribal or military leaders.<sup>24</sup> As a result, when global oil prices fell from \$113 to \$98 between August and September 2013, the government was no longer able to cover all the 'stability costs,'<sup>25</sup> leading to the outbreak of violence.<sup>26</sup> The organisation of production means that oil extraction gives few benefits to South Sudan; not only is Juba vulnerable to oil shocks, but most of the profits from oil are in hands of foreign companies.

Hit by the civil war, South Sudanese agriculture remains poor, and fails to profit any side of the conflict. About 80 percent of the population lives in rural areas,<sup>27</sup> with 'subsistence farming providing a living to the vast majority of population.'<sup>28</sup> The production costs in South Sudan are higher than in other Sub-Saharan countries. For example, in Malakal state, labour costs are between five and ten dollars per day; in Uganda and Tanzania they are one and two dollars, respectively.<sup>29</sup> Despite these weak

foundations, the country was formerly a thriving exporter of agricultural products, with 36 percent of non-oil GDP coming from agriculture in 2010.<sup>30</sup> However, the ongoing civil war shattered the state's agriculture. Due to the conflict and frequent droughts, famine was declared in the northern province of Unity.<sup>31</sup> While President Kiir's forces still control areas north of Juba,<sup>32</sup> which have agricultural potential, they are unable to benefit from this control. The condition of agriculture in South Sudan is appalling, it does not allow for development nor can it sustain a long-lasting internal conflict.

Some of country's non-oil revenues come from the government-controlled capital, Juba, but they do not significantly benefit the government. The country's almost non-existent secondary and tertiary sectors are mainly located in Juba.<sup>33</sup> Traditionally, most of the commerce was dominated by Sudanese businesses.<sup>34</sup> However, after independence in 2011, this dramatically changed. Construction, manufacturing, electrical power, consumer goods, and telecommunications are now largely owned by companies from Kenya, Uganda, South Africa, and Ethiopia.<sup>35</sup> These services are, however, limited to a few urban areas.<sup>36</sup> The country lacks basic infrastructure, like roads, which would allow services to spread and develop evenly across the state. In fact, South Sudan has only around 200 kilometres of paved roads.<sup>37</sup> The limited reach of South Sudan's secondary and tertiary sectors preclude them from influencing the progression of the civil war.

Foreign involvement is the most significant enabler of the civil war. One of the sources of weapons to both sides is China. A UN report states that, despite the records of human rights abuse and considerable civilian casualties, the Chinese state-owned company China North Industries sold 20 million dollars in weapons to the government in 2015.<sup>38</sup> This was not the only arm deal between Beijing and Juba; in 2014 alone, 38 million dollars in weapons shipments arrived in Kenya for transportation to South Sudan.<sup>39</sup> The People's Republic of China (PRC) does not aim to arm rebel groups, as it supports Juba. Juba, however, experiences problems keeping track of its weapons during storage and transportation. This allows various rebel units to steal the government's arms.<sup>40</sup> Thus, Beijing, a supporter of President Salva Kiir, unintentionally acts as a source of arms for the all sides of the conflict.

Khartoum is a more reliable source of funding for rebel groups. Khartoum has followed a policy of destabilising its southern neighbour since independence in 2011.<sup>41</sup> In 2015, the South Sudanese Foreign Minister, Barnaba Benjamin, accused Sudan of funding and supporting the rebels.<sup>42</sup> The rebels and Khartoum denied these allegations,<sup>43</sup> but the EU funded Conflict Armament Research shows that some of the weapons found in rebels' magazines in Jonglei state were indeed produced in Sudan in 2014.<sup>44</sup> In addition, Foreign Policy alleges that Khartoum provided Yau Yau rebels with munition as early as 2012.<sup>45</sup> This shows that Sudan's assistance to the rebels has likely been continuous since the South's independence. It is clear that Khartoum's involvement is one of the reasons why the conflict lasts without any prospects for peace.

While most Iranian weapons are sent to the Sudanese government, South Sudanese military groups are also armed by Tehran. Small Arms Survey reports that 'small calibre ammunition produced at Iran's Defence Industry Organisations has appeared with [...] SSLM/A in Unity, and with pastoralists in Eastern Equatoria.'<sup>46</sup> Both of the regions are crucial from the perspective of the civil war, with the former chairman of the SPLM, Ladu Jada Gubek, who is from Eastern Equatoria, changing the dynamics of conflict by switching sides to join NSF.<sup>47</sup> Likely deployed to support the interests of their ally in Khartoum, Iranian weapons are an important factor enabling the protracted civil war.

Allegedly, and perhaps due to Iranian support for rebels in Unity and Eastern Equatoria, Israel provides arms to government forces.<sup>48</sup> The Times of Israel cites a UN report about Israeli weapons fuelling the

civil war in 2014,<sup>49</sup> and the UN Security Council's experts panel were presented with various photos of South Sudanese soldiers carrying arms produced by Israel Military Industries.<sup>50</sup> Moreover, the experts have pointed out that most of security forces loyal to Juba – the police, the SPLA, the bodyguards of government officials – carry Israeli weapons.<sup>51</sup> Therefore, not only Chinese, but also Israeli assistance is crucial for the government to continue fighting.

Some of weapons and vehicles belonging to South Sudanese rebel groups come from Eastern Bloc. These weapons, specifically rifles such as the AK-47, are used by rebel groups in various Sub-Saharan countries and were sometimes produced as early as the 1950s.<sup>52</sup> While the opposition and the Kiir government are both undoubtedly armed by foreign powers attempting to pursue their own interests in the world's youngest state, the civil war is also enabled by the supply of weapons from previous decades of Cold War interventions.

South Sudan, despite a weak and deteriorating economy, is still able to carry out a devastating civil war due mainly to the help of external powers. For the government, warfare is funded partially with the scarce revenues from oil extraction, but primarily from arms deals with countries like Israel and China. The rebels in South Sudan benefit chiefly from looting, corruption, and illegal activities, but also benefit significantly from assistance provided by foreign powers like Iran and Sudan. It is important that all aspects of South Sudan's economy are accompanied by high levels of corruption and rising levels of debt, factors that will restrain future growth and development in the world's youngest nation.

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While tensions are being ratcheted up all over the globe, the Asia-Pacific region is seeing some truly disquieting scenes play out. Some issues are commanding international media attention, like Myanmar's universally condemned handling of the Rohingya refugee crisis and the United States' volatile relationship with North Korea. But beyond these headlines, there are situations going largely unnoticed but that are no less troubling, like the Australian government's treatment of refugees in detention on Manus Island.

Our writers for this issue explore the creeping infringements of human rights, as shown by Kirby Fullerton's examination of LGBT+ discrimination in South Korea and Shivam Mishra's analysis of freedom of speech erosions in India.

Elena Wong investigates the structural factors surrounding situations like the ASEAN response to the Rohingya crisis. The institutional circumstances behind the Philippines' 'war on drugs', spearheaded by President Duterte, are outlined by Jacob Milburn. William Paul shines a spotlight on Singapore, a nation widely considered as a beacon of economic security, and how infighting in the ruling political party has thrown the weaknesses of the nation's semi-democratic system into stark relief.

Together, the stories in this issue serve to highlight that for each success story in the Asia Pacific region - for example, the election in 2015 of Aung San Suu Kyi in Myanmar, widely heralded as a progressive move towards democracy - there is often an unseen, urgent situation forming: the subsequent refugee crisis.

## Surveillance & Sexuality in South Korea

*KIRBY FULLERTON outlines how a growing online community in South Korea is resisting the government's use of surveillance and failure to protect its LGBT citizens.*

In contrast to its northern counterpart, South Korea seldom makes international news for human rights violations. Visions of a vibrant economy, sprawling skyline and the world's most militarised border between North and South Korea probably come to mind before issues of civil liberty. Although the Republic of Korea (South Korea) has declared support of LGBT rights in the first ever United Nations Human Rights Council's 2011 resolution on sexual orientation and gender identity, the government's recent actions suggest otherwise.<sup>1</sup> In May of 2017, *Korea Times*, the nation's pre-eminent English newspaper, reported that the military court had sentenced an army captain to six months in prison for misconduct, for having consensual and private sex with a fellow male soldier.<sup>2</sup> Homosexuality is not criminalised in Korea, but discrimination on grounds of sexuality is not legislated against by the state.<sup>3</sup> This leaves LGBT individuals vulnerable to a variety of potential abuse. Accounts of same-sex practice in Korea can be traced back to elite warriors of the Silla dynasty in 50BC, although homosexual behavior has consistently been condemned in Confucian ethics since its arrival from China in the 1300s. Confucian ethics that privilege heterosexuality and filial piety are present in Korean socio-political values today.<sup>4</sup> This, alongside the successful introduction of protestant Christianity in the 1800s and the growth of neoliberal capitalism in the 1950s,<sup>5</sup> has combined to form the current Korean social and political discourse surrounding LGBT human rights.

The Military Criminal Act of 1962, Article 92-2, allows for the sentencing of servicemen on grounds of misconduct.<sup>6</sup> Even if not on duty, consensual and private homosexual behavior can result in an up to two-year prison sentence. The military's actions become even more striking in the context of South Korea's mandatory two-year conscription for all males, with the alternative of two years in prison for failure to serve. The nation's need to address its security threat, the volatile and nuclear-capable Democratic People's Republic of Korea (North Korea), is used as the government's rationale for both mandatory conscription and punishment of homosexuals within the military. During the presidential election in spring of 2017, the Liberal Party candidate and current President Moon Jae-Im responded to his opponents' comments that gay men weaken the military by asserting that he also opposes homosexuality.<sup>7</sup> As the conviction of the army captain spread in Korean news, allegations arose from the National Military Human Rights Center for Korea that Army Chief of Staff General Jang Jun-gyu had ordered a targeted investigation

to find homosexuals, confiscating mobile phones, searching online gay dating applications and encouraging men to reveal names of gay colleagues.<sup>8</sup>

This level of systematic persecution reveals how far away the country's actions lie from its commitments on United Nations and international documents supporting anti-discrimination and civil liberties.<sup>9</sup> The public and growing anti-LGBT movement, supported by the increasingly politically powerful Korean Christian Church, has muffled the growing resistance from LGBT activists in Korea.<sup>10</sup> The government's decision in 2015 to side with Christian Evangelical groups to stop the annual Seoul Queer Culture Festival is an example of this. LGBT activists spoke out against the military's ruling at the 2017 festival, which drew a crowd of 50,000 attendants, despite 15,000 police present to separate the festival from the crowd of anti-LGBT groups protesting the festival.<sup>11</sup> Although there is growing support and recognition of LGBT people amongst Korean youth, these powerful anti-LGBT groups provide both the justification and backing for the government's discriminatory actions.

South Korea, although successful in establishing itself as one of the world's fastest growing capitalist economies since the 1950s, has largely escaped critique for its failure to protect LGBT populations.<sup>12</sup> Their positive global reputation as a liberal Asian nation and key ally to the United States is a potentially explains the lack of reaction to the government's reluctance to enact comprehensive anti-discrimination legislation. This would not be the first time the United States, and other western nations, have prioritised their security and economic interests over their democratic ideals in the region. After the Korean War (1950-1953), fought largely between the United States and Russia over political ideologies democracy and communism, the United States supported over two decades of military dictators in Korea.<sup>13</sup> This support included assisting their resistance to the student-led democracy movements of the 1980s. Societal change in Korea over LGBT issues must come from within, and international sanctions are often ineffective in their ability to sway opinion of the general public. However, the ability of the Korean government to actively enforce anti-homosexual laws and remain ignored by Western nations, who nevertheless claim to champion democratic ideals.

Online communication technologies have emerged since the mid-1990s as a positive and liberating outlet for queer Korean individuals to seek advice, support, and solidarity.<sup>14</sup> The appearance of online forums for gay, lesbian and queer individuals creates a space for free dialogue regarding social, political, and romantic matters.<sup>15</sup> The ability to remain anonymous online is a major benefit to individuals in a society where targeted outings by anti-LGBT groups, supported by the Christian Church, are still a source of anxiety.<sup>16</sup> This results in hesitancy to attend LGBT events in public, and the preference to meet other LGBT individuals online in an open yet secure environment. This makes the government's

alleged use of online dating applications to systematically expose gay men in the military even more invasive. Online hackers are also a concern for many lesbian women: after hacking one of the most popular online lesbian forums in 2016, an anonymous hacker published the identities of the women on the site.<sup>17</sup> As a precaution against hacking, most lesbian online sites now require a National Korean ID card to create an account.<sup>18</sup> LGBT individuals, who already feel as if they must hide their sexuality from employers, teachers, parents and friends, seek online communities as a space to learn about sexual health, share stories of their lived queer experience, and find romantic partners. The actions of the government and anti-LGBT hackers aiming to expose their identity serves to limit even further their ability to use online spaces to express themselves and cope with the lived experience of being Korean in a Korea that largely does not recognise or tolerate their sexuality.

Despite these fears, LGBT Korean YouTubers are using their online presence to raise awareness of LGBT issues to a Korean and global audience. In an interview, prominent lesbian YouTuber Kim Usang stated that she changed her name to Kim when she created the channel because, 'I just want to express my, my view, my opinion, my purpose. Be normal. We are normal. The most normal name in Korea is first name Kim. So I just wanted to be a Kim, to be a normal.'<sup>19</sup> Kim has set up a personal messenger so that her viewers can reach out to her with questions and share their stories in an anonymous but intimate way. This shows the positive capacity for LGBT individuals in Korea to communicate in a nation that, although economically and culturally rich, does not provide an open tolerant atmosphere or comprehensive anti-discrimination legislation regarding LGBT issues.

While nation-states often fail to monitor the actions of treaty signatories, online communication platforms allow more global accountability of the South Korean government, as international organisations like Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch quickly reported the military court's ruling.<sup>20</sup> In 2015, the United Nations Human Rights Committee called upon the government to end the ban, supported by members of Korea's most liberal political party, the Justice Party.<sup>21</sup>

Amidst growing global security concerns surrounding North Korea, it remains important to examine the actions of the South Korean government, assuring that the promises made to protect and support human rights at the United Nations are more than performative gestures. In South Korea, a technologically adept country, online communications emerge as both a liberating platform for anonymous dialogue and a confining space for individuals who live in a nation that does not ensure the protection of their sexual orientation. For growing LGBT activism in Seoul, the question of whether to hide or seek indeed holds risks, but also includes the promise of a more tolerant open Korean society.

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## Hidden Cracks in Singapore's Legitimacy Strategy

*WILLIAM PAUL investigates how hidden conflicts in Singapore are starting to show the cracks in the unity and legitimacy strategies of the ruling People's Action Party.*

Singapore has become something of a golden calf among UK commentators recently, especially among supporters of Brexit. However, grand visions of London becoming a 'Singapore on

Thames' and desires to model the economy on the 'Singaporean miracle' are a sort of pseudo-economic Orientalist understanding of the city-state, which exoticizes and fetishizes the small island state's seemingly invincible economy.<sup>1</sup> Yet whilst Singapore has much to admire as a nation, there has been little report of the numerous hidden challenges for the ruling People's Action Party (PAP), which, with recent infighting, mishandling of the presidential election, and economic challenges, is facing a difficult balancing act in retaining the legitimacy that it has crafted for itself since 1959.

Firstly, it is worth revisiting much of what makes Singapore a much-vaunted example of economic strength around the world. As a semi-authoritarian state that has generated consistent economic growth and successfully retained and redistributed many of the benefits of this at home, Singapore has defied many political theories on the essentiality of democracy for development. Singaporeans pride themselves on a plentiful public housing system,<sup>2</sup> as well as extensive subsidies for many public goods, such as Hawker centres,<sup>3</sup> where Michelin star cuisine is available to all for the cost of about four pounds.<sup>4</sup> Besides this, it is internationally renowned for its greenery, efficient use of limited space, ongoing prosperity and a dynamic, vibrant and inclusive culture.

Yet, like all semi-democratic systems, there are plenty of cracks hidden below the surface, some of which are now seeing the light. Perhaps most the obvious of these was the recent, highly irregular public dispute between the children of Lee Kuan Yew, Singapore's first – and most famous – Prime Minister. David Cameron's infamous criticism of the dangers of social media in 2010 resonate in this instance;<sup>5</sup> Lee Hsein Loong, Yew's oldest son and current Prime Minister, was accused of using the 'organs of the state' against his younger brother and sister over a dispute about their father's house.<sup>6</sup> Furthermore, Loong has been alleged of grooming his son for future leadership of Singapore.<sup>7</sup> This spat played itself out on Facebook. Conflict between the siblings persists, with Lee Kuan Yew recently telling reporters that he was unaware if the dispute relating to their father's house had been solved.<sup>8</sup> Lee Kuan Yew was meticulous in his attention to unity amongst Singapore's political elite, a highly regarded attribute that ensured at least the perception of a common goal and a focused leadership achieving its socio-economic aims. In a country where laws are strict on government criticism – the Sedition Act criminalises any acts or statements that can be perceived as a threat to the government – this highly public dispute demonstrates that the Singaporean leadership is not as unified as it might have previously seemed, and reveals some of the hidden cracks permeating a divided leadership.<sup>9</sup> It is also interesting that a disagreement that may not have previously had many consequences for the PAP has flared up to the extent where many of the comments made resonate – especially about Loong already grooming the next-in-line. This somewhat suggests that the earlier basis for political legitimacy has somewhat slipped and Singaporeans are wanting more. The PAP may have to change in order to provide this.

