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DISSOLUTION

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A pro-independence protestor stands surrounded by red smoke coming from a firemen protest in front of Catalonia's regional parliaments as lawmakers vote inside, in Barcelona, January 16, 2014.

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Andrew Perry

References:

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

<http://www.leviathanjournal.org/#!references/c1lk7>



Africa



Asia-Pacific



Europe & Russia



Latin America



Middle East & North Africa



North America



International



It is my pleasure to present to you our second issue of the 2017-2018 academic year: 'Dissolution'. All over the world, political choices impact local communities, nations, and international networks. This can sometimes lead to alarmist discourses lamenting the dissolution of society's foundation. Taking these discourses with a pinch of salt, writers in this issue have investigated current dynamics of construction and reconstruction of our systems.

Some writers focus on the effects of global economic and political changes on local communities. In the Asia & Pacific section, Ewan Forrest denounces the tragic impact of the Indian government's investment in extractive industries on the lives of local Adivasi communities. When these same industries leave, the consequences can be detrimental too: Abigail Wise explains how the decline of coal-mining in Appalachia precipitated today's opioid crisis.

Counter-movements from communities that were previously repressed can, in turn, impact overarching institutions. In Ireland, the influence of the Catholic Church has declined, and pro-choice movements have gained popular support. This, according to Seán Leonard, raises hope for the upcoming referendum on abortion in May 2018.

The Catholic Church still holds a traditionally important role in many parts of the world, and the impact of some individuals, like Cardinal Laurent Monsengwo, can be decisive in encouraging pro-democracy trends. Abraham Assaily profiles him for the African section.

Sometimes, grassroots movements can escape their founder's control. In 2017, Tarana Burke was the face of the #MeToo movement. Now, as Samuel Phillips writes, she fears that the movement has been turned into a witch-hunt, putting the spotlight on aggressors rather than creating a community of survivors of sexual assault.

Amid all these articles, some writers focused on broader political and economic dynamics. In the International section, Orson Gard shares his vision for a Holistic Development Strategy. Some writers took a more sceptical stance, arguing that the events we observe, far from being transformations, are merely part of a cyclical order. In the Middle East section, Michael Drax wonders whether or not Iraq will succeed in breaking free from an enduring cycle of violence.

This issue is the result of impressive teamwork, and I would sincerely like to thank the whole team. It has been a pleasure to work with you, and to see everyone improve together. I would also like to take this opportunity to thank Copy Editors, whose meticulous reviews are invaluable.

This journal could not exist without the support of professors throughout the University of Edinburgh. We would like to the University of Edinburgh's School of Social and Political Science for the continued support. Although we regret the absence of lectures this March, the team would like to express its support for the University staff. We hope they will be heard.

Finally, if you found this issue as inspiring as I did, I would like to encourage you to write for our last issue of the year, 'Pride.' I am thrilled about the theme, and cannot wait to read your submissions!

I enjoyed reading the diverse perspectives and ideas that students at the University of Edinburgh have to offer; and I hope you will as well.

Sincerely,

Barbara Wojazer

MEET THE TEAM



Editor in Chief

Barbara Wojazer 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 Jurevicius 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 Gharesifard 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 Kerim Baikhar Zhunussova 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 Redding 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 Birch 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

Janelle Brannan is a third-year International Relations with Quantitative Methods student. A Filipina-American who grew up in Ohio, she attributes coming to Edinburgh and her interest in IR to a multicultural background and a desire to get out of Ohio. Her main interests lie in the IR of the Asia Pacific and political data analysis. When she isn't looking for a dog to pet, she is involved with PIRPALS at the University.



Africa Regional Editor

Sam Phillips 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

Kirby Fullerton is a 4th year Social Anthropology and Development student from Arkansas, United States. After spending third year studying and conducting ethnographic research in Seoul, South Korea, she became interested in examining the intersections of neoliberal personhood, state-sponsored nationalism, and gender inequality in Northeast Asia. In addition to writing and editing for Leviathan, Kirby enjoys debating with the Edinburgh Debate Union.

**Europe & 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 & 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 Luke 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 Uhlig 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**

Dhruti 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 Dibb 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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As the recent years see the familiar faces of African politics fade into retirement or the grave, it is apparent that the regimes and personalities which have defined decades are over. The collapse of old certainties has not, however, seen the emergence of new ones. As neoliberalism and its variants tighten their hold across the continent, hope for substantive change seems dim, as strongmen, democrats, and their chosen successors all preach from the same book.

In this issue, Matteo Crow explores the combination of wishful thinking, mismanagement, and environmental circumstance that lead to the Cape Town

water crisis in South Africa, arguing that the change in weather patterns has ramifications for all nations that politicians often fail to assess carefully. When old expectations determine current policy, plans fall through.

Abraham Assaliy profiles Cardinal Laurent Monsengwo, Archbishop of Kinshasa and one of the most dynamic religious leaders in Africa, and his role in organizing the massive national protests in Democratic Republic of Congo against President Kabila. The involvement of Cardinal Monsengwo in these protests represents a break in past modes of church state relations in Africa, signalling a future where the Catholic Church plays a larger role in standing up to oppression.

When the Water Stops Flowing

MATTEO CROW suggests that Cape Town is just the beginning of a water-scarce future that could hold significant ramifications for social unrest.

'Day Zero' – the day that the city of Cape Town runs out of water – is on the front-page of every newspaper, with a name that plays to apocalyptic fears.^{1,2,3} But Cape Town merely highlights what natural resource managers and climate scientists have worried about for decades: with industrialisation and a growing population, water consumption is only increasing, while water supply is staying stable, if not decreasing.⁴ Some of the greatest rivers in the world – the Nile, Colorado, Ganges, and countless others – are but a shadow of their historical flow when they reach the ocean, drained along their entire path by irrigation, urban populaces, and industry.⁵ Beyond an environmental disaster, these events can have serious effects on societal stability. As Governor of West Cape Province, Helen Zille, asks: 'When Day Zero arrives, how do we make water accessible and prevent anarchy? And if there is any chance of still preventing it, what is it we can do?'⁶

Cape Town's 'Day Zero' is estimated to be only three months away, and when it hits, the Cape Town government will be forced to cut water use to 25 litres a day, available at 200 centres sprinkled across the city.⁷ At first glance Cape Town seemed like it had taken the steps to prepare for water-scarce years and that it was not at a high risk of water supply collapse. Only three years ago, the Western Cape region had maximised the capacity of its water storage infrastructure (such as reservoirs and dams).⁸ A number of human and environmental factors contributed to the evolution of these events. The crisis was precipitated by three years of drought, but human factors, such as disagreements over water infrastructure investment and other administrative blockages between the regional and national governments, hindered drought preparation by retarding investment into new technologies and new water storage.⁹ New developments in desalination and further surface storage projects were not developed quickly enough to mitigate the effects of the drought, the severity of which was also largely unexpected by officials operating under the assumption that 'future rainfall patterns would resemble the past, or at least not change too quickly.'^{10,11} The Cape Town crisis is an especially worrying case, given that the city is located within an industrialised country with a functioning government and only a semi-arid climate.¹²

The most important takeaway from the crisis in Cape Town is the realisation that the city is not unique in its water supply concerns.¹³ Underinvestment in climate change preparedness is endemic across the world.¹⁴ Similar water supply crises are possible in a number of large urban areas in West Africa, India, Mexico, Central Asia, the Middle East, and even the United States.¹⁵ The great water dilemma in California – where the majority of rain falls in the north, while the majority of the population resides in the south – is reflective of a global problem: growing urban populations are frequently located away from sufficient sources of fresh water.¹⁶ Governments all around the world

have been making nominal steps towards climate change mitigation and efforts to ensure reliable supplies of necessary resources, including water, but the drastic investment needed to achieve the ambitious mitigation targets is unpalatable to politicians focused on short-term governance.¹⁷ When reality hits, as in Cape Town, it becomes apparent that governments frequently fail to sufficiently invest in the requisite preparations to mitigate the effects of global climate change.¹⁸ Unfortunately for governments across the globe, research shows that these environmental events are a crucial variable in the collapse of societies – and governments remain underprepared.

Societal collapse is frequently tied to two main variables: economic stratification and ecological strain; two problems that governments, in principle, serve to moderate.¹⁹ When social scientists consider the basic tenets of a stable society, they generally list an educated population, strong institutions, minimal social tension, and an established relationship or 'social contract' between the population and the government.²⁰ That social contract is reliant upon the government providing security, of all types, to the populace in exchange for cooperation and funding, generally through taxes.²¹ When the government fails to provide basic services – such as the provision of water – distrust of government permeates society. Without that trust in the social contract, governance structures lose their legitimacy.²² Martin O'Malley, Governor of Maryland and former Democratic presidential candidate in the United States, made valid comments in 2016 on the relationship between drought and the Syrian Civil War.²³ Drought in Syria may have intensified urbanisation as farmers ran out of water and migrated to cities, providing the crowded areas of young, poor men that proved a potent equation for violence.²⁴ This example demonstrates the dangers facing the Western Cape region of South Africa, where unemployment tops twenty percent, another variable with the potential to exacerbate social unrest.²⁵ The arrival of 'Day Zero' will implicate both the Cape Town and Western Cape governments in failing their end of the social contract, with potentially disastrous consequences.

Cape Town serves as a warning for governments across the globe that ecological strain is constantly increasing and that significant short-term investments are necessary to ensure growing global populations have access to the necessary resources, including water. When the social contract is broken over access to a basic necessity, loyalty to a stable society may fly straight out the window, as desperation fuels individualist and survivalist tendencies. No matter how strong the institutions of a country are, without meeting the population's basic needs, the social contract between state and population is broken, and collapse becomes a possibility. Helen Zille's comments about anarchy do not only apply to South Africa; the water challenges facing Cape Town are part of a global problem of diminishing freshwater resources and consistent underinvestment in solutions.²⁶ Scores of states, especially those in the Sahel, may have similar circumstances in the near future. The alarmist rhetoric around resource scarcity does not sound quite as alarmist when the taps, quite literally, start to run dry.

Matteo Crow is a former student at the University of Edinburgh.

Profile Piece : Laurent Monsengwo

ABRAHIM ASSAILY explores the unique role Laurent Monsengwo, a Roman Catholic Cardinal, is playing in human rights campaigns in Central Africa.

Laurent Monsengwo, the 78-year-old Archbishop of Kinshasa and Cardinal of the Catholic Church, has come out as a key player in the pro-democracy and civil rights groups that are currently holding mass rallies throughout the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and calling for the resignation of the current president, Joseph Kabila.¹ These protests come in the wake of Kabila's retraction of his promise to leave office before the end of 2017 after spending twenty years as the President of the DRC.² These overtly political moves are rare for the Catholic Church internationally, as, historically, it often opted to muffle its objections to authoritarian regimes and maintain a division of church and state in order to continue humanitarian and pastoral work unrestrained, especially in the tumultuous areas in Central Africa.³ Archbishop Monsengwo has never held this apolitical stance, and has been deeply involved in politics in both DRC and the Vatican.⁴ Whereas activists like Monsengwo were previously kept on a tight leash, under Pope Francis the universal Catholic Church has put its weight behind their activities,⁵ foreshadowing a new era of church-state relations in Africa and beyond.

Laurent Monsengwo was born in Kinshasa in 1939, while the country was still under Belgian colonial rule.⁶ The Catholic Church was one of the proverbial pillars upon which Belgian rule in Congo rested, providing the minimal care, education, and medicine that made life livable during colonisation.⁷ As he joined the Church and progressed through its ranks, he would see his homeland gain independence only to falter as its first democratically-elected leader, the charismatic Patrice Lumumba, was deposed and assassinated, replaced by the dictator Mobutu Sese Seko, who would rule from 1965 until 1997.⁸ During this time, Monsengwo would go on to become the first African to receive a PhD in Biblical Studies from the Pontifical Biblical Institute at the Vatican.⁹ Having completed his higher education, he returned home to serve as Bishop of Inogo and Kisangani and a humanitarian;¹⁰ during this time, he witnessed the widespread violence, chaos, and disunity that consumed his country. The Catholic Church at this time, however, sat as a passive observer to the atrocities of the Mobutu government, fearful that dissent or opposition would result in the Church being expelled, leaving millions of Catholics without pastoral care.¹¹