The recent presidential election highlights how these old legitimacies are no longer so secure, and that the demand for more forceful democratic institutions is growing. Singapore operates as a tightly controlled democratic system, with elections taking place under strict requirements set by the PAP. Under the guise of racial harmony, this year's presidential election was only open to Malay citizens, one of Singapore's minority ethnicities, as they had not held the presidency for any of the five preceding terms.<sup>10</sup> The criteria were further reduced later, with requirements for all private sector candidates to have been a senior executive of a company with equity of at least 500 million Singapore dollars.<sup>11</sup> This disqualified two potential – and popular – candidates,<sup>12</sup> resulting in the non-election win by default of Halimah Yacob, who took office in September. This result was greeted with active pushback. Eugene

Tan, a Singaporean law professor, has identified a 'groundswell of strong views' aimed 'at the election process and the government, which is seen as exclusive and disenfranchising'.<sup>13</sup> A popular political blog, Consensus SG, pointed out that there 'is hardly anything fair about setting the rules of the game in one's favour, and then winning at it', concluding that the 'PAP cannot continue to think that it can rely on the goodwill of the Singaporean people... to remain in power'.<sup>14</sup> The movement for democracy and calls for greater transparency, accountability and inclusion have grown in Singapore as the state prospers economically and strengthens its welfare net. Yet this has alienated many Singaporeans that are happy with the current system. Opinions are divided on the ongoing viability and the opportunities for reform, and many are less convinced in the ongoing legitimacy of the government than at any time before. Furthermore, its claim of legitimacy through ongoing success is losing traction and does not allow it to pass off events such as these so easily any more.

It is not just through the presidential election and infighting in which the PAP has stumbled into its current situation. The focus on the infighting could have taken a backseat if the government had a strong record in recent years. Yet, this record was made notorious in recent talks due to its symbol of malaise. There are pressures over migration, which has dropped off due to self-identified weaknesses in the construction, marine, and offshore engineering sectors, and which provides an essential part of economic production.<sup>15</sup> Singapore Airlines reported a nine per cent drop in operating profit last year after facing weakening demand and competition from regional partners,<sup>16</sup> whilst strained transport infrastructure was not helped by the announcement that zero car licenses would be granted in 2018,<sup>17</sup> leading Singaporeans to grumble about recent breakdowns in the service.<sup>18</sup> Singapore is a dynamic, engaging, and in many ways - as the Brexit advocates claim - miraculous nation, using the most of a tiny island in its presence as a state. Yet there are hidden problems and issues arising to the surface: ones that those demanding the UK follow the 'Singapore model' should take care to heed.

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## Duterte's Deadly Drug War

*JACOB MILBURN explores the less apparent, long-term explanations of Duterte's Deadly Drug War.*

Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte won the support of many voters while campaigning for the presidency by promising to crack down on the drug trade.<sup>1</sup> A populist who is known for his use of inflammatory and offensive rhetoric, he argued that drug crime was one of the most serious issues that the country faced and sensationally threatened to kill drug dealers and users in order to eliminate it.<sup>2</sup> Since his election, he has overseen an extrajudicial campaign of nominally anti-drug violence that has led to the deaths of thousands of innocent people.<sup>3</sup> Many people are aware of this so-called 'war on drugs' because it has been extensively documented in the media, but not everyone knows why it is happening. It is worth looking into the backstory of today's events to determine why Duterte's use of violence is so popular, why extrajudicial killings are so widely tolerated in the Philippines, and why the brutal drug war is allowed to continue.

President Duterte has been harshly criticized by the international

media for his endorsement of extreme violence against alleged drug dealers and users, but he remains popular domestically because he has managed to convince many people that this violence is both justified and necessary.<sup>4</sup> He has achieved this by depicting drug crime in the Philippines as an existential crisis for the country that only a brutal approach like his can end. At campaign rallies he warned that the Philippines would face an 'imminent disaster'<sup>5</sup> if the drug trade was allowed to continue, suggested that the country was at risk of being 'fractured',<sup>6</sup> and claimed that he was running for president to 'save the Republic'.<sup>7</sup> This political strategy he employed, known as 'the performance of crisis',<sup>8</sup> is commonly used by populists. Consisting of two parts, it involves the creation of a perception that there is a looming crisis, which in Duterte's case was the imminent disaster that would be caused by drug crime, and then the suggestion that only strong leadership and decisive actions can save 'the people' from the crisis.<sup>9</sup> Duterte's performance of crisis and the narrative he created about drug crime has not only allowed him to win elections: it has also enabled him to justify almost any acts, no matter how heinous, as necessary for ensuring public order.

Duterte's war on drugs has been characterized by exploitation, terror, and extrajudicial killings.<sup>10</sup> State police who are supposed to be upholding the law have been committing crimes against people they are sworn to protect and have victimised some of the most vulnerable people in Philippine society.<sup>11</sup> In fact, as Amnesty International alleges, the Philippine police have 'systematically targeted poor and defenceless people'<sup>12</sup> rather than the drug kingpins that Duterte claimed they would. They have also planted evidence on suspects, paid vigilantes to kill people on their behalf, and stolen from their victims.<sup>13</sup> The situation is made even worse by the fact that police officers are effectively rewarded for abusing their power; they receive cash bonuses for killing suspects instead of arresting them.<sup>14</sup> Because police now kill 97 percent of suspects in their anti-drug operations, it is fair to conclude that they have simply been killing for money.<sup>15</sup> Advocacy groups have alleged that the police have violated human rights by carrying out these extrajudicial killings, but Duterte has endorsed their behaviour and promised to shield them from prosecution, stating that they will 'never go to prison'.<sup>16</sup>

It's worth noting that Duterte's willingness to endorse and justify extrajudicial killings is nothing new. Prior to his election as President, he served for nearly two decades as Mayor of Davao City, where he allowed death squads to operate freely and kill accused criminals with impunity.<sup>17</sup> In his time as Mayor, these death squads were responsible for killing over one thousand people, including children and petty criminals.<sup>18</sup> Just as he would later do in his Presidential election campaign, he framed the killing of alleged criminals as a method of achieving security and peace, and although it may be counterintuitive to suggest that death squads would bring about peace, Duterte has claimed that his approach transformed Davao into one of the safest cities in the world.<sup>19</sup> In reality, the city still has some of the highest crime rates in the Philippines, but it has been easy for Duterte to dismiss facts like this that contradict his narrative.<sup>20</sup> When he was once asked about Davao's high murder rate, for instance, he claimed that most of the murder victims were criminals who were killed by vigilantes.<sup>21</sup> Ultimately, because he was re-elected Mayor multiple times, it is clear that many people in Davao believed Duterte's message that allowing death squads to operate freely was making the city safer. Popular support may seem paradoxical, but in the case of Davao the widespread allowance of death squads can be explained by the fact that extrajudicial killings were normalised decades ago in the Philippines when the country faced a communist insurgency.<sup>22</sup>

It is important to recognise that death squads and extrajudicial killings are not a new phenomenon in the Philippines and that Duterte's war on drugs is heavily influenced by the country's violent past. The use

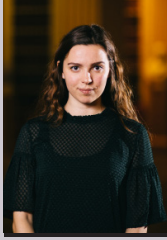
of death squads in particular can be traced back to the 1980s, when a communist militia known as the New People's Army (NPA) was at the height of its influence in the Philippines. At the time, the NPA, which had been engaged in a long conflict with the Philippine government since it first emerged in the 1960s, controlled the entire city of Davao and used terror to maintain their authority, killing police officers for their weapons and stealing money from residents to fund their operations. It is important to recognise that death squads and extrajudicial killings are not a new phenomenon in the Philippines and that Duterte's war on drugs is heavily influenced by the country's violent past. The use of death squads in particular can be traced back to the 1980s, when a communist militia known as the New People's Army (NPA) was at the height of its influence in the Philippines.<sup>23</sup> At the time, the NPA, which had been engaged in a long conflict with the Philippine government since it first emerged in the 1960s, controlled the entire city of Davao and used terror to maintain their authority, killing police officers for their weapons and stealing money from residents to fund their operations.<sup>24</sup> The citizens of Davao eventually began to resist NPA rule in 1986 when an anti-communist movement called *Alta Masa* was created by Franco Calida, a Philippine Army officer who was sent to Davao by the government to take control of the city.<sup>25</sup> Calida's *Alta Masa* movement was based upon his belief that the only way to defeat the NPA was to 'give them a dose of their own medicine', relying on terror tactics just as the NPA's operations had.<sup>26</sup> Calida used government money to provide the civilians who joined the movement with guns and encouraged them to kill rebels with impunity, which many did, killing anyone who was alleged to be a communist without fear of retribution.<sup>27</sup> Although tolerating these extrajudicial killings was clearly problematic, the government initially supported the *Alta Masa* movement openly because they viewed it as an effective and inexpensive method of combating communists; President Corazon Aquino even publicly praised *Alta Masa* in a speech, calling them 'the example in our fight against communism.'<sup>28</sup> Unfortunately, this endorsement of *Alta Masa* by the government caused the vigilante violence associated with the movement to be increasingly perceived as legitimate and led to the formation of copycat death squads in other parts of the country that began to commit abuses in the name of fighting communism.<sup>29</sup> Perhaps unsurprisingly, Duterte has repeated some of Calida's and Aquino's ill-advised actions in his war on drugs and has consequently created a similarly chaotic and deadly environment. Like Calida, he has used government money - in the form of bonuses offered to police officers for killing suspects - to incentivise the killing of perceived enemies of the state, and like President Aquino, he has endorsed vigilante violence that has spiralled out of control and led to thousands of deaths.<sup>30</sup>

President Duterte's deadly war on drugs has been consistently criticised in the international media and decisively condemned by NGOs, some of whom have extensively documented the extrajudicial killings that have taken place, but it is tacitly tolerated by the international community, which has been slow to respond to the crisis and largely reluctant to condemn Duterte's actions. The United States, a longstanding ally of the Philippines, initially took some steps under the Obama administration, expressing concerns about human rights abuses and suspending certain foreign aid programs, but it reversed course under the Trump administration.<sup>31</sup> Current U.S. Secretary of State Rex Tillerson has almost entirely avoided addressing the issue of human rights violations and has maintained a cordial relationship with the Philippine government, while President Trump has even expressed support for Duterte's actions, stating that he had done a 'unbelievable job' of tackling drug crime.<sup>32</sup> The European Union has expressed some concerns about the situation in the Philippines, with

the European Parliament urging the Philippine government to put an end to the extrajudicial killings, but like the United States, it has not taken any concrete action against Duterte.<sup>33</sup> Japan and China, two of the most influential countries in the Asia-Pacific region, have also been unwilling to address the problem.<sup>34</sup> Japan's government has avoided publicly criticising Duterte and continued to invest heavily in the Philippines, while China's government has publicly endorsed the war on drugs, and even suggested that they would be willing to assist in the anti-drug campaign by providing small arms to the Philippine government.<sup>35</sup> Ultimately, it is clear that because some of the world's most powerful countries have chosen not to take any meaningful action against the Philippine government or even criticise Duterte for his actions, the international community has allowed the brutal drug war and the human rights abuses associated with it to continue.

Looking beyond the headlines, after examining Duterte's history, and the history of the Philippines, it is evident that he was able to win the support of voters by promising to wage a brutal war on drug crime and able to maintain popularity while doing so, in spite of using violence against his own citizens. It is likely the public had been accustomed to tolerating extrajudicial killings since the *Alta Masa* movement emerged and trusted Duterte because of his supposed effectiveness in tackling crime as Mayor of Davao. It is also possible to argue that the war on drugs has been allowed to continue because of the international community's inaction, and reasonable to conclude that because most of the countries that could have affected change in the Philippines by punishing Duterte's government have not done so, the situation is unlikely to improve in the near future.

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*Asymmetry between the agendas of the leaders and the citizens in a society is hardly unheard of. States seeking independence, power or security can easily cause rulers to take questionable measures, but the common argument of this section's authors is that it often comes down to how we critically uncover it, or at least that we aim to. By focussing on various incidents of hiding and seeking in this issue, we encourage you to ask the questions in both current*

*and long-lasting issues in European political culture.*

*Thus in this issue's profile piece, Katja Nacevski tells the little known*

*story of 'the Erased' population as a result of Slovenian independence and their long battle for justice and acknowledgement. Often referred to as a shameful chapter in Slovenian history characterised by violence and suppression, the population has remained silenced and unknown for years.*

*In uncovering the greatest data leak in Swedish history, Adam Frisk questions whether the recent turn of events ever became possible due to the leaders or the public. Arguably the Swedish government went to great lengths to hide their mistakes, but according to him the aftermath might point in the direction of a population problematically indifferent to seeking answers.*

## Cover-ups in One of the World's Most Transparent Democracies

*ADAM FRISK uncovers the greatest digital data leak in Sweden's history and investigates whether its successful suppression is the fault of the government or the public.*

Sweden is often hailed as a shining example of transparency, openness and democracy – and with good reason. It currently ranks fourth on Transparency International's Corruption Perception Index,<sup>1</sup> third on The Economist's Democracy Index,<sup>2</sup> and second on Reporters Without Borders' World Press Freedom Index.<sup>3</sup> Freedom of the press was first introduced in the constitution in 1766, earlier than in any other country, and has since acquired the status of a widely-held consensus in political life. Following a massive IT-related scandal in July 2017 however, the level of trust that is enjoyed between government, parliament and the people has become an issue worthy of both discussion and critical assessment. Perhaps the shining ideals of transparency and public information and the consensus surrounding them are becoming more and more opaque within the dusky corridors of power.

Transportstyrelsen, the Transport Agency, is the Swedish authority in charge of, among other things, safety matters concerning road, air, and sea traffic. In April 2015, the board's IT services were outsourced to IBM and privatised, as this was believed to serve the need for a more efficient handling of IT issues. The issue was so pressing that in May 2015, the board's director general Maria Ågren signed a document allowing for certain laws concerning the protection of secret information to be ignored in the procurement process. Compare it, if you will, to speeding because you are in a hurry.

After later concerns within the Swedish Security Service that this might have exposed secret information, an investigation was initiated against Ågren in January 2016, and she was subsequently fired by the government in January 2017. The reason for her dismissal was, however, never disclosed to the press, nor to the public at that time. Instead, by July 6, information was leaked to the press confirming that Ågren had pleaded guilty and had been convicted to a 70 000 kronor fine, approximately £6,300, for 'carelessness with classified information.'<sup>4</sup> Her decision to abandon laws concerning classified material had had serious, and probably unforeseen, consequences; information concerning Swedish military vehicles and their locations, as well as Swedish citizens' driving licenses, were now in the hands of foreign IT workers, without security clearance by the Swedish government.<sup>5</sup> A minor speeding offense now seemed to have resulted in a major traffic accident.

The media reports were followed by public outcry; with the opposition parties being quick to condemn both the scandal and the government's handling of it. Prime Minister Stefan Löfven, the head of a minority coalition government of the Social Democrats and the Green Party, remained silent for days until finally, on July 23, he called the situation a 'train wreck.'<sup>6</sup> In the scandal's aftermath, three motions of No Confidence, filed against three separate ministers were issued by the opposition, which, if they gain parliamentary majority, forces a minister to leave their post. Two of the ministers (the Minister of Infrastructure and the Minister of the Interior) resigned voluntarily as it became clear that they no longer enjoyed the support of the legislative body. The Defence Minister, after two opposition parties withdrew their support from the motion against him, could stay on his post by a slim parliamentary margin.

As the government's handling of the data breach is currently still under investigation by Parliament's Constitution Committee, new information continues to surface. The scandal, popularised as 'Transportgate' on Twitter, has raised serious concerns about the attitude towards and knowledge of delicate IT security issues within Sweden's public authorities. However, it potentially also sheds light on the political culture within Swedish government and its attitude to transparency.

By managing to avoid public disclosure of the information on the potential data breach, the Swedish government displayed an obvious wish for it not to reach the public, or the remaining parties of parliament. This, despite the weak nature of Mr. Löfven's two-party government, with parliament holding six additional parties, and broad cross-party cooperation seeming desirable in a situation where national safety is a genuine concern.

Instead, the affair has to some extent facilitated a new political culture in Sweden. Early after the news broke, the four right-wing opposition parties collectively known as The Alliance made clear of their intentions to hold Motions of No Confidence against the three ministers mentioned above. This move was unprecedented in Swedish political history. In 37 years, there have only been nine motions of No Confidence, despite being perhaps the most powerful parliamentary tool there is, none of these gained majority support in the Swedish Parliament.<sup>7</sup> An additional Motion was initiated by the nationalist Sweden Democrats against the Prime Minister himself, but failed to rally a majority behind them. This followed a public statement by the party's leader saying he was convinced that 'someone or even [the Prime Minister] is lying.'<sup>8</sup> The ramifications of such a blatant display of distrust between government and opposition are certainly great, and their effects on the political discourse should be taken seriously, even more so in a country with a long tradition of stable governments and of achieving cross-party agreements. Threats of Motions of No Confidence are now put forward with a lot more ease than what was deemed normal.