By the late 1980s, Mobutu was losing a war against multiple rebel factions and most of the primary actors in Congolese politics had lost faith in his ability to maintain his corrupt and despotic regime.¹² Trusting the Catholic Church to mediate without bias, Monsengwo was appointed President of the High Council of the Republic, a national council designed to oversee a transition to democracy, in 1991.¹³ His political involvement only intensified during the transition period, as he was elected Speaker of the transitional Parliament in 1994, proving himself an effective political leader with a strong and stalwart belief in democracy, and playing a key role in drafting and ratifying of the 1994 constitution.¹⁴ During this time, Monsengwo used the national podium to call for the nation to come together as one and for a more open discussion between politicians, making great strides in bringing the different warring factions together.¹⁵ In 1997, rebel forces under Laurent-Désiré Kabila, the current President's father, ousted Mobutu and brought an end to decades of repression and brutality.¹⁶ The new era of violence and war, which saw two conflicts on a continental scale erupt,¹⁷ unleashed by Kabila's coup also swept away the gains garnered by Monsengwo's conciliatory initiatives.

The DRC has a long history of struggling to maintain stable democratic institutions and human rights, and many of its accomplishments in social, economic, and political stability were quickly torn down by ethnic and political conflict followed by strongman rule.¹⁸ Politics in the DRC are characterised not only by rampant corruption and brutal state oppression, but also massive ethnic, cultural, and economic divides that keep the vast country in a state of near constant struggle.¹⁹ While major cities in the Congo retain some form of law and governmental oversight, militias and warlords dominate the interior of

the country.²⁰ These militias are usually led by a 'strongman' figure, focused on seizing fertile and resource-rich land to either exploit it for profit or to seize it for their ethnic group.²¹ The incessant conflict between these groups has ravaged the Congolese countryside and inflicted irreparable harm upon the civilian population, leaving the DRC with some of the lowest standards of living in the world.²²

In these fractured circumstances, religion acts as one of the few unifiers in the country, with around half of the country being Catholic and another 30 percent being other kinds of Christians.²³ In 2007, Monsengwo would be ordained as Archbishop of Kinshasa, making him the de facto head of the Catholic Church across all of the DRC, responsible for the souls of 26 million Congolese faithful and one of the most influential men in the country.²⁴ As a strong Christian leader at the head of a unified church, Monsengwo's voice has the ability to bring about a great deal of change in the DRC. His influence has only grown in the past decade, as his strong belief in the power of youth education has led the Catholic Church in the Congo to invest heavily in schools, to a point where 40 percent of all primary school students in the DRC are currently enrolled in schools run by the Catholic Church.²⁵

President Joseph Kabila became the most recent in the line of the DRC's authoritarian rulers in 2016, when he refused to step down despite the end of his presidential term.²⁶ Kabila has been in power since 2001.²⁷ His refusal to leave has sparked major protests across the country, which Kabila has put down with excessive violence, seeing as many as 60 killed and over 600 detained without trial.²⁸ In the ensuing turmoil, Archbishop Monsengwo has taken back the central political role he commanded during the early 1990s, organising the protesters across several cities and putting the weight of the Church behind demands that President Kabila resign.²⁹ The populace has rallied around the Archbishop, with protesters shouting slogans the likes of, 'Kabila, you are no longer our president, our new leader is Monsengwo.'³⁰ Monsengwo's return to political involvement has not been without danger, both to him and to the members of the Church in the DRC more generally, as Monsengwo and other priests have received death threats from both militant groups and governmental authorities.³¹ That Archbishop Monsengwo would continue to lead protests against the President despite credible threats of violence against the Church and its flock demonstrates the fundamental shift in church-state relations in the DRC, with the Church under Monsengwo bravely putting its own survival at risk to oppose injustice.

The radical departure from the Catholic Church's traditional relationship with the government of the DRC under Archbishop Monsengwo has come with the blessing of the Vatican, demonstrating a much more radical shift in how the Church sees its role in African society. In August 2016, Pope Francis created the Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development, an organ tasked with caring for the suffering and oppressed, placing it under the control of Cardinal Peter Turkson, former Archbishop of Cape Coast and one of the Church's most active figures.³² In Zaire and elsewhere, the Catholic Church remained silent over horrific atrocities committed by the government, fearful of being repressed and unable to provide pastoral care to Christians.³³ Pope Francis himself experienced the immense difficulty of these relations, compelled to give mass to the same men who terrorised his country during Argentina's brutal military junta.³⁴ Perhaps it is because of these memories that Pope Francis has empowered Cardinal Turkson to let the Catholic Church take an active role in defending human rights and speaking out against injustice. While Archbishop Monsengwo has been undeniably crucial to events in the DRC, his activism is only possible because of institutional support from people like Cardinal Turkson. This shift in the upper echelons of the Catholic Church represents a new era for the Catholic Church across the world, as it has actively chosen to support those who prioritise justice over security and are willing to sacrifice themselves to this cause. Africa, home to almost 200 million Catholics,³⁵ is likely to be particularly affected by this new stance, as aspiring strongmen and authoritarian presidents may increasingly find themselves challenged and brought to heel by the immense political power of the Church on the continent.

Abraham Assaily is a Third Year International Relations student at the University of Edinburgh.



In this issue, unique perspectives on economic development, inter-Asian geopolitical relations, and ethnic conflict are presented to reveal the various and wide-ranging consequences created by government action or inaction. Writers question not only the implications of economic and political disruption, but also what is constructed, during times of disruption and destruction.

Ross Gale examines the complex motivations behind Chinese, Russian, Japanese, and US foreign policy regarding North Korea. He argues that, despite condemnation, these actors might have interest in maintaining an isolated and yet volatile North Korean regime. While

much has been written regarding the development of India's economy, Ewan Forrest examines the negative impacts of natural resource extraction in conflict torn regions of Asia's subcontinent. This reflects an erosion of both ecosystem integrity and the traditional ways of life for some of the most marginalized rural communities in the region. Jacob Milburn traces Aung San Suu Kyi's political career, from Nobel Peace laureate to her failure to condemn the ethnic cleansing of Rohingya people, revealing the significance of silence on spoiling the career of Southeast Asia's once celebrated human rights champion.