The second point of interest is how the crisis revealed the inner

workings of the government and how they appear to function in an all-but constructive manner. According to the government itself, the Interior Minister and Defence Minister both knew of the data breach in early 2016. The Minister of IT and Infrastructure, Anna Johansson, who was formally responsible for the Transport Agency, claims to not have been notified until as late as January 2017, the same time Prime Minister Löfven supposedly was being informed. Both of their secretaries had received the information much earlier, but failed to pass it on. We can do little else than assume that these statements are true, but it is nevertheless astonishing. All opposition parties heavily criticised the government for lacking transparency and communication within its offices. The ministers' failure to discuss such vital matters with the Prime Minister was also looked upon with great disapproval. 'The members of a cabinet must talk to each other', said Liberal leader Jan Björklund bluntly.<sup>9</sup> The lack of internal communication was considered particularly remarkable since the current government recently claimed to have established a national 'Security Council' with the Prime Minister, Defence Minister and Interior Minister as permanent members – a council which has now been unable to provide evidence of any meetings ever taking place.<sup>10</sup>

The government itself did however not seem to share this concern. Prime Minister Löfven explained his government's workflow as 'traditional management culture in Sweden',<sup>11</sup> and the demands of his ministers to resign were treated as political attacks rather than well-needed measures. In fact, Interior Minister Anders Ygeman did indeed step down, but was immediately relocated to a high-profile position of Leader of the Social Democrats in Parliament. This raises questions about what allegiances are actually dominating Swedish politics – those towards fellow party members, or those towards the national and public interest? With regards to transparency and democratic accountability, a big measure of introspection seems to be needed in Swedish current politics, and perhaps especially within the Social Democratic Party, a party whose position as a power centre has been consolidated and cemented over the last century.

Another pressing point of concern is the public reaction to the revelations. The Swedish public itself constitutes a vital aspect of this scandal that went to the core of its country's self-image. While both the government's and the opposition's handling of the crisis was widely condemned,<sup>12</sup> this has not resulted in any clear loss in popular support for the government. In fact, following the scandal, some polls showed that support for the Social Democrats was increasing.<sup>13</sup> While this might be a sign of ideological integrity among Swedes staying true to their political beliefs even in the midst of a political scandal, it could also point to political indifference. Not even the public's confidence for Stefan Löfven, who as Prime Minister holds the final responsibility for this crisis, has suffered negative consequences – as these lines are written, he remains the most trusted party leader in the country.<sup>14</sup>

In their 1963 book, Gabriel Almond and Sidney Verba identified three stages of political culture within a society: a participant culture, a subject culture, and a parochial culture, listed here by decreasing levels of public political participation. The subject culture is characterised by a populace that is somewhat politically aware, but passive.<sup>15</sup> The recent events might or might not be plausible evidence to label the Swedish populace as such, but poll data illustrate a slight indifference to the serious mishandling of information concerning their safety and its non-existent effects on their support for the politicians responsible. When considering the future of transparency in Sweden, one should keep a close eye on the Swedish public's role in allowing, maybe even encouraging, a typically subject political culture to develop.

All in all, the IT scandal in the Transport Agency goes to the heart of the Swedish self-image. It was characterised by cover-ups rather than

transparency, partisan attacks rather than trust, and indifference rather than public engagement. Though it would be going as far as to completely discredit Sweden and its many merits in democratic accountability and transparency, there is however an evident rift in normal political practice; that of striving for openness and the dawn of a new, more cynical political culture: a culture where the rulers can hide and where the people don't seek.

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## Profile Piece: The Erased in Slovenia

*KATJA NACEVSKI takes a closer look at the victims of the Slovenian independence, 'The Erased'. Will Slovenian history hide them forever, or should we be seeking to make their histories heard?*

The self-declared Slovenian government announced an independence referendum for 26th December 1990. More than 88 percent of the electorate voted for a new state, separate from Yugoslavia.<sup>1</sup> Following the declaration of independence on 25 June 1991 and a 10-day war with the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, the Republic of Slovenia became a sovereign state; this marks the beginning of The Erased.<sup>2</sup>

The Erased were born in other Yugoslavian republics, but were living in Slovenia at the time of the declaration. With the term Erased, we refer to the group of people who were erased from the register of permanent residence in Slovenia after independence was declared in 1991.<sup>3</sup> They either did not want to, could not, or did not know that they needed to make new citizenship arrangements after independence. Consequently, they lost their citizenship.<sup>4</sup> This denied them official documents and access to benefits of the newly developed welfare state. The transformation from the multinational identity of Yugoslavia to a nationalist identity of Slovenia is recognised as one of the most severe acts of the Slovenian transition to independence. In 2007, Freedom House described the situation by stating that 'after 15 years of independence, ethnocentrism and high levels of social intolerance toward individuals from other former Yugoslav republics remained a serious problem in Slovenia.'<sup>5</sup>

In 1992, the Slovenian Ministry of Interior Affairs erased a total of 25,671 names from the register of permanent residence of Slovenia. Out of these, 14,775 were men and 10,896 women.<sup>6</sup> 5,360 were children at the time, however these numbers do not include children who were born to the Erased after 1992.<sup>7</sup> Until August 2015, 1,899 applications for permanent residence permits were received. The joint number of rejected and dismissed applications and suspended cases was 1,350, while 312 applications were at the time still awaiting decisions.<sup>8</sup> By 2009, only 10,943 had settled their status, but 13,426 remained without any kind of regulated legal status in Slovenia after 17 years of erasure.<sup>9</sup> In 2002, the Association of the Erased Residents of Slovenia was formed in Ptuj.<sup>10</sup> The issue peaked during the 2004 presidential election, when a technical law on the Erased further obstructed the process of solving their legal status.<sup>11</sup> Until 1 October 2015, the state attorney's office directly received 23 cases, of which 15 have been processed. All 15 were rejected.<sup>12</sup> It is important to note, only since 2008 has the government



shown more interest in solving the problem.<sup>13</sup>

Aleksandar Todorović was born in the Federalist Republic of Serbia, Yugoslavia. He was erased in 1993, when he went to register the birth of his daughter. The clerical worker, who was to handle the registration, informed him that he was an illegal citizen and could thus not be listed as the father on the birth certificate. She wrote 'unknown' into the section. He lost his citizenship as well as his fatherhood.<sup>14</sup> When researching the Erased, his name appears on multiple occasions. He was the founder of the Association of the Erased Residents of Slovenia.<sup>15</sup> The problematic issue became more prominent in mainstream media, he emerged as one of the main advocates for achieving a resolution.<sup>16</sup> To bring attention to the Erased, he started by demonstrating and going on hunger strikes.<sup>17</sup> As a consequence of being Erased, he could not get employment and filed a lawsuit against the government.<sup>18</sup> His presence was often prominent in public discussions and the media often focused on him. Unfortunately, this frequently made him a target of both verbal and physical assaults by unknown individuals of the public.<sup>19</sup> The latest incident happened on 22 July 2013, when a couple of intoxicated strangers attacked him in a restaurant in Ptuj.<sup>20</sup> Todorović alluded that many of the assaults on his person were connected to hate speech, which had been expressed towards the Erased by high-ranking politicians and officials. Unlike some of the people he was fighting for, his story did not have a happy ending. He was reported missing by his family on 21 January 2014 and later found dead more than three weeks later.<sup>21</sup>

Public opinion about the problem took a long time to shift. When the 2008 election brought to power a centre-left government, the number of people bringing attention to the issue and calling for solutions had considerably increased.<sup>22</sup> The Slovenian government adopted a law in 2012 to finally provide the Erased with compensation.<sup>23</sup> Additionally, some of them also took their cases to the European Court of Justice (ECJ), but the ECJ rejected the suit against the Slovenian government made on behalf of the Erased. The court claimed that they were satisfied with the settlement, which had been put in place by the national government. By doing so, it made clear that it would no longer consider cases dealing with the Erased.<sup>24</sup> The last date for making compensation claims was 18 June, 2017.<sup>25</sup>

Whilst the problem has yet again become background news, the Erased still face unresolved issues. The legal framework remains insufficient for the regulation of legal statuses.<sup>26</sup> The government passed amendments in 2010 to the Act Regulating the Legal Status of Citizens of Former Yugoslavia Living in the Republic of Slovenia, but the procedure is lengthy and options remain narrow. Many of the procedures require resources, particularly if applications need to be made from abroad. Current Slovenian law also states that if a person has been absent for more than 10 years, they are not allowed to regain their status.<sup>27</sup> Arguably this makes little sense, since the legislation was adopted 18 years after the erasure.

Another symbolic and more specific issue is that of housing provisions for the Erased. After independence, the Erased were not allowed to buy real estate in which they lived based on housing rights acquired in the time of socialism. The right to buy apartments was reserved for Slovenian nationals. An issue that remains unclear is the validity of lease contracts for housing in which the Erased lived before their citizenship and legal statuses were taken away, after when they were deported or prevented to return.<sup>28</sup> Moreover, the Slovenian government has yet to issue a formal apology for the erasure. Through the discourse of othering and hostility, they were objectified. Apologies were extended by Minister of Interior Affairs Katarina Kresal and the president of the National Assembly Pavel Gantar during their time in office (2008-2011).<sup>29</sup> Some have suggested that the appropriate method of apology

would be a resolution adopted by the National Assembly, containing the apology and a firm commitment towards remedying the violations.<sup>30</sup>

Citizenship holds the central question of legitimacy for individuals in society. Status of citizenship is political: it allows people to vote and appoint representatives to national assemblies and city councils.<sup>31</sup> It is legal: permitting people to settle disputes between themselves, issues with the state and their personal statuses.<sup>32</sup> Lastly, understood in social terms it concerns the integration of an individual in society.<sup>33</sup> To be without citizenship is seen as falling outside of the socialisation process. In the case of the Erased, this distinction is useful to consider since it allows them a place in the contemporary public debate. Even though they were foreigners, they could not seek protection under the 1951 UN Convention for Refugees.<sup>34</sup>

Facts were mostly hidden from the public until 2002. At the time, the ruling coalition, as well as its opposition and most of the Slovenian public did not contribute to solving the controversy.<sup>35</sup> It will be interesting to see how Slovenian history will incorporate this difficult and often referred to as shameful chapter of its transition. Following the compensation settlement, the topic has yet again faded from mainstream media and discussions. Yet, the number of people who are still waiting to resolve their status shocks most of the public when light is shed on the issue. Most see themselves as objects victimised by the political regime. Due to their unresolved issues, they were deprived of their power, subjectivity and activity and often hidden to the rest of the world.

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groups deciding to act on their own taking control of their communities

The history of Latin America in the last half century has been one of turbulences and change. With great swings in the political groups in control in all states from hard right to hard left and vice versa. Today there are still many struggles and crisis within the region, despite the lack of attention from the international community. These hidden struggles shape the politics of the region with many different

and their lives by rejecting the old systems of control.

In this issue Ewan Forrest takes a look into the Zapatista communities of southern Mexico and their unique and radical solutions for the many problems that globalisation, capitalism and poverty have caused them. Kattel Ané goes into how the modern day sugar industry in Mexico has begun to destroy the natural environments and indigenous communities that inhabit these areas. Dante Philip writes on the Venezuelan economic crisis and the inventive ways that many people have begun to adapt to the situation through the use of Bitcoin.

## A Bitter Aftertaste: Brazilian Sugar Industry, Land Grabs, and Deforestation

*KATTEL ANÉ discusses the high costs and devastating impact of sugar cultivation in Brazilian communities.*

**S**irinhaém, Pernambuco, Brazil: a medium-sized fishing community of 53 families lives between seventeen islands in the estuary of the Sirinhaém river. Since 1914, this traditional community of mixed indigenous and African heritage has been peacefully living off the Susuru fish and clams, selling them at local inland markets to tourists passing by.<sup>1</sup> However, as recently as 2012, militia police have been reported breaking property, burning houses and small farms, and pillaging the land. Families have been forced to flee to the mainland, and allocated to a nearby favela.

The militia in charge of the operation was a small, privately hired, professionally trained group rented out by a company called Usina Trapiche, which specializes in the production of sugarcane for use by companies such as Coca-Cola and PepsiCo. Although, 'Trapiche did relocate most of the families in favelas on a steep hillside on the outskirts of the Sirinhaém...they have no land for basic subsistence crops. Families were given small and basic homes with bars on their windows.'<sup>2</sup> Despite the community's persistence in returning to their islands and rebuilding their homes, their houses are repeatedly burned down.<sup>3</sup>

This scenario is not new to the peoples of the region. Since the early 1980's, Usina Trapiche had been trying to gain access to the land in this estuary. Since the demand for sugar dipped in the late 1980s, the company lost interest in the land, leaving the community relatively untouched.<sup>4</sup> However, since 1998, the market for sugar, and especially the cheaply-produced and particularly sweet Brazilian strain, surged, re-incentivizing the use for this now-valuable land. By 2002, the company had gained legal right to the land due to the ambiguity in the delimitation of the boundaries of the communities' borders.

This problem is even more widespread. Pernambuco State as a whole has one of the highest levels of land conflicts in Brazil. In 2012 alone there were a recorded, '42 [land conflicts] directly related to the production of sugarcane.'<sup>5</sup> Brazil nationally was producing 20 percent of the world's sugar and 34 percent of its ethanol [a derivative of sugarcane] in 2005,<sup>6</sup> and constituted '38 percent of world trade in sugar.'<sup>7</sup> Sugar is also a valuable commodity in that it is, 'also used in ethanol or as an ingredient in industrial products such as cement or glue,'<sup>8</sup> in addition to its presence in confectionary. As a result of the economic value of the industry, the inactivity of the Brazilian government and complacency of the international community as a whole, 'at least 4m hectares of land have been acquired for sugar production in 100 large-scale land deals since 2000, although given the lack of transparency around such deals, the area is likely to be much greater.'<sup>9</sup>

Not only do these land grabs have severe ecological and economic ramifications, they are also often characterized by blatant violations of

human rights. In order for a 'land acquisition' to be considered a 'land grab', it must violate human rights, especially those of women, and lack free, prior, and informed consent, also referred to as FPIC.<sup>10</sup> FPIC requires that, 'indigenous peoples and local communities are adequately informed about projects taking place on their land, and must be given the opportunity to approve (or reject) projects before they start and also at certain stages during project development.'<sup>11</sup> Since the recent rise in the popularity of ethanol as a 'sustainable energy source' and 'natural' sugar on the market again, these lands grabs have been increasingly common, passing under the radar of both the local and international media. Even outside Brazil, 'the 31 million hectares used to grow sugar across the globe, most of it in the developing world, is rampant with land grabs, in which local residents are forcibly evicted, often without compensation, to make way for larger corporate farms...in many cases, sugar corporations become involved in armed land conflicts, including using their own private militias to force farmers off their land.'<sup>12</sup>

Growing sugar, like most crops, requires seasonal bursts of manual labor, and so many workers must live in temporary housing for about six months a year. As such, in the sugarcane regions, 'so-called 'dormitory cities' have increased, where migrant workers live in tenement houses, or overcrowded barracks, without ventilation or minimal hygienic conditions.'<sup>13</sup> Most of the time this results in cheap labor for the companies, but in some cases, native peoples have been victim to modern slavery. The International Labour Organisation reports that, '2007 was a record year for freed workers, with 5,877 workers being freed from 197 estates [in Brazil]...although sugar cane production accounts for only 1percent of the total activities that make use of slave labour in Brazil...2,947 persons were rescued from situations analogous to slavery from just four mills... they have to collect twelve tons of sugarcane a day...and can leave a worker physically broken after ten or twelve years.'<sup>14</sup>

Economically, the sugar cultivation sector destroys indigenous populations. Often, companies force residents to work for the company itself, because of the simple fact that the farmers' lands no longer exist for cultivation. With their livelihoods destroyed, many Native peoples have no other choice but to accept employment in the sugar cane cultivation industry.<sup>15</sup> This creates a cycle in which local residents not only lose their lands and the opportunity cost of growing crops to sell from them, but end up strategically forced to work for companies which will not invest in their local communities.<sup>16</sup>

Producing a land and water-intensive crop, the sugarcane industry greatly impacts the environment. In the Pernambuco case, Usina Trapiche was dumping pesticides and chemicals into the Sirinhaém river, making fishing virtually impossible.<sup>17</sup> This not only starves the local residents of their primary source of food and income, but places the whole maritime ecosystem of the region in danger of collapse.<sup>18</sup> Similarly, due to the clandestine nature of the activities of these companies, often times they must clear away forest to make way for illegal roads, and plantation space. This leads to deforestation and destruction of native vegetation.<sup>19</sup> This accelerates the rate at which endangered species in the region go extinct, reduces biodiversity, and the resilience of the forest as a whole to recover from previous damage. Earth's rainforests act as the primary filter of carbon dioxide, such deforestation is a major contributor to climate change. An estimated seventeen percent of all annual anthropogenic greenhouse gas are due to the deforestation of the Amazon.<sup>20</sup>

Had a community in the United States had their homes burned down, it would have made world headlines. This begs the question: why is the world not outraged? For one, First Nation peoples have a long history of being excluded from the common narrative since the very first conquistadors set foot on their lands. However, leaving their plight out of the public eye has a more subtle, and alarmingly more intentional incentive. If news leaked of the blatant human rights violations, economic strife, and environmental degradation behind the scenes of the production of a can of Coke or Pepsi, what would happen to profits? Although the Big Ten Food and Beverage Companies—which collectively earn over \$1.1 billion in revenue per day<sup>21</sup>—attempt to distance themselves from the activities of the direct sugarcane-producing companies like Usina Trapiche, they effectively still source all of their sugar from these groups. Additionally, the problem is even more pervasive than meets the eye. Companies like the Big Ten employ what is called ‘pseudo variety’ in that they control virtually all other food and beverage companies behind the scenes by buying out the small, competing companies.<sup>22</sup> For instance, The Coca-Cola Company and PepsiCo alone make up 74 percent of the market share for soft beverages.<sup>23</sup> This means that even well-intentioned consumers, unaware of the non-diversity of apparent choices, still contribute to the general inaction towards these issues. Moreover, boycott and other resistance tactics become almost impossible since these companies dominate on such a wide range of products.