These stories highlight the importance of reading beyond the headlines to better understand the diverse cultural, economic and political complexity of the world's largest continent.

National Development, Rural Dispossession: The Destruction of Tribal Communities in India

EWAN FORREST examines the ongoing challenges faced by India's Adivasi people as large-scale resource development projects and state intervention threaten their traditional livelihoods.

In 2013, a landmark ruling by the Indian Supreme Court halted the development of a bauxite mine in the Niyamgiri hills by Vedanta Resources PLC, a multi-billion dollar mining company. The future of the hills in Odisha province was placed in the hands of the local Dongria Khond tribe who, holding this land sacred, unanimously rejected the plans.¹ Then, in 2016, the Odisha government filed a new petition against the community, seeking to overturn this ruling. This was accompanied by a considerable spike in police harassment and intimidation.² Niyamgiri, in many ways, became emblematic of the wider tribal experience in India. The threat of displacement at the hands of extractive industries combined with negative interactions with state authorities is a story repeated throughout the country.³ These patterns point towards a common process: a creeping dispossession and uprooting of the socio-economic structures of tribal communities.⁴ As large-scale resource extraction in predominantly tribal areas intensifies, so do environmental and political threats to tribal groups. This destructive process is compounded by the large-scale state incorporation, policing and militarisation of tribal areas. These are exacerbated by the response to an ongoing Maoist insurgency in which thousands of tribal people have been caught in a crossfire. As these processes gain momentum, tribal communities are rapidly finding themselves pushed to the sidelines in Prime Minister Modi's new India.

The classification of people as 'tribal' and their separation from a non-tribal society is a categorisation that holds its own complications. The Indian government's own 'Scheduled Tribes' designation encompassed, in 2013, 8.4 percent of the Indian population – some 104.28 million people in 705 different listed communities.⁵ The majority of people from those Scheduled Tribes who use the designation 'Adivasi' ('original inhabitants', hereafter used interchangeably with 'tribal') are concentrated in a central 'tribal belt' stretching across the country from Gujarat to West Bengal.⁶ It is worth noting the further complications of blurring categorisations, non-Adivasi migration into predominantly Adivasi areas, and tribal groups whose identities are not recorded by the government's sometimes arbitrary scheduling system.⁷ For all this

confusion, however, there is a part of clarity; Scheduled Tribes are among the least urbanised social groups in India with 90 percent living in rural areas, and they are disproportionately affected by resource extraction and production projects.^{8,9}

Bauxite mining in particular remains a source of extreme contention in many Adivasi communities. Deposits in the east coast states of Odisha and Andhra Pradesh represent 80 percent of all metal-grade bauxite ore in India, and the sixth largest deposits in the world.¹⁰ These deposits are primarily located in Adivasi territories, which are supposedly protected by the Indian Constitution. But these territories become extremely attractive for extractive corporations, who thus justify their intrusion into Adivasi communities.¹¹ Unfortunately for the Adivasi, large-scale extraction projects are set to continue. The Indian government's development goals revolve around the increasing use of its own domestic resource base to further growth, with a prioritisation of short-term gains over sustainable or equitable resource use.¹² It is unsurprising, therefore, that both state and private entities have created large extractive zones, in many cases over which they can exert de facto control.¹³ The Modi government has displayed a similar commitment to its predecessors in securing the interests of extractive industries, particularly of the mining industry. The Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Amendment Bill 2015 was passed through Parliament, and reduced the need for mining corporations to gain the consent of local Adivasi communities prior to extraction projects.^{14,15} Such legislation enables an intensification of mining projects with a significant reduction in the agency of Adivasi peoples to legally defend themselves. Small victories like Niyamgiri may therefore swiftly become relegated to the past.

As such, a large proportion of Adivasi communities are rural, and the regular large-scale projects being proposed under current legislative circumstances have the potential to critically disrupt the livelihoods of thousands of tribal people.¹⁶ Mass displacement is an all-too-familiar feature of such projects that disproportionately affects tribal communities. As many as 40 percent of all tribal people have been displaced from their communities, and since the 1950s only 25 percent of those displaced have been formally relocated.¹⁷ Legal loopholes which necessitate former land ownership as a feature of displacement further enable corporations to gain a legal upper hand in disputes.¹⁸ Adivasi land rights, enshrined in the Constitution, are at the heart of this issue, and legal protections are under increasing threat of erosion; the legalised transfer of lands from Adivasi communities to non-Adivasi landowners and corporations looms.¹⁹ Felix Padel and Samarendra Das go as far as to describe these creeping processes as 'highland clearances', wherein an unwritten (and perhaps unconscious) policy exists with the result of dispossessing tribal people from their lands in the name of development.²⁰ The expansion of India's mining sector into Adivasi communities is a perfect example of a wide-scale uprooting of

communities from their rural livelihoods being carried out through resource extraction. By the very nature of the development goals of the Indian government, to say nothing of its further enshrinement into law under Modi, any reversal seems untenable, and Adivasi livelihoods may be permanently altered.

It goes without saying that this accumulation through dispossession comes at the expense of traditional economic life in Adivasi communities. This is particularly well demonstrated in case studies of hydroelectric dam projects in Gujarat and Madhya Pradesh. In the Narmada valley, which passes through these two states, thousands of Tadvi villagers, an Adivasi tribal group, were displaced. They now experience financial destitution, natural disasters and crop failures more intensely than ever in their government-directed relocation zones.²¹ Because of these financial hardships, and because their relocation emphasised a new integration into an agrarian market economy rather than more traditional subsistence agriculture, many Tadvi have moved to nearby cities to avoid precarity.²² The changing livelihoods of the Tadvi are mirrored in tribal experiences across India. As traditional modes of economic activity are uprooted from tribal communities, thousands of Adivasi people are immersed in the deep end of an emerging market economy and effectively pauperised.²³ Dam projects are particularly prominent in rural displacement issues in India, and not simply because of the size of the areas affected. Hydroelectric projects are often intrinsically linked with mining projects, bringing them into ever-increasing contact with Adivasi communities.²⁴ Ore smelting requires exceptionally high levels of electricity and water, with one ton of aluminium requiring 1,378 tons of water used in its production.²⁵ This link between two of the most intensive sources of tribal dispossession in India serves largely to exacerbate the impacts of both for Adivasis. Dam building in tribal areas of India often creates conditions that are emblematic of challenges facing Adivasi communities more generally; primarily, the uprooting of traditional economic and social structures and the pauperisation of tribal people within an emerging agrarian economy.

Extractive projects in tribal areas present the traditional structures of the Adivasi rural village economy with the threat of destruction. The parallel disruption of the tribal social sphere is a process in which issues of Adivasi socio-political organisation come to the fore, and in which the Indian state takes a much greater active role. The inroads made by the Indian state into Adivasi social life have historically been largely negative. Extortionate interactions with police officers and state officials have traditionally been the primary Adivasi contact with the everyday state.²⁶ Greater attempts to integrate traditional Adivasi social and political institutions into regular state activities have been made in recent years by the Indian government. While measures are in place to promote greater recognition of tribal rights and status, other legislation (such as the Forest Rights Act of 2006) exists to undermine Adivasi political autonomy.²⁷ The Forest Rights Act neutered the power of the Gram Sabha, local village councils, while empowering similar bodies which were formally attached to local government.²⁸ As the economic dispossession of India's Adivasi communities is being carried out via corporations, so too is the erosion of tribal socio-political life through state incorporation. As will be discussed later on, such state incursions represent a key facet of the dissolution of traditional Adivasi social structures.

When addressing issues of state intrusion in tribal areas, there is an elephant in the room which must be tackled. An ongoing and large-scale armed Maoist insurgency, concentrated in the Adivasi areas of the central tribal belt, exists with the objective of overthrowing the Indian state. The insurgency has been active since 1967, but strengthened following a merger of several groups into the Communist Party of

India – Maoist (CPI- Maoist) in 2004. While the elite of the Maoist movement is non-Adivasi, its zones of control, activist base and terms of insurgency are centred on tribal communities.²⁹ It also appears that, at least initially, the Maoists gained support by bringing some concrete benefits to Adivasi communities: chasing off forest guards, securing price controls on important goods and building centres for basic services.³⁰ That said, Adivasi communities have been at the forefront of the sometimes violent punishments of the Maoist courts, and the Maoists have frequently stifled some Adivasi cultural traditions, such as consumption of alcohol.^{31, 32} However, the greatest consequences of the insurgency for most tribal communities lie not in the activities of the Maoists themselves, but in the response of the Indian state. Through counter-insurgent activities, a precedent is set for a mass militarisation of Adivasi communities and the widespread encroachment of a strong police presence. At Niyamgiri, armed officers of the state police were present at the public hearing in 2014 where the Dongria Khond rejected Vedanta's mining proposal – ostensibly to ward off Maoist threat.³³ The Modi administration has pushed a significant increase in the deployment of personnel into Maoist-affected areas, but the policy has encountered problems.³⁴ Failures to collaborate with the local tribal population have led to civilian casualties, Maoist victories and the further alienation of tribal communities.³⁵ The former Finance Minister, P. Chidambaram, commented on the situation in tribal areas in 2013, stating, 'What development can you attempt if people can't enter?'³⁶ Whether this development is the sort led by Adivasi communities or that proposed by Vedanta is unclear. What has been clear, however, is a gradual transformation in discourse through the lens of counterinsurgency of the Adivasi as a 'savage other' to a 'terrorist other' against whom the state can indulge in violence against at will.³⁷ That said, all insurgency is political, and the Modi government has consequently responded with elements of soft power as well as military force. In 2014, new anti-Maoist policies announced their focus on bringing Adivasi communities into the fold of the state, primarily through incorporation of tribal police officers and infrastructure building.³⁸ The measures taken by the government against the Maoists represent a massive encroachment of state power and resources into tribal lands and communities. The implications of this, combined with wider patterns of dispossession, are unclear, but it is apparent that this disruption of social and political life will be imposed upon, rather than led by, Adivasi communities.

India's tribal communities stand in seemingly stark contrast to the broader development goals of the country. Massive projects of resource extraction, particularly through mining and hydroelectric developments, serve as vehicles for the mass dispossession of tribal peoples from their lands and traditional livelihoods. Instead, they are cast into the deep end of a market economy from which they rarely emerge more prosperous than before.³⁹ This process exists parallel to, and is partly facilitated by, the massive inroads made by the Indian state into tribal communities in the name of counter-insurgency and national development. For tribal people themselves, these sweeping changes are largely externally imposed and offer little legal recompense. As India's ambitions of rapid development and global power push closer to reality, the tribal people of its heartland are witnessing the end of their traditional ways of life.

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Profile: Aung San Suu Kyi

JACOB MILBURN reviews how Aung San Suu Kyi developed a stellar reputation as a human rights activist through her nonviolent struggle against the Burmese government, and how she has recently lost this reputation due to her silence amidst the Rohingya crisis.

Aung San Suu Kyi, elected in 2015 as Myanmar's de facto head of state, has been celebrated for decades by the international community. Awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1991 for her nonviolent efforts to end military rule in Myanmar, she was commonly praised by Western journalists and political leaders for her advocacy of peace, unity, and democracy, and for her unwillingness to compromise her principles for political expediency. In recent years, however, she has faced intense criticism for remaining silent as the Burmese military engages in what the United Nations (UN) has described as a 'textbook example' of ethnic cleansing against one of the country's minority groups, the Rohingya.¹ Her silence and inaction in the face of these human rights abuses has disappointed many of her former supporters in the international community and ultimately threatens to tarnish her legacy as it represents a betrayal of some of her core values. To illustrate the significance of Suu Kyi's recent loss of face, this article will provide an overview of her early life and how she built her reputation through her political activism, a look at how this reputation has been tarnished since the Rohingya crisis began, as well as an analysis of her response to the Rohingya crisis and a few possible explanations for her decision to remain silent.