Although Brazil itself suffers the losses of natural capital degradation, human rights abuses, and almost-uncompensated labor, almost all the profits leave the nation. Because all of the Big Ten Food and Beverage Companies are based outside of Latin America, no agent in this scheme has any incentive to protect the economic, social, and environmental opportunities of the developing world. Developing nations can then produce and work as hard as they want, but in the given system, they stand no chance for drastic change. In this way, simply the system of world trade encourages an ever-growing discrepancy in the wealth and equity between States. This has forced all of Latin America, and in particular Brazil, to be forced to trade ecological, indigenous and local rights in exchange for the ability to be economically viable.

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## Mexico’s Other Revolution: The Zapatista Uprising and the Hidden War in Chiapas

*EWAN FORREST discusses the hidden conflict between the Mexican government and indigenous activist groups.*

Mexico received a rude awakening when, on 1 January 1994, the Zapatista Army of National Liberation (EZLN) burst onto the political scene in an armed uprising in Chiapas province.<sup>1</sup> Twelve days later, following a direct military response, the predominantly indigenous group led by an enigmatic masked spokesman known as Subcomandante Marcos signed a ceasefire with the Mexican state. To this day, a hidden conflict persists in Chiapas, and the Zapatistas remain a potent political force. Their original struggle, opposition to the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) and the threat it poses to indigenous collective land arrangements, is one aspect of their broader anti-neoliberal, anti-capitalist and indigenous rights focused ideology. The government’s responses to this, however, have been combined military and media campaigns aimed at disrupting the organisation and obscuring the nature of the movement from the public eye.

While they claim not to have fired a shot in 23 years, their recent endorsement of an indigenous candidate in the 2018 presidential elections is a reminder that, despite media silence, indigenous activism in Mexico’s peripheries is alive and well.<sup>2</sup>

A predominantly rural and strongly indigenous province, Chiapas is an economic backwater frequently ignored in national political discourse. At the turn of the century, more than 70 percent of the population was below the poverty line (a figure which rose to 76.2 percent, the worst in Mexico, in 2014), 56 percent were illiterate and fewer than 10 percent had access to running water in their homes.<sup>3,4</sup> Despite being resource-rich, producing most of Mexico’s natural gas, some of its largest hydroelectric power projects, and much of its oil and coffee, the inhabitants of Chiapas live in destitution by the standards of the rest of the country.<sup>5,6,7</sup> Much of the population, especially in indigenous communities, lives on collective land arrangements known as ejidos. Article 27 of the Mexican Constitution, which had enshrined the ejido system after the Mexican Revolution as a measure against the re-emergence of large-scale private estates, began to wither away under the neoliberal governments of the 1980s.<sup>8</sup> The shift in Mexico towards a neoliberal economic model in the late 1980s and early 1990s presented a direct threat to these arrangements as collectively owned entities, through sweeping reforms which promoted privatisation of land.<sup>9</sup> This process became symbolically tied to NAFTA, which Mexico entered in 1994. While economists at the Federal Reserve Bank of San Francisco recognised as early as 1992 that NAFTA was simply a catalyst rather than a cause of rural privatisation in Mexico, for the EZLN and many Chiapanecos it was a symbolic final straw.<sup>10</sup> The Zapatista slogan ‘¡Ya Basta!’ (enough is enough) repeated in their formal declaration of war reflects the symbolic value of resistance against NAFTA to indigenous communities.<sup>11</sup> It was no coincidence that the uprising began on January 1st, 1994, the day that Mexico’s entry into NAFTA took effect. Much of the EZLN’s activity prior to the rebellion was focused on addressing the economic hardships of indigenous communities, and consequently they became embroiled in land issues that directly tied into their ideological opposition to neoliberalism. Their engagement in clandestine localised actions, such as health and literacy campaigns, was vital in winning local support in areas where similar government programmes were sorely lacking.<sup>12</sup> Furthermore, their engagement with local trade unions led to their direct involvement in land disputes and a deeper radicalisation of many union members.<sup>13</sup> The extent of popular support in parts of Chiapas enjoyed by the Zapatistas presented a clear challenge to the Mexican government and heavily defined their response to the movement.

The Mexican government had strategic reasons to downplay the political ground that the EZLN were gaining prior to the uprising, even with relatively reliable information at hand.<sup>14</sup> The Salinas government was in the midst of negotiating Mexico’s participation in NAFTA, and the presence of serious opposition from guerrilla forces was potentially anathema to foreign investors.<sup>15</sup> Following the uprising, a war of obfuscation in the media became part of the Mexican government’s strategy, in conjunction with military offensives beginning in early 1995.<sup>16</sup> The Zapatistas as a group were directly ideologically opposed to the political and social structures of the Mexican state, to say nothing of an early desire to sweep through the whole of Mexico.<sup>17</sup> Given their significant popular support, the Zapatistas were a thorn in the side of the state, a thorn which had to be removed in order to secure the government’s legitimacy in Chiapas. A Mexican government official, quoted anonymously by *Los Angeles Times*, stated that the government’s media strategy involved the disassociation of the EZLN from other clandestine indigenous groups, social organisations and the general population.<sup>18</sup> The large-scale popular support including tens of thousands of civilian activists in parts of Chiapas and interactions with clandestine movements enjoyed by the EZLN were thus downplayed as a delegitimisation tactic. Early attempts to target and unmask Subcomandante Marcos, however, seemed to backfire. Opinion polls in both Chiapas and Mexico City indicated a widespread rejection of the Zedillo

government's attempted identification of the elusive figure.<sup>19</sup>

What followed, and largely persists to this day, was a quiet war against the EZLN and its large bases of support in the civilian population. Chiapas is highly militarised and has seen NGOs flock to act as international observers and as a buffer to a re-escalation of more overt violence.<sup>20</sup> Initial military efforts by the Zedillo government to destroy the guerrilla wing of the insurgency in the 1990s largely failed, and the government was forced to resort to the use of paramilitaries to target the civilian infrastructure of the Zapatista project.<sup>21</sup> The reluctance of the Mexican government and media to address this strategy may be explained by the negative response to the operation. Anti-Zapatista paramilitaries massacred 43 civilians in December 1997, and similar incidents including the murder of a Zapatista activist in 2014 continue in parts of Chiapas.<sup>22</sup> The threat of paramilitary violence has made 15,000 people internally displaced, exacerbating the social and political problems in the region.<sup>23</sup> The Zapatistas themselves are quick to criticise the media for allegedly covering up incidents of paramilitary violence, accusing the press of complicity in the 2014 murder.<sup>24</sup> Such largely government-sponsored violence in Chiapas, frequently committed against civilians, is obscured by a wider information war being waged by the Mexican state against the Zapatista movement. Despite this, the EZLN remains a concrete force with large-scale support in Chiapas.

An important aspect of the government's media campaign against the EZLN, as mentioned above, is the disassociation of the EZLN's military wing from civilian organisations. This framing of the Zapatista movement as a traditional guerrilla force, ignoring the clandestine civilian branches of the EZLN which organise the majority of Zapatista activity, provide some justification for military intervention. The group's military command, the Clandestine Revolutionary Indigenous Committee (CCRI) reflects their origins as the Maoist Forces of National Liberation (FLN) guerrilla group. However, the civilian wing of the movement represents a clear break from the traditional model of insurgency in Latin America.<sup>25</sup> In 2003, the CCRI announced the formation of municipal councils divided into autonomous districts, each run on principles of localised direct democracy and with control over local economic matters and service provision.<sup>26</sup> The organisation and provision of services such as healthcare and education by these bodies has proven so successful that some travel from outside Zapatista territory to access them.<sup>27</sup> Attempts to portray the EZLN as a more traditional guerrilla movement excluded from society obscure the integration of the majority of the movement within communities as an everyday political organisation.

The Zapatistas are fond of being able to communicate on their own terms, and occasional hiatuses over the past twenty years have perhaps contributed to a lack of media coverage. Marcos himself noted that the movement is often too focused on developments within Chiapas to devote time to the international media: 'Instead of tweets, we make schools and clinics.'<sup>28</sup> Recently, however, the Zapatistas have deliberately entered the media's eye for the first time since the 'Other Campaign' of 2005-6. The movement has decided to endorse the campaign of an indigenous candidate, Maria de Jesus Patricio Martinez, in the 2018 Presidential Election.<sup>29</sup> Again, however, the Zapatistas have accused the media of obscuring certain key political aspects and activities of their organisation. By conflating the movement as a political party with their name on the ballot, they say, the media has displayed 'functional illiteracy' and ignored the nature of the Zapatista political structure.<sup>30</sup> However, early polls indicate an unlikelihood in their supported candidate winning, raising the possibility of a return to the obscurity of the hidden war.<sup>31</sup> The nature of the Zapatistas as a socio-political movement as opposed to a military force remains largely hidden, yet the implications that the movement has had in southern Mexico are myriad.

In many respects, the Zapatistas remain enigmatic and largely ignored in discourse. Their rebellion against neoliberal reforms was met with the media and military wings of the Mexican state, which combined with their own occasional silence has led to a hidden war in Chiapas. Their own political organisations are often obscured from mainstream coverage, despite the

considerable socio-political importance they have for people in the region and the alternative they offer to the Mexican state's vision of society. The EZLN's hidden conflict has been ongoing for nearly 24 years, and yet events such as the upcoming presidential election highlight their continuing and underrepresented importance in the Mexican political sphere.

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## Crypto-currency and the Venezuelan Crisis

*DANTE PHILIP assesses the emergence of Bitcoin in Venezuela, and its use in surviving the nation's crisis.*

In the 15th October regional elections, President Maduro of Venezuela and his ruling party may have regained an element of democratic legitimacy and retained their political dominance, but the nation remains in turmoil, and its future dark. In the last few months alone, the Trump administration has maintained stifling trade sanctions and even considered a 'military option',<sup>1,2</sup> while *Foreign Affairs* has boldly declared that 'Venezuela is careering toward civil war'.<sup>3</sup> Issues of hyperinflation and devastating food and medicine shortages, alongside growing unemployment and violence, have shaken the country.<sup>4</sup> Yet, one obscure and veiled source of techno-dissent, Bitcoin, has been offering many Venezuelans stability and security in this period of turbulence. Existing in Venezuela in an underground movement while being actively sought out and repressed, a diverse community of enthusiasts are adopting the widely misunderstood crypto-currency to help them survive the turbulence of Maduro's regime.

Appearing just eight years ago, a key motivation behind Bitcoin was to establish 'a system for electronic transactions without relying on trust'.<sup>5</sup> The currency can be transferred without mediation by any financial institution, with minimal cost, and without threat of being scammed. Crypto-currencies are not regulated or controlled by any bank, instead a decentralised database holds the transaction information publicly.<sup>6</sup> It is the user base of Bitcoin alone who shape its value and exchange, as no federal banks interfere in its usage. Similarly, anyone may generate the currency at any time; through a process known as 'mining', a computer program solves complex equations, offers a proof-of-work to the public block chain and then receives a mining reward in the form of Bitcoin.<sup>7</sup> Like any other currency, it holds value if others are willing to accept it in trades and transactions.

Bitcoin has grown exponentially in Latin America within the last few years, the number of transactions growing by 1,747 percent in 2015 alone.<sup>8</sup> Its usage in Venezuela is becoming increasingly central to its growth. In 2014 just 450 users were registered at the central Venezuelan Bitcoin exchange, but in 2016 85,000 users were registered as trading the currency.<sup>9</sup> The growth of Bitcoin within Latin America correlates with the increasing financial instability and currency volatility that has struck many of its nations over the last few years.<sup>10</sup> As its value is determined on a global level, the currency can offer far greater stability than the national currencies of many South American states currently can. Bitcoin, and a number of other crypto-currencies like Ethereum,<sup>11</sup> are highly distinct from the common currencies used throughout the world today, and it is this that explains its surge in popularity. Secrecy, stability, and freedom from financial bureaucracy or state regulation are drawing crypto-currencies, from hiding, into the mainstream.

The currency is particularly well suited to the Latin American situation due to the lower costs and security, which are embedded in the Bitcoin system. Any Bitcoin transfers and exchanges are significantly cheaper than those of standard currencies, and are almost instantaneous. Bitcoins are sent peer-

to-peer without banks or profit-seeking institutions mediating the process.<sup>12</sup> This allows relations abroad to cheaply send their families in Venezuela the money necessary for their survival without extortionate cost. Furthermore, the currency relies on its global use, so regional instability is far less damaging. As the volatility of their national currency risks undermining personal financial security, businesses and regular workers alike in Latin America have invested in Bitcoin. Crucially, holding, buying, and selling crypto-currencies is theoretically anonymous for its users, who are identifiable only by a cryptographic signature which contains no personal information.<sup>13</sup> This complexity of Bitcoin's coding is essential in defending users against potentially repressive regimes that may wish to target, and track crypto-currency advocates.

Venezuelans have an even greater imperative to enter the world of Bitcoin; although like their Latin American neighbours in wishing to transcend their struggling national economies, it is the concrete reality of the Venezuelan situation that is enabling the popularity of Bitcoin. The most distinct benefit is simply that electricity is extremely cheap. Despite a national infrastructure that is potentially unstable and 'crumbling' due to energy rationing and frequent power outages,<sup>14</sup> high government subsidies to household electricity put Bitcoin within the reach of most Venezuelans.<sup>15</sup> In contrast to most developing countries, where the cost of electricity vastly exceeds the wealth gained from mining Bitcoin,<sup>16</sup> Venezuelans might make up to 500 dollars per month without huge dedicated computer systems.<sup>17</sup> While the State might be accidentally supporting crypto-currency users by subsidising electricity, users must nonetheless remain discreet; anomalies in electricity usage can be traced to households and 'miners' can face serious state suppression. In one raid, 11,000 computers were seized from just two miners.<sup>18</sup> Police have been known to demand bribes for the return of computers,<sup>19</sup> and miners have been arrested on charges of stealing electricity.<sup>20</sup> The mixed blessing of cheap electricity thus ensures the mining community can maintain itself, while never able to expand their operations without investing in expensive autonomous power-supplies, in fear of the state intervening.

Moreover, hyper-inflation of Venezuela's Bolivar, fuelled by high import costs and the printing of currency, means that moving funds into crypto-currencies is a necessity for many citizens. Although the official exchange rate is ten Bolivars to the USD, the 'actual' rate on the black market is closer to 12,000 Bolivar to USD, and the IMF expects inflation rates of 2200 percent by 2018.<sup>21</sup> Food prices are rising, and people are finding it difficult to pay for basic goods. Resource shortages remain the over-arching crisis for Venezuelan society, having led to the underground of buying of foodstuffs which are sold at inflated prices,<sup>22</sup> the mass stockpiling of resources, and most importantly, the government's regulation of currency. 11.4 percent of children in some vulnerable areas suffer from malnutrition,<sup>23</sup> revealing the depth of crisis. The Maduro regime's refusal to acknowledge this has led to crucial US aid programs being banned.

Those living near the border areas can easily exchange Bitcoins for Bolivars or other currencies like Colombian Pesos. Simple guides, like those offered by the aptly named Bitcoin Venezuela,<sup>24</sup> offer citizens the information necessary for trading and mining Bitcoin; facilitating the purchase of food online, and the transfer of income into more stable currencies. The stability of Bitcoin also allows for the exchange of more expensive goods, like cars or properties, which would be otherwise precluded by the instability of the Bolivar.<sup>25</sup> With the trading volume of Bitcoin in Venezuela quadrupling from June to October this year,<sup>26</sup> it is evident that the currency is becoming increasingly popular. While it was first invested in by wealthier university students and teachers, the currency now offers the stability to a wide range of Venezuelans.