Born in 1945 to General Aung San, the leader of Myanmar's independence movement and founder of the Burmese army, and Daw Khin Kyi, a diplomat, Aung San Suu Kyi lived most of her life outside of Myanmar.² Her father, who became widely admired for his role in the Burmese independence movement, was assassinated in 1947, months before the country gained its independence. Though she spent most of her childhood in Myanmar, she moved with her mother to India at age fifteen to finish her education, and later moved to England to attend Oxford University.³ Suu Kyi then spent most of her early career working in academia, and published many scholarly articles on Burmese history and politics, but did not visit Myanmar again until 1988, when she returned to the country to care for her mother, who was dying.⁴ Suu Kyi entered public life in August 1988, when Burmese student groups led nationwide protests, later known as the 8888 uprising, against the socialist government of Ne Win.⁵ A few weeks after these protests began, Suu Kyi delivered a highly symbolic speech at the Shwedagon Pagoda, where her father had given many notable speeches, and related the pro-democracy movement to the independence movement led by her father, calling it 'the second struggle for independence.'⁶ After giving this speech, she quickly amassed a large following and established herself as a prominent political leader.

Once she emerged as the leader of Myanmar's pro-democracy opposition movement, Suu Kyi spearheaded a nonviolent struggle for democracy against the military junta, known as the State Law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC), which took control of the Burmese government after the 1988 uprising. She won numerous accolades for her efforts, and was recognised internationally as a symbol of hope for her country.⁷ Suu Kyi began to speak out against the SLORC junta as soon as it came to power in September 1988, but the military leaders quickly felt threatened by her influence and she was eventually placed under house arrest by government forces in July 1989, for 'endangering the state.'⁸ Suu Kyi would remain under house arrest for the next six

years but she continued her political activism, writing some of her most famous works, such as *Freedom from Fear* and *In Quest of Democracy*, which were published after being smuggled out of Myanmar.⁹ In these essays, she articulates some of her core beliefs and principles, including the principle that 'people cannot be truly free if they are living in fear' and her belief that politics should be guided by Buddhist values such as metta (loving-kindness), karuna (compassion), and thissa (truth).¹⁰ Suu Kyi received criticism and admiration for expressing these beliefs; some dismissed her as idealistic and questioned her 'uncompromisingly principled approach' and her unwillingness to compromise with the military regime, but she was also widely celebrated for sticking to her principles in the face of oppression.¹¹ In 1991, she was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for her 'nonviolent struggle for democracy and human rights' and her reputation as an advocate of peace, unity, and democracy was cemented.¹² By 2015, when Myanmar's first truly democratic elections were held and Suu Kyi became the Burmese head of state, she was a nearly universally celebrated figure.¹³ As recently as September 2016, a year after her election as 'State Counsellor', she was invited to the White House, where she appeared at a joint press conference with President Obama and spoke of how her government would address the longstanding ethnic tensions in Rakhine state, emphasising that 'communal strife is not something we can ignore,' and expressing her hope that 'the world will recognise that we are sincere in trying to bring together the different communities in what is a very poor state with tremendous potential.'¹⁴

Less than two years after delivering the abovementioned remarks at a White House press conference, Suu Kyi is facing intense criticism and condemnation from the international community for remaining silent as her military commits human rights abuses against the Rohingya population.¹⁵ The Muslim Rohingya population of the Rakhine state has been persecuted for many years - denied citizenship and classified as illegal immigrants by the government, which calls them 'Bengalis,' implying that they come from Bangladesh.¹⁶ After clashes between Rohingya rebel groups and the Burmese military in the fall of 2016, the military launched a violent crackdown on the Rohingya, killing thousands and forcing hundreds of thousands more to flee, mainly to refugee camps across the border in Bangladesh.¹⁷ The UN has described this violence as bearing 'the hallmarks of a genocide.'¹⁸ In the midst of this crisis, Aung San Suu Kyi has largely remained silent and 'avoided journalists and press conferences.'¹⁹ When she has addressed the matter, however, she has refused to condemn the violence. Consistently, she has either stated that the military is operating according to 'the rule of law' in the Rakhine State and excused its actions, or suggested that the media was 'exaggerating' the issues.²⁰ In a 2017 *BBC* interview, Suu Kyi also denied that the military had carried out a campaign of ethnic cleansing.²¹

Suu Kyi's silence and inaction in the face of genocide in her own country may seem puzzling, but there are a few factors that may help to explain her actions. First, as many have noted, she does not have much control over the Burmese military. It remains largely autonomous from her government because the country's constitution, adopted in 2008 when it was beginning its transition to democracy, reserved one quarter of the legislative seats, as well as a number of cabinet posts, for the military.²² This means that although Suu Kyi is head of state, she cannot order military officials to stop targeting the Rohingya population. This does not mean she is unable to speak out against them, of course, but it could explain why she has not done so. Given that Suu Kyi has always been steadfast in her convictions in the past, however, it is unlikely that she would be reluctant to speak out against the military if she believed that was the right thing to do. Another possible explanation for her inaction

is that she has adopted a siege mentality, surrounding herself with ‘sycophants’ in response to international criticism and simply refusing to listen to her critics.²³ This could explain her aversion to interviews since the crisis began and absence from UN General Assembly meetings in September 2017.²⁴ One other possible explanation for Suu Kyi’s silence in response to the Rohingya crisis, which is perhaps the most disappointing given her formerly stellar reputation as a humanitarian, is that she has an anti-Muslim bias.²⁵ Author Francis Wade, who makes this claim in his book *Myanmar’s Enemy Within: Buddhist Violence and the Making of a Muslim Other*, alleges that Suu Kyi’s bias against Muslims developed from the fact that she was an ethnic Bamar who benefited from the ‘ethnic hierarchy’ that exists in Myanmar.²⁶ Because Suu Kyi had faced criticism even before the current Rohingya crisis for not speaking out against communal violence against the Rohingya and deferring responsibility to the government when she was the leader of the opposition movement, there is clearly some evidence to support this.²⁷

Ultimately, it might simply be the case that Suu Kyi is not the Gandhi-like figure that the Nobel Committee thought she was. Rather, she may in fact have biases that have convinced her to dismiss and ignore ethnic cleansing, thus becoming complicit in the crimes committed by her military.

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Political Realities: North Korea as Strategic Perpetual Dissolution

ROSS GALE *evaluates the complex motivations behind political actors China, Japan, South Korea, and U.S. to maintain the status quo regarding relations with North Korea despite condemnations and sanctions.*

The Korean War that split the peninsula geographically and politically was a microcosm for the competing ideologies of communism and democracy during the Cold War.¹ However, since the armistice agreement of 1953,² the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (DPRK) has continued to be politically at odds with Western powers and, increasingly, the entire global order under the United Nations (UN).³ As communism began disintegrating across the Soviet Union and much of Asia in the 1990s,⁴ the DPRK was left isolated with less protection from powerful ideological allies.⁵ To counter this vulnerability, the regime pursues a hawkish military policy despite crippling economic difficulties.⁶ This has culminated in the DPRK’s provocative nuclear weapons programme that has garnered almost universal condemnation from the UN and a plethora of punitive sanctions.⁷ The state is repeatedly named amongst the most oppressive in the world,⁸ with a 2014 UN report qualifying the internal policies of the regime as nothing short of ‘crimes against humanity.’⁹ The DPRK regime is labelled a rogue threat to both global security and the fundamental values of the UN.¹⁰ Ever-deteriorating international relations and the resulting consensus of condemnation depicts a polarised conflict between the DPRK and the rest of the world.¹¹ However, there is a challenge to this prevailing rhetoric. Experts like Barbara Demick argue that key international players, namely China, Japan, South Korea, Russia, and the U.S. have an interest in continuing this apparent dissolution of relations.¹² This

article will examine the legitimacy of these claims in the context of each state’s own interests, and reveal additional complexities to the political intentions of various state actors that historically and presently influence the region.

Since intervening in the Korean War on the side of their communist neighbour, China has been the DPRK’s most important ally on the world stage.¹³ However, tensions arose in response to DPRK’s nuclear weapons testing in 2006, when China lent support to punitive sanctions under UN Security Council resolutions.¹⁴ Undeterred, the DPRK has continued its nuclear pursuit and consequent sanctions have been issued with Chinese support in cooperation with the U.S. and others alike.¹⁵ Following the DPRK’s testing of their most powerful long-range ballistic missiles in September,¹⁶ China publicly stated their disagreement with the DPRK’s nuclear programme and its destabilisation of the region.¹⁷ In February, the Chinese Commerce Ministry suspended coal imports from the DPRK and Chinese banks took measures to restrict its economic activity.¹⁸ The apparent hardening of Chinese policy towards the DPRK does suggest a worsening relationship with a longstanding ally.¹⁹

However, while publicly opposed to the DPRK’s policies, China has steadily increased bilateral trade, which yearly accounts for 90 percent of the DPRK’s trade volume.²⁰ The two states recently cooperated on implementing a shared bulk cargo shipping route and high speed railway to stimulate bilateral economic activity;²¹ and, while working with the security council in implementing sanctions against the DPRK, China used their veto leverage to soften terms and protect their trade links.²² By maintaining the DPRK’s reliance on China for its food and energy supplies alongside the clear majority of its trade,²³ Jaime A. FlorCruz argues China maintains an unrivalled position of influence over the state itself,²⁴ and in negotiation between the DPRK and the rest of the world.²⁵ Furthermore, the DPRK is of geopolitical value to China, providing a communist buffer zone that keeps the democratic South and their largest political and economic competitor, the US, off their border.²⁶ The world economic centre is shifting from the Atlantic to the Asia-Pacific, and as a result the U.S. and China are desperately vying for strategic dominance in the area.²⁷ As China seeks to minimise American influence and cultivate Chinese status as unopposed regional leader,²⁸ maintaining the DPRK’s dependency is coherent.

Cheng Xiaohe of the Global Peace Foundation also argues China will calculate that the likely outcome of the DPRK regime collapse would be a united Korea under South Korean hegemony.²⁹ The South would benefit from an influx of labour and resources:³⁰ over time enabling economic prominence that could rival that of China.³¹ Jennifer Lind of Dartmouth College emphasises China’s greatest concern is not the DPRK’s nuclear ambitions, but the prospect of regime collapse and the thousands of refugees China would be forced to accommodate.³² Indeed, as Barbara Demick argues,³³ despite China’s support in condemning and sanctioning the DPRK, contrastingly, their economic interests and policy decisions maintain the DPRK regime for the expansion of their regional influence and stability.

Since the end of Japan’s colonisation of the Korean peninsula during the Second World War, the DPRK has maintained an enduring hostility towards their eastern neighbour.³⁴ Despite the North’s uneasy truce with South Korea,³⁵ the regime’s recent 22 ballistic missile tests have been fired toward Japan, and in August triggered a state emergency procedure.³⁶ The tangible threat posed by the DPRK’s nuclear aggression resulted in Japan exercising coordinated diplomatic pressure on the regime extending beyond that agreed in the UN, and undertaking collaborated military exercises with the U.S. and South Korea.³⁷ The two states’ antagonistic relationship has both poised for conflict if tenuous diplomatic relations break down.³⁸ However, Demick insists Japan is wary of the collapse

of the DPRK regime as unification under Southern supremacy could produce a new economic and political rival in the region.³⁹ While the accumulated economic and political power of a unified Korea might prove damaging to Japanese interests,⁴⁰ Justin McCurry insists that the threat to the very safety of the Japanese islands posed by the DPRK's advancing nuclear programme is an unavoidable and overwhelming concern.⁴¹ This lies in contradiction with Demick's assessment by affirming Japan's primary objective of a de-nuclearised peninsula and a break in the status quo.⁴² These competing interpretations of Japan's priorities reveal the multi-dimensional complexity of relations between the two countries.

Despite being one of the DPRK's staunchest allies during the Korean War and one of the three states sharing a border with the DPRK,⁴³ Russia is vulnerable to what Putin described as 'global, planetary catastrophe and huge loss of human life' if the DPRK crisis escalates into conflict.^{44, 45} Russia principally objects to the DPRK's persistent nuclear ambitions,⁴⁶ and backs UN sanctions against the DPRK for their nuclear programme.⁴⁷ However, Alexander Titov argues the DPRK's crisis is not Russia's priority, with recent conflicts in Ukraine and Syria being seen as far more significant for their foreign interests.⁴⁸ Indeed, as the DPRK has drawn global condemnation, Russia has frequently supported the regime,⁴⁹ and Hannah Thoburn contends that Putin sees the DPRK as victims of hegemonic U.S. power which dominates the international system.⁵⁰ The two states shared political opposition to American primacy on the world stage provides the basis for their relationship,⁵¹ and fuels Russian fears of regime change and conflict, which would increase American military presence in South Korea and along their immediate border.⁵² Hence, despite supporting resolutions condemning the DPRK's nuclear programme and Putin's cautious warning, as Andrei Lankov argues, Russia is content with the status quo in the DPRK.⁵³