While the currency has seen a large appreciation in its value and expansion in its user base, grandiose reflections from sources like Bitcoin News that 'Venezuela proves Bitcoin is the future' are not yet warranted.<sup>27</sup> The Venezuelan Bitcoin revolution must remain underground due to fears of political repression, so hailing that the global transition to crypto-currency has been verified by experimentation in Venezuela is an incorrect perspective.

If Maduro's regime develops its authoritarian tendencies further, with currency exchanges and large mining operations continuing to be shut down, then the necessary infrastructure for a thriving Bitcoin community will be destroyed. Although now up and running again, the largest Bitcoin exchange in Venezuela, SurBitcoin, was suspended earlier this year in February,<sup>28</sup> and there is little to prevent surveillance and state raids for dismantling the largest Bitcoin operations in the country.

The threat of state crackdowns, however, is not even the most considerable threat that is preventing Venezuela from leading the crypto-currency revolution; almost one-third of the population do not even have a bank account, so are unlikely to enter the complexities of crypto-currency exchange.<sup>29</sup> A completely stable electricity infrastructure, universal computer usage, and an even remotely compliant government, none of which Venezuela has, would be necessary for Bitcoin proliferation. The growth of Bitcoin as an underground, essentially illegal currency within Venezuela is arguably the result of the Maduro regime ensuring that relations with America remain broken. Although Bitcoin is a definitively global enterprise, many of its leading innovators are American, so a new medium in which the US can inject its economic hegemony is likely to be perceived as highly threatening by the Maduro regime.

Bitcoin is receiving investment from diverse sources, from ex-Goldman Sachs executives to swathes of venture capitalists,<sup>30,31</sup> such that it is being placed under the will of global neoliberalism and speculative finance. Such a trend threatens its potential to offer a more democratic, liberating currency for the world's poor, and the likelihood of the anti-globalisation Maduro regime allowing it to flood Venezuela. Furthermore, if Latin America is at the vanguard for the proliferation of Bitcoin, then Mexico is arguably more significant. The government might be planning to regulate the industry,<sup>32</sup> but it is not outright repressing it, and the explosion of just 50 Bitcoin companies in 2015 to 240 in 2017 outstrips even the impressive growth in Venezuela;<sup>33</sup> Bitcoin might be feeding families in Venezuela, but Mexico is a far less tumultuous site of growth.

Hyperbole and exaggeration around international usage of Bitcoin, and its potential to lift the masses of impoverished nations out of poverty, have been an element of crypto-currency reporting over the last few years; yet the covert networks of Bitcoin users in Venezuela do offer a glimpse into how crypto-currency, forced into the shadows by repressive governments seeking out its users and maligned by sceptical mainstream media, might one day ascend to benefit everyone. The Bitcoin community in Venezuela stands at a precipice; with increased international attention and increased government surveillance,<sup>24</sup> those engaged in the crypto-trade might soon be eliminated through state crack-downs. For the currency to succeed en-masse in Venezuela, its user base must expand while remaining hidden from both the threat of the state and the total co-optation by international corporations.

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In 2017, people across the Middle East and North Africa have access to more information than at any point in human history. The advent of technology, the expansion of the internet, and access to social media were used as tools by the activists who catalyzed waves of revolutions that swept across the region in 2010. Developments in technology and access mean that an activist in Tahrir Square can communicate with an activist on the streets in Sidi Bouzid, as easily as those standing beside them. Yet, the same technology that fosters communication can be used to jam cell signals in Diraz, Bahrain<sup>1</sup>

or disseminate the 'correct version of events' in Turkey.<sup>2</sup>

In his article, Harry Martin discusses the dual nature of social media for LGBT communities in the region. On one hand it has been used as a tool by the LGBT community in order to express themselves in their societies. Yet, governments have wielded it as a weapon to further oppress this marginalized group.

Aaron examines what lies behind media and social media coverage in an article scrutinizing discussions of the Yemeni conflict in Saudi Arabia and Oman. With the barrage of information afforded to a person in 2017, what duty does the individual have to search for the truth?

## Veiled Collateral

**AARON** evaluates the Omani and Saudi media's marginalisation of the Yemeni refugee crisis.

The existence and scale of the Yemeni crisis does not evade any enlightened reader, and neither does its marginalisation by the media. The Yemeni crisis was described five months after its start as having caused more destruction than five years of the Syrian crisis.<sup>1</sup> More than two years later, the crisis has compounded. Whereas a sustainment of conflict led to more than five million refugees fleeing Syria,<sup>2</sup> fewer than 200,000 civilians have fled Yemen.<sup>3</sup> The absence of refugees fleeing the devastation has been met with a familiar media silence, with neighbouring media posing no exception.

Yemen was one of the poorest countries in the world prior to the Saudi-led Operation Decisive Storm, with more than one-third of a population of 26.8 million living under the poverty line.<sup>4</sup> It is then of no surprise that the conflict has led to an even larger humanitarian crisis, where more than 80 percent of the population is in need of assistance, the majority of which relates to nutrition and healthcare.<sup>5</sup> With regards to the former, Yemen is on a famine trajectory,<sup>6</sup> whilst the healthcare situation also fares poorly and has become compounded by the largest recorded cholera outbreak.<sup>7</sup>

A natural reaction to such – crudely summarised – humanitarian devastation would be mass evacuation of the victims to areas providing safety, nutrition and healthcare. However, Yemenis face a virtual blockade. Yemen borders the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia from the north, the Sultanate of Oman from the east, and is surrounded by the sea from its southern and western boundaries. The land borders with Oman have been closed<sup>8</sup> and the Saudi Arabian border is a main frontier of the conflict.<sup>9</sup> Visa restrictions aside, poverty levels put air travel beyond the reach of most Yemenis. As for the sea routes, not only are the journeys to East Africa perilous,<sup>10</sup> but the possible destinations do not guarantee relief due to poverty in the recipient countries such as Djibouti and Somalia.<sup>11</sup>

The effective blockade around Yemen has meant that the refugee count has been at a miniscule 0.7 percent of the population.<sup>12</sup> Putting the scale of the migration into context, 29 percent of Syria's population has migrated since the onset of the conflict.<sup>13</sup> The returning of close to 40,000 Somalian refugees from Yemen to Somalia despite Somali's dire safety and nourishment circumstances reveals the acute need for migration by affected Yemenis.<sup>14</sup>

The Yemeni refugee blockade has suffered from the disproportionate media coverage that is prevalent to the entire Yemen situation, particularly with regards to media outlets in neighbours Oman and Saudi Arabia. An examination of the coverage of refugee topics by the *Alwatan* newspaper – a prominent private outlet in Oman – over a single month reveals but a single, general acknowledgment of a refugee issue in

Yemen in a wider discussion of refugee crises.<sup>15</sup>

On the other hand, private Saudi newspaper *Al Riyadh* – one of the most circulated in the region – mentioned Yemeni refugees in six occasions over the same month.<sup>16</sup> However, every reference was in a promotional context highlighting Saudi humanitarian assistance to the refugees, with only one article mentioning the actual plight facing Yemenis.<sup>17</sup> Even then, it was in the context of laying blame for the destruction and devastation upon the Houthi rebels, the targets of the Saudi government. In the same period, *Al Riyadh* dedicated 24 articles highlighting the plight of the Rohingyas fleeing persecution in Burma and the Saudi assistance to the refugees, as well as similar ten articles on Syrian refugees.<sup>18</sup> The reporting in both newspapers fails to inform readers of the magnitude of the crisis in terms of scale and needs.

The marginalisation of the Yemeni refugee crisis allows for the preservation of different interests of the governments of Saudi Arabia and Oman. Being the leader of Operation Decisive Storm and Operation Restoring Hope, Saudi Arabia understands that revealing a refugee crisis would increase the world's attention to the devastation taking place in Yemen, threatening pressure on the Kingdom to stop the operations. Such pressure could also threaten future international arms transactions. Attention to the crisis will evidently also lead to calls for Saudi Arabia to admit further refugees than the 40,000 it has admitted.

As a neutral neighbour, the threat of pressure of accepting refugees is the only potential consequence that Oman shares with the Kingdom. Accepting refugees would risk accusations of sympathy towards the Houthis by the Saudis, who have already accused Oman of smuggling weapons into Yemen.<sup>19</sup> As a mitigating measure, Oman has treated thousands of Yemenis wounded in the conflict,<sup>20</sup> as well as assisting in the evacuation of more than 40,000 foreigners from Yemen.<sup>21</sup>

The rising role of social media as a news source has been observed to limit the effectiveness of censorship of traditional media.<sup>22</sup> However, the acclaimed influence of new platforms has failed to inform the majority of its users of the Yemeni refugee crisis. Despite having the highest number of Twitter users in the Arab world,<sup>23</sup> the employment of two key steps has assisted the Saudi Arabian government in marginalising publication of the Yemeni refugee crisis. The first component being the disproportionate and biased nature of television and newspaper coverage of the Yemeni crisis in general, and the Yemeni refugees in particular, by traditional media sources resulting in a lack of awareness of the issue (press in both Oman and Saudi Arabia is classified as Not Free by Freedom House).<sup>24, 25</sup> In fact, the influence of traditional media sources has created support amongst Saudis for government operations in Yemen. The manner of this support, as observed from Twitter, suggests that the government can leverage social media support and facilitate this very second component should it publicly denounce any calls to admit additional refugees.

While press censorship would restrict the publication of information on refugees only by those who solely rely on domestic press sources,

the Saudi government's actions have also resulted in self-censorship that would prevent investigative Saudis readers from publicising the issue of Yemeni refugees. Since the start of the Saudi operations in Yemen, multiple twitter users advocating opposing foreign policy opinions have been jailed.<sup>26,27,28</sup> Such arrests and harsh sentences have resulted in an environment of self-censorship amongst social media users.<sup>29</sup>

As for Oman, the government's neutral stance and less strict social media censorship (which has been largely restricted to targeting dissent concerning domestic affairs) suggests that the lack of social media engagement is largely due to a lack of awareness of the Yemeni refugee crisis. Furthermore, the treatment of wounded Yemenis in Oman could have allayed feelings of complacency by some Omanis towards Yemenis, reducing their incentive to further investigate their needs.

While ignoring the refugees, television and newspaper sources in Oman and Saudi Arabia have nevertheless covered the existence of casualties – although Saudi media portrayed them as casualties from attacks by Houthis on civilians.<sup>30</sup> Thus, their knowledge of the existence of bombing casualties as well as cholera and malnourishment victims should trigger questions amongst Omani and Saudi readers regarding the need for the migration of affected Yemenis. This result is especially likely given the context of Syrian and subsequently Burmese refugees making headlines locally and globally. Yet a lack of their engagement with the refugee crisis, as observed through the Arabic versions of the #Yemeni\_refugees Twitter hashtag, reflects the effects of the gaps in the press coverage.

We are in an age where the Internet has made alternative news sources available to most users. Casting aside the shameful censorship practices of authoritarian governments, the disengagement with the refugee crisis raises a question regarding the moral duty of citizens. Their duty is to obtain a conscious exposure to a balanced coverage of sensitive affairs, particularly when mainstream coverage is uncomprehensive, inconsistent or causes suspicion.

The qualification of this task as a moral duty is due to the consequences of a continuation of the marginalisation of the Yemeni refugee crisis. This continuation threatens an increase of cholera victims to more than one million casualties,<sup>31</sup> a continued shortfall in aid and a preservation of arms sales to the Saudi-led coalition. In addition, the marginalisation will support a maintenance of the land blockade, leading further Yemenis to migrate to the Horn of Africa. The route to the Western coast from most cities requires either crossing the war's frontline or territories held by al Qaeda.<sup>32</sup> Neither does a successful crossing of the perilous route guarantee respite for the refugees; refugees risk encountering poverty, militancy and famine in areas of the Horn of Africa.<sup>33</sup>

Social media has supported the success of many political causes despite major shortcomings of traditional media sources. Yet it often takes emotional shocks to alert privileged readers of the urgency of such crises. Yemen has seen the death of thousands of brothers of Aylan Kurdi<sup>34</sup> and Omran Daqneesh,<sup>35</sup> yet the media's marginalisation has prevented reactions similar to those seen in Syria. Let us hope and act to avert the scenario where it takes another bloody trigger to wake the world to the atrocities faced by the barricaded Yemeni civilians.

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## Should LGBT Trust Technology in the Middle East?

*HARRY MARTIN explores the relationship between various media outlets and LGBT communities in the Middle East.*

While technology has the potential to greatly enhance the world, it is those who use it that determine how effective it will be. Broadly speaking, in the Middle East, the governments and state-sponsored media outlets have the monetary power to spread their own anti-LGBT propaganda and, for the most part, LGBT voices do not have the same exposure. And when the latter group's voices are conspicuous on media outlets, they are usually framed in an undignified and immoral light.

In Egypt, for example, censorship and criminal charges have become increasingly common since President Abdel-Fattah el-Sisi rose to power in 2014. Three months after he attained office, eight men were charged with criminal offenses, having been filmed in the first gay wedding in the nation's history in March of the same year.<sup>1</sup> While there is no direct law against homosexuality in Egypt, these eight men were subject to a common loophole in Egyptian law, being charged with 'spreading indecent images' and 'inciting debauchery.'<sup>2</sup> Other recent crackdowns on LGBT communities in the country include the 2014 arrest of 26 men after they were filmed by a private, pro-government TV station at a gay club in Cairo<sup>3</sup> and, this year, mass arrests after the publication of images of people raising rainbow flags in public.<sup>4</sup> The largest of these widespread arrests in 2017 came after a Mashrou' Leila concert, an alternative rock band whose lead singer is gay.<sup>5</sup> It resulted in the arrest of 32 men and one woman, with nineteen men eventually convicted of 'debauchery' and sentenced to six years.<sup>6</sup>

Essentially, the growing accessibility of cameras and smartphones has only exacerbated problems for the LGBT community, as Sisi's government can more easily produce evidence against individuals. A similar, less reactionary pattern has emerged in Jordan, a country often assumed to be a leading liberal nation in the Middle East. In August this year, MP Dima Tahbonb of Islamic Action Front (the political wing of the Muslim Brotherhood) used Twitter to denounce homosexuality and explicitly state that gays are not welcome: 'Those bats of the night who have no place, and their identities hidden, challenge the people and the law publicly marching and condoning homosexuality in Amman.'<sup>7</sup> This sort of language seems to stem from an entrenched belief in Middle Eastern and North African (MENA) politics that condemning LGBT groups will appeal to a largely conservative electorate and accrue more votes. In fact, Jordanian law safeguards many minority groups from discrimination; LGBT people are the notable exception.<sup>8</sup>

Media outlets, whether state-funded or independent, share a similar tactic to politicians in their treatment of the LGBT community. Headlines, such as 'Social Catastrophe that Threatens Jordan'<sup>9</sup> (Islah News), sensationalise and grossly oversimplify stories concerning homosexuals. Homosexuality, in particular, is often depicted as a Western import, which directly undermines the Islamic and cultural values that many conservatives hold in Jordan.<sup>10</sup> Indeed, this ploy seems to work for journalists too. A 2016 survey of 32 Jordanian social media pages found the average post from a media outlet gained 250-400 likes or shares, whereas posts relating to LGBT issues received an average of between 600-2000 likes or shares.<sup>11</sup> Websites offer such articles

as 'clickbait' and use the theme of the infiltrating Western agenda to heighten taboos surrounding the LGBT community. Furthermore, the more liberal papers and those that wish to remain neutral, such as the *Jordan Times*, refuse to discuss all LGBT topics and stories.<sup>12</sup> This silence perpetuates prejudice, as such apathy seems to give credence to the bigotry of the tabloid press.

It may be easy to suggest that the increase in Internet accessibility in Jordan has connected LGBT people with their peers the world over and has offered the opportunity for blogs and online magazines for these people to discuss their sexuality or gender in a fashion uncorrupted by the mainstream media. As of 2016, 73 percent of the Jordanian population has access to the Internet<sup>13</sup> and, while many homosexual, bisexual, and transgender voices have begun documenting their lives and suffering online, many have been shut down by the state.<sup>14</sup> In 2015, the Jordanian police detained more than nine journalists and writers on similar grounds to those arrested in Egypt, as Jordan also has no direct law criminalising homosexuality or transgenderism.<sup>15</sup> Dima Tahbonb MP also called for the banning of a local LGBT magazine – *My Kali* – in the aftermath of her Twitter saga.<sup>16</sup> The online news source has now been suspended for a year.<sup>17</sup>

On the global stage, many of these highly conservative countries tend to behave very differently regarding LGBT rights than they do domestically or for less publicised international events concerning LGBT people. Following the mass shooting at a gay club in Orlando, Fla. in 2016, Iran, Qatar, Egypt, the UAE, and Saudi Arabia all condemned the attack and reasserted their solidarity with the USA.<sup>18</sup> Presumably this was done with the aim of maintaining and opening new financial relationships with the West and to relieve some of the scrutiny of Western media on human rights laws. An Egyptian foreign ministry spokesman, Ahmed Abu Zeid, went as far as to say his nation and the USA were 'united in this moment of grief'.<sup>19</sup> The falseness of these words, following a homophobic mass shooting, was identified by Human Rights Watch, who labelled the condemnations 'hypocritical'.<sup>20</sup> Indeed, this was particularly 'hypocritical' considering the MENA region's voting record in United Nations (UN) councils. In 2011, all but two countries in the Middle East and North Africa voted against the Human Rights Council's Declaration of Rights for LGBT People.<sup>21</sup> Of the two nations who did not vote against the declaration, only one, Israel, voted in support and the other, Turkey, abstained.<sup>22</sup>

Similarly, rivalries within the Middle East tend to be exacerbated by the topic of LGBT people, with the aim of degrading opponents in the eyes of the global media. The split between Iran and Saudi Arabia, traditionally predicated on the Sunni-Shia divide, has seen the development of a new argument over human rights. The Saudi Government initially executed a senior cleric, Nimr al-Nimr, after he proclaimed universal equity for civil and human rights. The Iranian state protested against this, but did not take any genuine action,<sup>23</sup> which again suggests the Shi'ite government was interested in both highlighting Saudi barbarism in conjunction with underlining its own supposed morality. This was in spite of Iran's own execution record of LGBT people.<sup>24</sup> Human rights activists estimate that since the Islamic Revolution of 1979, between 4,000 and 6,000 LGBT people have been killed for their presented gender or sexuality.<sup>25</sup> Such is the stigma surrounding much of the Persian LGBT community; Iran is second in the world for the highest number of gender reassignment surgeries, which is partly aided by the decriminalisation of this operation in 1986.<sup>26</sup> This kind of behaviour from Ayatollah Ali Khamanei of Iran and King Salman of Saudi Arabia seems to highlight their complete disregard for human and civil rights.<sup>27</sup> As demonstrated in the debacle following Nimr al-Nimr's death,<sup>28</sup> leaders then hide behind the other's malice to further their own religious and political ideology.

Domestically, Saudi Arabia is apparently several steps ahead of

other countries, such as Egypt, in censoring LGBT people. Virtually all national media services are controlled by the Broadcasting Service of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (BSKSA), including the highly regulated print press.<sup>29</sup> In addition, BSKSA has openly acknowledged constant surveillance of Internet usage across the nation, citing 'pornographic', Islam-related, human and political pages as being the most highly monitored.<sup>30</sup> With social media usage escalating in the country – forty percent of the Arab region's Twitter users are Saudi<sup>31</sup> – it may be inferred that newer media platforms also receive a similar amount of state scrutiny, though there is little statistical evidence for this. However, it may also be inferred from the lack of state crackdowns on the LGBT community that King Salman has created such an oppressive society that, unlike Egypt, minority groups do not even protest in fear of persecution.

Turkey, which for so many years was seen as the secular majority-Islam nation success story, has incrementally reverted to a human rights position that is starting to mirror some of the more conservative nations in the region. This year, police ended a Gay Pride march with tear gas and rubber bullets after the activists were forbidden from taking part in the event, the ALP Government citing ultra-conservative and extremist threats as the reason for the ban.<sup>32</sup> This followed a remark by then Family Affairs Minister Aliye Kavaf, who asserted that homosexuality is a 'biological disorder' and a 'disease'.<sup>33</sup> Presumably in order to revitalise the forward-thinking relationship Turkey once had in the global media, President Erdogan staged a dinner with Bulent Ersoy, a well-known Turkish transgender singer and actress on Ramadan in 2016.<sup>34</sup> Ersoy is arguably just as famous for being transgender as for being a performer, and so this dinner cannot be taken out of the context that many activists have highlighted being alongside Erdogan's frequent dialogues with far-right politicians and public figures. These accusations have also indicated the ALP's gradual implementation of conservative Islamic values, when it once was a highly secular state.<sup>35</sup>

While governments' control and manipulation of the media cannot completely restrict many communities from expanding their knowledge and connections globally, there are still endemic problems with the use of technology by Middle Eastern regimes to monitor and further marginalise already oppressed groups. It is clear that in more conservative states, such as Iran and Saudi Arabia, governments will use these tools to subjugate those who threaten their nation's narrow ideology. However, it is also becoming more common for traditionally less conservative states, like Egypt and Lebanon, to suppress marginalized groups as technology becomes more advanced. As long as these prejudices remain unchallenged, a true representation of minority communities, such as LGBT people, in the media will stay far out of sight. In the end, technology is a neutral mechanism; people can choose to use it how they wish and, at the moment, much of the Middle East uses it negatively.

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## Abdullah Ocalan: Hero, Terrorist, Enemy of the Turkish State

*HANNAH CARLSON explores the many faces of one of the heroes of Kurdish nationalism.*

Understanding the movement for an independent Kurdish state is integral to making sense of the conflict in Syria. The secessionist movement, is however, not recent. Since the



signing of the Treaty of Sèvres, Kurdish peoples in Turkey, Iraq, Iran, and Syria have advocated for their right to form a state, or, at the very least, to obtain greater political autonomy.<sup>1</sup> In each of these current states, the Kurds represent sizeable minority populations. In Turkey, attempts to unify the country, after the fall of the Ottoman Empire, has led to the repression of the Kurdish language and customs in the South-Eastern provinces of Turkey.<sup>2</sup>

Several Kurdish political parties exist in Turkey, Iraq, Iran and Syria, including the Kurdistan Democratic Party whose leader, until recently, was the president of the Kurdistan Regional Government in northern Iraq. Other parties, such as the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF), the People's Defense Forces (YPG) and the Women's Defense Forces - a faction of the YPG, known by the separate acronym YPJ- are currently involved in the conflict in Syria, and receiving support from the United States Armed Forces.<sup>3</sup> The Kurdistan Workers' Party known by the acronym 'PKK' was founded in 1980 by Abdullah Ocalan. The PKK is a Marxist-Leninist party that seeks political autonomy for Kurds in Turkey.<sup>4</sup> The PKK is labeled a terrorist organization by the United States and many countries in Europe.<sup>5</sup>

Abdullah Ocalan founded the PKK after writing a manifesto in 1977 entitled 'The National Road to the Kurdish Revolution.'<sup>6</sup> Prior to this, Ocalan had been studying political science at Ankara University. It was during this period of his life that he was drawn to Marxist views and far-left politics. As a student he organized demonstrations, and was put in prison for distributing leftist political pamphlets. He eventually left Ankara University without obtaining a degree.<sup>7</sup> Few details of Ocalan's childhood are available, but it is often described as turbulent, owing to his Turkish mother's domineering nature and his Kurdish father's more reticent one.<sup>8</sup> Ocalan was born in 1948 in the village Omerli in rural southeastern Turkey.<sup>9</sup> As a child he was known to be passionate, but fair.<sup>10</sup> Prior to attending university, Ocalan sought to enlist in the Turkish Army, from which he was refused because of his Kurdish heritage, he has stated.<sup>11</sup>

With the founding of the PKK, Ocalan began training guerilla groups in Syria who engaged in armed conflict with Turkish military forces in the border regions of Turkey, Syria and Iraq.<sup>12</sup> The PKK was known for its violent tactics, such as its assassinations of dissenters within the PKK, and Turkish Kurds who did not support their political goals. The PKK also kidnapped western tourists on a few occasions, mainly to draw global attention to their cause. The Turkish government claims that 40,000 people died due to the conflict between the PKK and Turkish forces between 1984 and 1999.<sup>13</sup> It was in 1999 that Turkey threatened military action against Syria if they did not apprehend Ocalan, and return him to Turkey. Ocalan left Syria quickly in search of asylum in various European countries before heading to Kenya. It was while he was in Nairobi, en route for a flight to take him elsewhere, that he was apprehended by Turkish agents.<sup>14</sup>

Following his arrest Ocalan was imprisoned on Imrali island, which is located in the Sea of Marmara near Istanbul.<sup>15</sup> It was anticipated that he would face the death penalty by hanging. However, at this time Turkey was seeking entrance to the EU, so his sentence was altered to life imprisonment in isolation.<sup>16</sup> His trial was later deemed unfair by the European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg, France.<sup>17</sup> At the time of his trial, his Dutch lawyers were refused entry into the country; according to the Turkish Foreign Ministry they were not permitted to enter because they had acted 'like PKK militants' and 'because they intend to cause provocation and sensation and have no intention to act as lawyers.'<sup>18</sup> At his trial, Ocalan pushed for himself to have a role as mediator, saying 'I might not be worth a dime, but they say ... 5,000 suicide bombers are ready to die for me.'<sup>19</sup> This plea proved to be somewhat successful, as Ocalan announced a ceasefire and his sentence

was commuted; he asked that all PKK members leave Turkey. However, after three years, the PKK called off this ceasefire. It is estimated that there are currently 4,000 - 5,000 members of the PKK, many of whom are based in the mountainous Kurdish region of Iraq.<sup>20</sup>

It appeared as though relations between Kurdish political parties and the Turkish government might improve when Erdogan came to power. In 2013, Erdogan began negotiations with Ocalan, who was still imprisoned on Imrali island. Once he became president, Erdogan introduced new and original legislation that allowed new rights and freedoms to the Kurds in Turkey, especially in regards to their culture and language. However, these freedoms were largely revoked after the coup in 2015.<sup>21</sup>

In recent years, Ocalan has shifted in his goals for the PKK, and in his views on Turkish governance of its Kurdish regions. The editor of *Radikal* newspaper Eyup Can, has stated 'He has evolved to such an extent that let alone an independent Kurdish state, he doesn't even want to refer to 'democratic autonomy'[for Kurdistan].'<sup>22</sup> More interesting, however, is his transformation in the eyes of the Turkish government. Once a committer of treason and labeled a 'baby killer' by the Turkish government,<sup>23</sup> Ocalan is now viewed as a potential collaborator in seeking an end to the conflict between secessionist Kurdish groups and the Turkish state, albeit with caution and as a serious political liability in the event that negotiations go awry.<sup>24</sup> More intriguing is the political position held by these various Kurdish groups in Syria, Iraq and Turkey as the region is reshaped by war and conflict.<sup>25</sup> Ocalan is just a single figure among all of these groups and crises, who, nonetheless, inspires enormous loyalty among PKK members. It is somewhat remarkable that after nearly twenty years of imprisonment, Ocalan continues to hold tremendous sway with individual PKK members. It still stands to be seen whether Abdallah Ocalan, the man, or Abdallah Ocalan, the legend will have an effect on this new iteration of the Kurdish independence movement sweeping the Middle East.

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With Trump at the helm, international perspectives of the United States could be described as wavering, at best. Each week brings a new story, if not several, concerning President Trump and his administration, in which American democratic norms are ignored or jeopardized. What is less frequently focused upon are the reactionary campaigns aimed at thwarting Trump's agenda. This section opens with a piece by Ally Huntoon, in which she surveys what went wrong in polling during the latest US election and why so many experts were blind to the ensuing electoral result. Technology and more specifically, social media, are beginning

to play major roles in democracies around the world, sometimes with unexpected and unwelcome results. Hannah Weissman assesses when technology's inclusion in political movements can provide a boon, in her analysis of social media's role during the Dakota Access Pipeline protests. While the Dakota Access Pipeline protests were unsuccessful in diverting the pipeline away from Native cultural sites, Weissman shows that the awareness raised during protests is a positive end within itself. In this section's profile piece, Gaia Scotto di Minico discusses the work of NOW, an organization fighting for gender wage equality in the age of Trump. Although the international standing of the United States remains precarious after the election of November 2016, it is not for lack of resistance on the part of US citizens against Trump's agenda.

## Flawed Data Collection in the 2016 U.S. Election

*ALLYSON HUNTOON surveys what went unseen by data collectors.*

On 9 November 2016, Americans awoke to the news that Donald Trump would be the next president of the United States. Those who had stayed awake into the early hours of the morning to watch election results from each state revealed one-by-one bore witness to unprecedented history, and passion was in no short supply. The first female presidential candidate to be nominated by a major party was predicted to shatter the highest glass ceiling. Her opponent, famed businessman and television personality Donald Trump, had a fan base hoping for a political outsider to prevail.

Former Secretary of State, Hillary Clinton, had been predicted to win both the popular vote and the electoral college. Although she did win the general election by nearly 2.9 million votes, Trump collected more electoral college votes and ultimately won the Presidency.<sup>1</sup> The media and pollsters had attempted to predict the results of the election for months, and these predictions fluctuated with each debate and scandal. Regardless, there was a widespread expectation, especially within the mainstream media, that Clinton would emerge triumphant. Leading up to election day, *FiveThirtyEight*, an American statistics and polling analysis site, predicted that Trump had a mere 30 percent chance of victory. *The Telegraph* also showed that Clinton, on the eve of the election, had an overall lead of three percentage points.<sup>2</sup> On the day of the election, at 22:20, *The New York Times* still claimed that Clinton had an 85 percent chance of winning.<sup>3</sup>

Eleven swing states would decide the outcome of the election, five of which - Pennsylvania, Ohio, Michigan, Iowa, and Wisconsin - reside in the Rust Belt. Barack Obama won these in the 2008 and 2012 elections,<sup>4</sup> and, because of their shared party affiliation and Obama's formal endorsement of the Clinton campaign,<sup>5</sup> many voters and media experts expected Clinton to win the states as well. However, these five key states flipped from blue to red by voting for Trump in 2016,<sup>6</sup> and came to play a crucial role in his election.

Since Trump's win, the media and polling sources which inform many Americans have scrambled to uncover what they missed before the election. There is a widespread belief in the United States that Trump's victory can be attributed to the 'forgotten' or 'silent' working class voters who were wooed by Trump's campaign rhetoric.<sup>7</sup> This group, however, was not the majority of his voter base. The Brookings Institute reports that of the 36 percent of overall voters who had incomes below 50,000 dollars per year, only 41 percent voted for Trump, while 52 percent voted for Clinton.<sup>8</sup> Moreover, among participants in the *American National Election Study* who said they voted for Trump in the general election, only 35 percent had household incomes within this bracket.<sup>9</sup> This appears to contradict the theory that most of Trump's support came from the working class. These misconceptions over the nature of Trump's support from different demographics set the pollsters off on the wrong foot.

Another factor in the failure of polling organisations to predict Trump's victory was the notable portion of voters who did not vocalize their voting intentions before

the election. In a pre-election article titled, 'Yes, There Are Shy Trump Voters. No, They Won't Swing the Election', *Morning Consult* writer Cameron Easley described the results of a voter intent survey conducted in partnership with *POLITICO*.<sup>10</sup> In a sample of over 2,000, respondents were asked to state their voting intention both online and over the telephone. The results found that voters making over 50,000 dollars per year were significantly more likely to report that they intended to vote for Trump when asked online compared to over the telephone,<sup>11</sup> indicating that this demographic was reluctant admit support for Trump.

A further major factor in the miscalculation of voter intentions was Clinton's lower than expected support among white women. Democrats had hoped that Trump's comments and conduct toward women, paired with the potential for Clinton to become the first female president, would encourage a large turnout among women to vote for the candidate.<sup>12</sup> These expectations fell short, however, with turnout among women increasing by only one percentage point in 2016.<sup>13</sup> Of those who did vote, the majority of young and white women with college degrees chose Clinton.<sup>14</sup> However, of white women without college degrees, 62 percent voted for Trump, giving the Republican candidate an overall majority of support among white women.<sup>15</sup> Clinton's loss of what was assumed to be her core demographic support was hugely unexpected.

As a consequence of these factors, a Trump victory was predicted as less likely than it perhaps was. *Financial Times* writer, Tim Hartford, claims that three major reasons for the failure to predict the outcome of the election were wishful thinking, lack of open-mindedness, and over confidence.<sup>16</sup> As the election neared and the race grew increasingly closer,<sup>17</sup> much of the left-leaning media found itself in denial that Trump could or should win.<sup>18</sup> The Democratic Party's confidence led to a refusal by many to even consider a Trump win, which potentially appeared arrogant and off-putting to some undecided voters.

The lack of open-mindedness in the media was, and continues to be, a major driving force behind both the deep divisions in American society and the inaccurate portrayal of the American people. The divide between left and right leaning media sources has contributed to an alienation with politics and lack of understanding of key issues among many Americans.<sup>19</sup> Taking advantage of this landscape, Trump claimed to be an outsider and attacked the many facets of the establishment, including the mainstream media. This led to a distaste for the media among many of Trump's supporters, which limited the damage done by the scandals involving the candidate that emerged as the campaign progressed. Alternative news sources that supported Trump, such as *Breitbart News*, *InfoWars* and *Glenn Beck*, tended to reinforce this.<sup>20</sup> A similar trend occurred among some Clinton supporters, who, by following New Media outlets which were generally supportive of their candidate, such as *The Huffington Post*, *BuzzFeed News*, and *Vice News*, may have underestimated the likelihood of a Trump victory.

Not viewing the other as a legitimate or trustworthy source of news, the followers of these contrasting media outlets often came into conflict with one another. The mainstream, East-Coast based media was guilty of appearing out of touch with rural and industrial middle America. Furthermore, these media outlets may have worsened the situation by dismissing the views of Trump supporters and claiming that support for Trump was relatively inconsequential.<sup>21</sup> These media sources also tended to interview extreme factions of Trump's support base, who, in using divisive racial and religious rhetoric,<sup>22</sup> were unrepresentative of his wider support. This led to a failure to accurately portray average Trump supporters; white, financially secure Americans who

were not vocal about their voting intentions.<sup>23</sup> As this demographic constituted a large share of American society,<sup>24</sup> Trump's support was under-stated.

According to *Pew Research Centre*, another factor explaining the inability of polls to correctly predict the election outcome was non-response bias. According to the organisation, some demographics, including less educated voters, can be more difficult to reach, making it harder to include them in polls.<sup>25</sup> Indeed, disdain for establishment politics may have led Trump supporters to actively avoid responding to polls. In excluding a large section of Trump's support from the opinion polls, non-response bias will have created a distorted image of support for the two candidates prior to the election.

The 2016 United States Presidential Election was not the first instance of media and polling organisations failing to accurately predict the result of an election. However, the considerable scale with which their predictions were wrong, and the effects they had in creating a deeply divided and misrepresented constituency led to international shock. Exit poll data detailing the demographic makeup of both Clinton and Trump's support base reveals what the media and data scientists got wrong before the election. In order to successfully understand and predict the outcomes of major elections in a political system which is reduced mainly to two parties, it is crucial to resist the temptation to rely only on self-confirming media sources and social connections. In the future, in order to better prepare for election outcomes, it will be important for polling and media sources to provide constituents with more varied scenarios and outcome possibilities, as well as to aim to reach as many voters of every demographic as possible.

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## The Role of New Media in Social Movements

*HANNAH WEISSMAN assesses the role played by social media during the Dakota Access Pipeline protests.*

Social media has become increasingly used in social movements, which has generated academic debates on its effects. There are three main theories as to the role of new media in civil society: techno-optimism, techno-pessimism, and technological determinism.<sup>1</sup> Techno-optimism views new media as a positive force in creating democracy, often driving the democratisation of regimes. Techno-pessimism, on the other hand, views new media with much more scepticism; seeing it as inhibiting effective forms of activism by deceiving supporters of a cause to believe that its use is equivalent to protesting.<sup>2</sup> The third theory is more nuanced: technological determinism is the idea that the relationship between new media and contemporary protest movements is contextual and relative to the specific movement.<sup>3</sup> It is also important to note that technological determinists see social media as a tool in revolutions but not as a cause of revolutions. This paper will use the lens of technological determinism to examine the extent to which new media helps historically marginalised groups advocate for greater equality, using the Dakota Access Pipeline protests as a case study.

Using new technologies to promote democracy is not a novel concept. The invention of the printing press and the radio were highly influential in protest movements of their time.<sup>4</sup> However there is a distinct difference between traditional forms of technology and new media: access. New media allows citizens to produce their own public media.<sup>5</sup> This is especially important for social groups, such as Native Americans, who generally live in remote and rural areas and have been historically overlooked.

The protests over the Dakota Access Pipeline center around tribal concerns. The pipeline brings oil from North Dakota to Illinois in a 1,200 mile pipeline, crossing four states.<sup>6</sup> The pipeline was created and is managed by Energy Transfer Partners.<sup>7</sup> Energy Transfer Partners claim to have followed all existing laws and regulations.<sup>8</sup> Pipeline supporters believe the investment will create jobs, increase energy independence,<sup>9</sup> and provide a safer means of transportation than trucks and trains.<sup>10</sup> The Standing Rock Sioux, who led the protest against the pipeline, were concerned over water pollution

should the pipeline leak.<sup>11</sup> This is a common occurrence for oil pipelines; in 2015, pipelines in the US leaked 258 times, causing 21,000 barrels of oil to be spilled into the environment.<sup>12</sup> The Standing Rock Sioux also stated that the pipeline would disturb Native cultural sites.<sup>13</sup>

The Standing Rock Sioux's legal fight against the pipeline was unsuccessful, resulting in the creation of Sacred Stone Camp in April 2016. By the end of April there were twenty inhabitants at the camp and by the end of September 2016 there were approximately 2,000.<sup>14</sup> At the camp's peak in early December there were between 10,000 and 14,000 inhabitants, including representatives from over 300 Native tribes.<sup>15</sup> While there are many reasons for the dramatic increase in the number of protesters at the camp, social media played a significant role throughout the protest.

Social media was used in a variety of ways to help facilitate the protests over the Dakota Access Pipeline. Near the beginning of the protests, social media was used as a means of coordination, with Facebook groups being used for ride shares to the camp.<sup>16</sup> Citizen journalists, photographers, and bloggers began posting content from the camp in the summer of 2016, which helped the movement gain greater internet traction.<sup>17</sup> As the camp grew, social media became crucial in raising funds to buy supplies for the camp. By early December 2016, Standing Rock had received over a million dollars in donations.

Historically, traditional media has not covered Native issues. One of the last times national press covered a tribal reservation was in 1973 when the American Indian Movement took over the town of Wounded Knee.<sup>18</sup> However, by the end of August 2016, *NPR* and *The New York Times* had sent reporters to the camp, and by the end of November the camp had become a regular addition to newscasts.<sup>19</sup> Although it took five months for the protests to gain attention, without social media, such protests might never have been covered by national news organisations at all. As most reservations are not near urban areas, it is easy for the mainstream media to overlook and ignore major tribal concerns. Social media also enabled Standing Rock to connect with indigenous groups across the globe, some of whom even came to the camp, such as groups from Norway, Ecuador, and New Zealand.<sup>20</sup>

Social media's role became even more necessary after being used to document violence at the camp. By the end of September 2016, private security guards attacked protesters,<sup>21</sup> and the North Dakota National Guard was activated.<sup>22</sup> By the end of October, 412 protesters had been arrested.<sup>23</sup> It was reported that police used water cannons,<sup>24</sup> billy clubs, tear gas, mace, and compression grenades.<sup>25</sup> Those arrested were marked with numbers and placed in large cages that could hold up to 25 people, images of which were tweeted, along with pictures of militarised police,<sup>26</sup> with the hashtag #NoDAPL. This garnered alarm and anger from many across the world.

By October, conditions had become so dire that the United Nations sent a special rapporteur to North Dakota. The images circulating on social media undoubtedly helped in convincing the United Nations of the urgency of this matter. Chief Edward John from the UN Forum on Indigenous Issues spent three days in North Dakota at the end of October. He interviewed many tribal members about their experience at the camp, specifically about their interactions with law enforcement.<sup>27</sup> The Chief noted the lack of US Federal government presence at the camp and implored the US to take concrete action.<sup>28</sup> Another statement by the UN was made in mid-November, which condemned the excessive force used in North Dakota and the inhumane conditions those arrested were subjected to.<sup>29</sup>

The protesters at Standing Rock also took advantage of the unique qualities of social media. Sacred Stone camp frequently used the live streaming ability of Facebook to share the conditions in the camp. Increased technology has created the ability for the average person to participate in political documentation. DAPL lawyer Lauren Regan stated, 'This movement, since its inception, has had more video recordings than probably any other protest movement in the history of the United States, especially live-streams.'<sup>30</sup> Pictures and videos can be seen as more persuasive than words, and today, anyone with a smartphone and social media account can broadcast their pictures and videos to the wider world. Another example of how the movement used social media to connect to its supporters was the Facebook check-in. At the end of October, the Standing Rock Sioux asked their supporters to check in at the protest camp to confuse police.<sup>31</sup> According to *The Guardian*, over one million people checked in at the reservation,<sup>32</sup> increasing national awareness of the issue, which protesters hoped would encourage more people do their own research and devote their time to

learning about Standing Rock.<sup>33</sup> There were many social media posts made, specifically detailing actions that supporters could take if they were unable to attend the protest. These actions included making calls to the governor of North Dakota and the White House, sending supplies, and signing an online petition.<sup>34</sup> The community of support fostered by the use of social media also led to additional protests; on 15 November 2016, protests occurred across 300 cities in solidarity protests with the Standing Rock Sioux.<sup>35</sup>

Social media has become the new tool of social movements; however, its success depends on the nature of the conflict. The Standing Rock Sioux were able to use social media to generate a huge number of supporters both virtually and physically. Social media posts coming out of North Dakota allowed greater supporters to be involved, whether through virtual check-ins, financial contributions, making phone calls, or attending solidarity protests. Lastly, and most importantly, the posts often contained emotional videos and pictures, creating a passionate group of supporters. While the protests ultimately did not achieve their goal, it is argued that Standing Rock was more of a beginning than an end.<sup>36</sup> Events at Standing Rock increased national consciousness and strengthened the relationships between Native and non-Native communities.<sup>37</sup> Social media gives a voice to the voiceless, including those who have been historically marginalised, allowing them to control their own narrative and gain an audience. Yet, it is crucial to remember that social media does not guarantee the desired outcome, it is a tool rather than a magic bullet. For those that use this tool effectively, it can change the course of history. Linda Black Elk, a professor at Sitting Bull College, said, 'We were invisible to people, they didn't want to see us and we're not invisible anymore...and I think that we have decided that visibility is a gift. And we are going to use it for the greater good.'<sup>38</sup>

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## Feminism and Transparency in the United States: Profile on NOW

*GAIA SCOTTO DI MINICO explains why the gender wage gap concerns everyone and what an American non-profit organization is doing to mitigate it.*

Political transparency has always been a pillar of democracy. As a regime that serves its people, there is an unspoken duty to present facts and verified information about the way the nation runs. The gender wage gap has become a hot topic in politics in light of the fact that when it comes to pay equality in 2016, the United States ranks 66th in the World Economic Forum Report.<sup>1</sup> In particular, the score calculated for economic participation and opportunity was found to have decreased over the last decade from 0.759 to 0.752.<sup>2</sup> In 2014, the Obama administration set up the Fair Pay and Safe Workspaces Act which sought to unmask gender disparity in income and ensure that sexual harassment in the workplace would not go unaddressed.<sup>3</sup> This legislation was a huge step forward for women, feminists, and human rights activists alike. For this reason it came as a blow when the Trump administration pushed to repeal this crucial piece of legislation within months of his inauguration. Even more worrying is the fact that President Trump has hinted at dismantling Obama's White House Council on Women and Girls, a forum set up in 2009 to monitor policies related to gender and to maintain strong links with feminist organisations.<sup>4</sup> A government that has strong links with feminist organisations is crucial to implementing legislation that advances gender equality.

The National Organization for Women is one of these outside groups that help to develop comprehensive and effective legislation. NOW is a feminist group that has been dedicated to approaching women's rights issues for the past 50 years.<sup>5</sup> Through intersectional grassroots activism, this body promotes feminist ideals to achieve social, political, and economic equality between genders.<sup>6</sup> It is the largest feminist organisation in the United States, with hundreds of chapters spread throughout the country and

hundreds of thousands of members, who through traditional or non-traditional means push for social change. In 1978, NOW organised a march in support of the Equal Rights Amendment which involved 100,000 people in Washington DC.<sup>7</sup> Although it addresses the issues of violence against women, reproductive rights, and sexual orientation discrimination, NOW's strongest priority is 'winning economic equality'.<sup>8</sup> Through their National Action Program, the 'bible' for activists around the country, NOW campaigns for a list of issues for which it lays out strategies and concrete action plans.

It has been proven in Scandinavian countries, such as Sweden, that the act of publicly declaring salaries allows the state to monitor the gender wage gap effectively so that it can work to reduce it. In fact, businesses that hire more than 25 employees are required to announce their employees' pay, and can face fines if there are glaring disparities. This has had a positive effect of decreasing pay inequality from the first and second year this system was introduced, although a six percent discrepancy persists in Sweden.<sup>9</sup>

The main problem with collecting wage statistics is that they generally do not describe the situation accurately. For example, *FullFact* measures gender pay gap in the UK by randomly selecting 50 women and 50 men and comparing their incomes. By these measures, women earn, on average, 19 percent less, per hour, than men. If the study only looked at full-time workers, the median woman would earn 9.4 percent less than the median man.<sup>10</sup> This does not accurately reveal the gender wage gap as women are more likely to work lower-earning jobs. *Glassdoor* and *Payscale* have found that women will unknowingly ask and accept a lower wage than men who have the same education and experience level as them; women are also less likely to negotiate their salaries.<sup>11</sup> Wage inequality is therefore not a problem exclusive to certain companies but a wider, social problem.

Where does the social problem arise from? Women have always been recommended for jobs that seem to require inherently female traits. Women will more likely work as teachers, secretaries, nurses, or in jobs that generally receive a lower pay than, for example, engineers or doctors. Moreover, the introduction of quotas in certain institutions and certain countries has, in some cases, backfired; women must work harder to reach an elevated position, and once they have achieved this, it is assumed that tokenism has placed them there rather than merit.<sup>12</sup> Another difficulty arises when women enter a male-dominated field, Congress being an apt example: a female senator or congresswoman will have to assume more 'hard-line, masculine' characteristics in order to be taken seriously. Many times, this means that she is restrained in arguing for legislation to decrease gender inequality. Thus having more women in Congress does not necessarily translate as more substantive female representation.<sup>13</sup>

As was previously mentioned, the Trump Administration has halted an important piece of legislation that would have forced large companies to share information with the government regarding their employees' salaries. However, the discussion surrounding unequal pay has not slowed down. Employees of large corporations are increasingly turning towards websites that report the salaries of their male counterparts, shareholders are continuously pressuring companies to address the pay gap, and local governments have recently passed laws addressing the importance of equal pay.<sup>14</sup> The 'peer effect' can, in some cases, be a greater motivator than legislation.

It is evident that women would like to see the pay gap shrink, but why should men be interested in addressing it? It might be assumed that men only have something to lose, financially, in fighting for equal pay. However, a meritocratic society is more economically productive: studies have shown that companies with diverse boards perform better than homogenous ones. In fact, firms with the best record for promoting women into management were 18 to 69 percent more profitable than the industry median.<sup>15</sup> Moreover, companies in the top quartile with regard to women on their management teams had financial returns 34 to 35 percent higher than companies in the lowest quartile.<sup>16</sup> Companies with 3-4 additional women in senior management functions also scored higher on measures of organizational excellence.<sup>17</sup> Lastly, research found that companies with the highest level of gender diversity outperformed the average of their sector in terms of return on equity, operating result, and stock price growth.<sup>18</sup> Ultimately, when a society increases equality in the workplace, people can realize their maximum potential, which benefits all in a company, community, and society.

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We live in a world of ever-accelerating news cycles. Crisis after crisis demand our attention. The future of the EU and the UK is still in question as progress in the Brexit negotiations remains slow. President Duterte continues with his bloody war on drugs in the Philippines, Venezuela teeters on the edge of bankruptcy, the Middle East stands on a precipice as Saudi Arabia purges a number of senior officials, potentially playing a part in the resignation of Lebanon's prime minister. Kenya's sham elections should not be ignored, Kim Jong-Un's impending nuclear threat and Mueller's investigation into Russian involvement in the US elections are to be followed closely. Every region seems to be embroiled in a crisis of its own making.

What is becoming increasingly clear is that in an interdependent,

globally connected world, none of these developments take place only domestically or within a vacuum. They are symptomatic of underlying currents, and motives not obvious to the global community. In this issue, we will attempt to break through the noise, drawing your attention to what you might be missing amidst the barrage of emergencies.

Under Donald Trump's leadership, the U.S. has decided to withdraw from the Paris Agreement. The fear that the international community will never be effective in addressing climate change, is legitimate. Even existing institutions created to tackle carbon emissions are plagued with fraud, a topic Monika Plozza highlights in this issue.

In her analysis of the rise of Al-Qaeda as a postcolonial case study, Charlotte Dibb sheds light on the circumstances that allowed a non-state actor to appropriate power on the global stage, and how colonialism sowed the seeds necessary to justify their motives.

## 'Oops' – Rise of Al-Qaeda as Post-Colonial Case Study.

*CHARLOTTE DIBB examines the rise of Al-Qaeda as a postcolonial case study, and how it reflects the international system as a whole.*

From the Greek and Roman conquests of Arabia, to Dante implying that the Prophet Muhammad was at the center of *Inferno*, to Lawrence of Arabia, to the Crusades, colonialism has impacted many regions' cultures and ways of life.<sup>1</sup> The rise of Al-Qaeda, as a postcolonial case study, is a culmination of the Middle East's long history of colonial influence. It exemplifies the tenants of self vs. other, state vs. non-state, and demonstrates that neo-colonialism and the legacy of colonialism are contemporary issues in international relations. The three key events examined in the rise of Al-Qaeda are: the proxy war between the United States and the Soviet Union in Afghanistan, The Gulf War, specifically the residual forces left by the United States, and finally, the events and aftermath of 9/11, signifying the shift of an ally to an enemy, and showing the cyclical nature of international relations.

Postcolonialism critiques the current hegemony of mainstream international relations theory by acknowledging the legacy of colonialism, and the persistence of neocolonialism in modern civilisations. Four key assumptions construct the theory of postcolonialism. First, is the denaturalisation of colonialism. This is the idea that colonialism's legacy is not only felt through policies, laws, education, behaviors, and social constructs, but also through concrete, neocolonial actions taken by actors on the international stage.<sup>2</sup> This is the underlying premise of the case study, because the history of colonialism in the Middle East is constantly a factor in people's lives, and in the behavior of Al-Qaeda.

The second assumption of postcolonialism is the de-universalisation of the history of the modern nation-state. This is the notion that theories of international relations cannot focus exclusively on systems of only nation states, but must include non-state actors and consider their impact.<sup>3</sup> This is particularly applicable to the rise of Al-Qaeda.

Thirdly, postcolonialism theorises that mainstream international relations theory provincialises the West, meaning that mainstream theories are developed to explain events in a specific province, or state, and then the theory is expanded to encompass other situations. In this manner, a given theory becomes accepted as universal, with little knowledge of the rest of the world as a whole.<sup>4</sup> How can a provincialised theory apply to cultures as diverse as Islam and the West, when mainstream theory is far too focused on the West and does not understand or accommodate Islam?

Finally, postcolonialism opposes the idea that theories of international

relations are systems of constant anarchy. Rather, it argues that the international system is one of hierarchy, and within that, certain roles are internalised, and accepted. For example, the West vs. the Rest mindset of neo-colonialism.<sup>5</sup> This is something mainstream international relations theory ignores, because it is focused on states themselves, not the people and cultures that exist within, and influence states and non-state actors.<sup>6</sup> It often is established through racial roles and stereotypes.<sup>7</sup>

The Soviet War in Afghanistan, fundamentally a neo-colonial war of influence between the US and the USSR,<sup>8</sup> set the stage for the development of Al-Qaeda. The conflict was not only over ideological influence, but was also a war for resources, the original impetus for the first colonial period in history.<sup>9</sup> This ties into the postcolonialism assumption of Western provincialism. Provincialism assumes that capitalism, in its Western form, as the United States wanted to impose on Afghanistan, would be able to work in the Middle East. This was mirrored by the Soviet Union's assumption that Communism was universal and would function in Afghanistan.<sup>10</sup> Both ignored the culture of Afghanistan, its tribal history and political system, and presumes that Western conceptions of economic systems are universal.

Furthermore, the fact that the US felt they had to mobilise the mujahideen, because it felt that funding the local resistance would have far greater returns after the war was over,<sup>11</sup> shows the importance of non-state actors. It showed the power of non-state armies, and allowed for the basis of Al-Qaeda to form. The groundwork was set for Osama Bin Laden to galvanise Muslims against a non-Muslim enemy in later years.<sup>12,13</sup>

Colonialism is not a thing of the past, and is not a moment in time.<sup>14</sup> It is continuous, and cyclical, as postcolonialism assumes. The U.S. government became involved in the Gulf because it feared that the United States' oil supply would be threatened,<sup>15</sup> as the Kuwait Oil Company was owned jointly by United States and United Kingdom joint interests.<sup>16</sup> This, in and of itself, is a neo-colonial reason to become involved in a conflict.

The leaving of residual U.S. forces abroad really sparked the formation of terrorist groups. The residual forces the United States left in Saudi Arabia to protect their oil interests greatly threatened Osama Bin Laden's conception of the Muslim way of life.<sup>17</sup> He felt that the residual forces meant that the United States would take over Saudi Arabia, and then the rest of the Middle East, draining the area of oil and resources, but also obscuring native Islamic culture through the holding of Mecca and Medina, the two holiest cities in Islam.<sup>18</sup> Bin Laden, and indeed, many leaders in the post-colonial world feared the continuation of an oppressive status quo, and the erasure of their culture, and the wider Muslim sense of self within the community.<sup>19,20</sup>

The movement that began in resistance to the United States and its influence is an example of postcolonial theory, because it proves that states are not the only actors in the international system. Bin Laden feared the neo-colonial power of the United States, and so his rhetoric changed, where he

once preached fighting the local enemy, he now mobilised Muslim people against a hostile West.<sup>21</sup> Mainstream theories such as neo-realism would reject this notion of non-state mobilisation, seeing any non-state or 'terrorist' actions as always illegitimate and unjustified, and part of the weak and powerless.<sup>22</sup> Postcolonialism, however, recognises this non-state mobilisation as legitimate, and part of a reaction to neo-colonialist action in the Middle East. It also recognises the fear Bin Laden and the forces mobilised from various Muslim majority countries had of the loss of influence over their culture as a result of the previous colonial experience in the region, from centuries earlier during the Crusades, and more recently, from the Soviet Afghan War and American influence.

Former allies under colonialism, after the final transition, become solidified enemies, and a clear dichotomy of Self/Other becomes prominent. September 11th marked the final stage of the rise of Al-Qaeda, and the climax of the postcolonial case study. The events of 9/11 and their aftermath, prove that the international system is not one of anarchy, as mainstream international relations theory dictates, but of hierarchy. It shows that the roles the international system imposed on Al-Qaeda, and on President Bush, were so internalised by their counterparts, that a dichotomy of Self vs. Other was formed.<sup>23</sup>

The language used in various public addresses by both Osama Bin Laden and President George W. Bush, to galvanise the support of their people (the collective Self) against the enemy (the Other) demonstrates the development of the dichotomy. In his address to Congress after 9/11, President Bush referred to Al-Qaeda as 'their kind', 'murderers', and painted an image of the Middle East of being envious of America's freedom, democracy, and civilisation.<sup>24</sup> Furthermore, he says 'we'll meet violence with patient justice', which implies that Al-Qaeda is a violent, uncivilised organisation that kills women and children.<sup>25</sup> This exemplifies that the United States associates itself with the identity of the world hegemonic power, and can assign identity traits to the rest of the world.

Similarly, Osama Bin Laden, in a letter directed at the American people post-9/11 used language comparable to President Bush's. He spoke of 'you' attacking 'us', showing the Self vs. Other dichotomy of postcolonial theory. He also articulated his fears of the United States draining the Middle East of its cultural history, and resources. Mostly, his language praises Islam as a culture of manners, honor, and principles, whereas he views Western culture as one of intoxicants, fornication, and gambling.<sup>26</sup> His Self vs. Other internalisation is less a personal attack on President Bush, but towards Western Society and Culture itself.

This dichotomy encompasses the assumption that the international system is a hierarchy, not a state of anarchy, because the West controls the narratives of identity. The dichotomy of Self vs. Other is used to pit the ideology and interest of one against the other, with the understanding that the Self should always be prioritised. In the case of President Bush and Bin Laden, they are both pushing for national security of their perceived nations.<sup>27</sup> This creates and legitimises a culture of violence, and allowed for the Global War on Terror to start, and continue.

The us vs. them, self vs. other, West vs. The Rest rhetoric of the Global War on Terror is a textbook example of neo-colonialism and how colonialism and its legacy are still prevalent in the modern world. The idea originates as something steeped in race and racial stereotypes, but can be extended to colonial forces depicting the colonised as a society of degenerates.<sup>28</sup> As Bhabha points out, colonial racism is timeless, and in the case of the aftermath of 9/11, this racism manifests as the association of Islam with terrorism.<sup>29</sup> The events of 9/11 allowed for the age-old colonial belief that those who matched the perceived conception of a terrorist such as, someone who appeared Arab, and wore a turban, was one to be targeted, and were othered. This was often for the wrong reasons, as many Sikhs experienced discrimination post-9/11.<sup>30</sup> Islam is not a homogenous religion, and Al-Qaeda's salafi beliefs are not held by the global Muslim population,

yet it is the identity prescribed to the Muslim Other in opposition to the Western Self.<sup>31</sup> This phenomenon eliminates the nuance of culture, of religion, and has distorted the way Muslims discuss their own faith, in relation to Christianity and the West.<sup>32</sup>

As Barkawi and Laffey argue, within the realm of the postcolonial assumption that states are not the only actors in international relations, and that colonialism is still relevant today, Islamic fundamentalism as exemplified in Al-Qaeda's ideology, is a result of the interactions that create international relations.<sup>33</sup> Post-9/11, the West rekindled old colonial assumptions about their interactions with other cultures, that once again established their superiority and ability to dictate the roles of others in the international system.<sup>34</sup> Simply calling Al-Qaeda fundamentalists ignores the power of the historical, colonial, interactions they have had with the United States, such as the Soviet War in Afghanistan, and the Second Gulf War, and the context that the United States and the West created that provided the impetus for Bin Laden to recruit forces to protect the Islamic Self in the Middle East.<sup>35</sup>

The rise of Al-Qaeda as a non-state actor, one that hugely influences international society, in the context of two neo-colonial conflicts in the Middle East, and derived from the legacy and fear of colonialism itself, is a uniquely postcolonial case. Al-Qaeda, and specifically Osama Bin Laden himself, have internalised the role of a violent fundamentalist group that has been dictated by the hierarchical system of international relations, that the United States, and therefore, at the time, President George W. Bush, and the historical context, were able to impose upon them. While postcolonialism is the theory that best fits the rise of Al-Qaeda, it would be beneficial in the future to explore further the non-state actor aspect additionally from a poststructuralist perspective. Above all, the rise of Al-Qaeda is explained, and exemplifies the key assumptions of postcolonialism, and furthers the notion that international relations and the international system are created through interactions. These interactions are what create the world at large, and the international system as a whole.

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## A Carbon Trade Fraud

*MONIKA PLOZZA evaluates the overlooked deficiencies in the emission market system.*

Among scientists exists a broad consensus regarding the adverse effects of climate change, and especially the implications of greenhouse gases on the atmosphere. Over 80 million people are in danger of losing their homes by flash flooding due to rising sea levels as a consequence of melting ice caps and increasing extreme weather conditions; the adverse effects of climate change pose an imminent global threat.<sup>1</sup> Three-quarters of all CO<sub>2</sub> emanating from human activities stem from burning fossil fuels.<sup>2</sup>

This article examines the emission trading scheme, created with the purpose of curbing greenhouse gas emissions. Being the fastest global commodities market,<sup>3</sup> it is vital to have a better understanding the emissions market and the fraud that occurs behind closed doors due to poor funding for monitoring systems.<sup>4</sup> Pollution permits are traded amongst companies but since they are classified as 'legal fiction,' they are extremely hard to trace. Countries must seek to find a way to both incentivise companies to reduce emissions, and create an international monitoring system to address the frauds.

The emission trading scheme is a system to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Rather than setting emission boundaries, which would restricting the economic freedom of companies, governments opt to establish a market for greenhouse gas emissions.<sup>5</sup> Along with setting a maximal threshold level,

emission certificates are granted to companies, which can be traded between themselves.<sup>6</sup> This mechanism is also known as a cap-and-trade system. Companies may not exceed their allocated permits by the cap and thus need to keep their carbon emissions within the set limits. In the event where a company cannot reduce its emissions to the limits, they can choose to purchase permits from other businesses that have not used all their emission permits yet.<sup>7</sup> The establishment of a carbon market leads to prices which are controlled by supply and demand. Prices should incentivise companies to cut their emissions in order to sell their excess permits on the carbon market.<sup>8</sup> With this approach, the costs of greenhouse gas emissions are levied on the companies, thus the polluters. However, the firms can benefit from dynamic market forces to improve their emissions mitigation costs.<sup>9</sup>

Numerous national and regional carbon markets have been created so far and are currently expanding. In these markets, individual firms bear the responsibility to trade carbon emission credits among each other.<sup>10</sup> Emission trading is currently the fastest growing global commodities market.<sup>11</sup> So far, the European Union Emission Trading Scheme (EU ETS) is undoubtedly the biggest regional carbon trading scheme, with an estimated value of £113 billion.<sup>13</sup>

The International Monetary Fund stated that the emissions trading policy already bears fruit, as can be seen by the existence of the European Emission Trading Scheme.<sup>14</sup> That being said, the effective implementation of the cap-and-trade system relies on an efficient carbon market with enough trading volume. Who supervises and manages the carbon market? Surprisingly, the environmental authorities in charge of directing and imposing CO<sub>2</sub> emission obligations have very little influence. Besides establishing flexible emission trading units and tracing their existence, environmental authorities have no further power in this domain.<sup>15</sup> Unfortunately, this is an important factor which is swept under the rug. But how does the emission carbon market function?

Although enormous sums are contributed worldwide to the establishment of emission trading schemes, there is almost no investment in monitoring systems. To illustrate, the UK government expended just £216 million for the trial trading scheme.<sup>16</sup> This disparity caused the emission market to be dependant on the integrity of corporations to register reliable reviews of emission levels and reductions. Corporations such as PricewaterhouseCoopers operate as accountants and consultants for emitting companies, and simultaneously, as verifiers of pollution reduction projects. Moreover, entrepreneurial businesses, such as CH2M Hill and IFC Consulting, provide consultancy, brokerage and verification services. These conflicts of interests, coupled with the unsatisfying regulation of the emission market, allowed for fraud.<sup>17</sup>

A questionnaire study by INTERPOL in 2015 found that for all 190 member countries, 33 members who took part in the survey observed emission trading fraud.<sup>18</sup> The INTERPOL Environmental Crime Programme stated that carbon fraud could appear in five forms: fraudulent manipulation of measurements to claim more carbon credits from a project that were obtained; sale of carbon credits that either do not exist or belong to someone else; false or misleading claims concerning the environmental or financial benefits of carbon market investments; exploitation of weak regulations in the carbon market to commit financial crimes, such as money laundering, securities fraud, or tax fraud; and computer hacking/phishing to steal carbon credits.<sup>19</sup>

The sustainability director Craig Mackenzie at Scottish Widows Investment Partnership discovered that even the necessary emission data, established by the EU, was insufficient, misleading, and cumbersome to find.<sup>20</sup> In the European Emission Trading Scheme (EUETS) the initial carbon caps were set too high, therefore offering few incentives for companies to comply. The excess of pollution permits led to prices being too low to pressure the emitters to invest in energy conservation. At the same time, certain individuals seized the opportunity of the laissez-faire culture in

security and hacked into the ETS registry, resulting in a number of frauds, which is considered to cost the EU governments £4.4 billion.<sup>21</sup> In sum, the young carbon emission market offers various opportunities for fraud. The regulation is mainly untested and incredibly high sums of money are at stake.<sup>22</sup> Nonetheless, how can white-collar crimes take root in this market?

There are various key factors which facilitate fraud in the carbon market. Internal policy frameworks often lack sufficient control over auditing systems for identifying carbon fraud. Although international and national guidelines to combat climate fraud were implemented, the regulation of emission-intensive companies remains weak, making it susceptible for fraud.<sup>23</sup> The most prominent challenge is that, unlike traditional commodities, which have to be delivered to someone at some stage, pollution permits take the form of a 'legal fiction' making it harder to trace.<sup>24</sup> Moreover, as the carbon markets are growing, credits generated in one country and sold in another will become more complex to track. This will enable offenders to make full use of legal loopholes and inconsistent regulations between different states. One of the most significant drawbacks in this conundrum is the limited power of law enforcement and regulators to take action beyond their jurisdiction, hampering adequate global enforcement.<sup>25</sup> Even now, after the Paris Summit, the Post-Kyoto market mechanisms' future remains unclear.<sup>26</sup>

Historically, there have been hardly any markets grounded in environmental objectives. The disparity between the goals of the financial players in the market and the Kyoto Protocol burdens the regulation of the market.<sup>27</sup> Furthermore, the reports and warnings by INTERPOL, the European Commission, and the auditors of the British Financial Conduct Authority, stated that the inherent characteristics of the cap-and-trade system and basically invisible substance of the permits restrain the advancement of this economic instrument.<sup>28</sup> With regard to all these weaknesses, the question of whether the environmental goals could be reached through government regulation rather than letting a free market manage pollution permits arises. Francisco Ascui, lecturer in business and climate change and director of the MSc in Carbon Finance at the University of Edinburgh Business school stated: 'Through the EU ETS, people have learned that you can do this politically through a trading scheme, but there's an uncertainty about getting the cap right... but if you set a carbon price [through a tax] there's an uncertainty about the quantity [of emissions reductions].'<sup>29</sup> With all these factors in mind, can we learn from the mistakes of the past?

The carbon market's strengths – its flexibility and complexity – are at also its shortcomings. The future of the cap-and-trade system, while a powerful environmental instrument, relies on its capability to overcome its hurdles.<sup>30</sup> Effective anti-fraud measures are required to combat carbon fraud. The existing framework set by governments does not stop fraud. International and uniform carbon reporting guidelines could provide the remedy here. Furthermore, clear-cut penalties should be established for misreporting carbon emissions.<sup>31</sup> Overall, research has shown that the chances for criminal activities are lower in markets where authorities directly release credits and monitor entities' emissions and pollution permits.<sup>32</sup>

It should be kept in mind that the primary goal of the cap-and-trade system is the reduction of overall greenhouse gas emissions in the atmosphere. The best solution to combat carbon fraud would be the establishment and improvement of a sophisticated monitoring system. It would be most desirable if an international environmental body could oversee its development. Nevertheless, full governmental control would not achieve the mitigation of pollution. This approach may cut out fraud, but there would be no control over emissions. Finally, a positive change could be encouraged by following a carrot and stick approach: combining an international monitoring system, while still giving incentives to companies to reduce pollution.

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