Since the Korean War armistice of 1953, North and South Korea have remained embattled across the most heavily militarised border in the world.⁵⁴ Without a peace treaty, the states maintain an antagonistic relationship of military posturing, with recent DPRK nuclear testing sparking simulated invasion exercises by South Korean and U.S. forces.⁵⁵ Six-party talks that sought a peaceful resolution to the larger DPRK crisis broke off in 2009 and since, diplomacy between the North and South has been highly politicised and made little headway.⁵⁶ Despite election promises to reengage with the North, South Korean President Moon Jae-in recently hardened his stance to the DPRK in response to their ballistic missile testing with his government's approval of the deployment of U.S. missile defence systems within their territory.⁵⁷ However, the South is concerned by the implications of regime collapse.⁵⁸ Kim Jong Un's removal from power would likely ensure a bloody civil war and spark an influx of refugees.⁵⁹ The cost of reunification for the South is estimated to extend beyond one trillion U.S. dollars and it would take decades to accommodate the 25 million undernourished and low-skilled North Koreans while rebuilding the North to suit a modern capitalist economy.⁶⁰ Furthermore, Suzanne Scholte argues the longer the peninsula remains split, the higher this cost will be.⁶¹ Thus, South Korea is left choosing between continuing their volatile relationship with a conflict-ready enemy on their doorstep,⁶² or shouldering the staggering costs of reunification and problems that would ensue for decades.⁶³ However, Duyeon Kim stresses the 'shouting match' with the DPRK is not a new development and is far removed from military conflict,⁶⁴ with South Korea banking on continuing the fragile status-quo and avoiding the costs of radical change.⁶⁵

During the Korean War, the U.S. orchestrated large-scale air campaigns against the communist north and its legacy of destruction still lingers in the DPRK's political mind-set. The state harnesses this

fear through propaganda that depicts America as a wicked imperialist force eager to destroy their country and way of life.⁶⁷ This mentality extends to the arms of government through which national defence is prioritised, and their nuclear weapons programme deemed the only viable method of deterring an imminent American invasion.⁶⁸ As a stridently hostile nation, the U.S. is steadfast in opposition to North Korea's nuclear ambitions,⁶⁹ with President Trump using a UN address and Twitter to blatantly threaten the destruction of the DPRK if they were to attack America or their allies.⁷⁰ As the DPRK threatened the U.S. military base in Guam, the Trump Administration further sidelined diplomacy in favour of tougher sanctions and a hawkish regional military policy.⁷¹ While most experts agree that conflict remains highly improbable, as the DPRK steadily acquires the nuclear capacity to hit targets on the U.S. mainland tensions and rhetoric will continue to escalate.⁷² However, Lankov continues to argue the U.S. is competing with China for strategic political dominance in the area,⁷³ as the new centre of the global economy.⁷⁴ As the balance of military power in Asia engenders economic power,⁷⁵ the stationing of thousands of U.S. troops in South Korea and Japan under the mandate of protecting against the DPRK has geo-economic benefits.⁷⁶ As the balance in the region is shifting towards Beijing,⁷⁷ American economic interest lies in maintaining their military footing in Asia.⁷⁸ Furthermore, in the wake of the DPRK's nuclear advancements in recent years Japan and South Korea, among many others, have shored up their military capabilities with large weapon sales from the U.S.⁷⁹ In September, South Korea agreed arms deals with the U.S. worth billions of dollars,⁸⁰ and Lankov emphasises how profitable the DPRK crisis has been for the U.S.,⁸¹ the largest arms exporter in the world.⁸² Thus, while an aggressive rhetoric dominates the DPRK-U.S. relationship,⁸³ the U.S. has considerable economic interest in maintaining the status quo.⁸⁴ It mandates their military and geopolitical presence in Asia and is generating a flow of profitable arms deals that a change in the political climate would diminish.⁸⁵

The evidence would indicate that the DPRK is likely to continue their controversial nuclear weapons programme,⁸⁶ escalating tensions with neighbours and international opponents while drawing almost unanimous condemnation.⁸⁷ While the threat posed by a rogue state with advanced nuclear capacities shakes global stability, China, Russia, South Korea, and the U.S. have calculated interests in maintaining the fragile balance and dissolution of the status quo,⁸⁸ despite their public opposition to the DPRK regime.⁸⁹ The rhetoric of condemnation employed by the U.S. and others against North Korea woefully misrepresents the complexity of their interests in the region.⁹⁰ The benefit to these actors of maintaining such a situation may motivate policy that keeps the crisis simmering without ensuing military conflict, rather than seeking to solve it permanently. However, if the DPRK continues to advance their nuclear programme, Lankov proposes the DPRK will eventually develop suitable nuclear capacity to mitigate their inherent disadvantage in international diplomatic negotiations with more powerful players and to bring them to the table. The supposed breakdown in relations between the DPRK and other international actors will simply be passing the time before a peaceful solution to the decade-spanning crisis can be found.^{91, 92}

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Recent years have shown that Europe as a whole is neither as homogenous or as immune to external factors as some would like to think. There are great discrepancies in terms of who carries the burden of external challenges; and diverging tendencies in democracy and rights. Ireland is getting closer to a referendum on legalising abortion just before the Pope visits the country, and Seán Leonard argues that this points to further liberalisation and the Catholic

church's decreasing influence on Irish society. Meanwhile on the opposite side of the continent, recent events in Poland show seemingly undemocratic witch-hunts for NGOs, opposition politicians and protesters, according to Robert Jacek Włodarski. Lastly, Fabian Zubicky scrutinises a Sweden before and after the significant increase in non-Western refugees and what closing the borders has meant for the political Swedish self-identity. Somehow, older paradigms and convictions that we have taken for granted might be eroding and incremental societal changes are happening, for better or for worse.

Abortion Referendum: How Liberal an Ireland will the Pope Visit?

SEÁN LEONARD takes a look at the upcoming referendum on legalising abortion in Ireland and the Catholic church's influence just weeks before the Pope's first visit in 40 years.

In September 2017, Taoiseach Leo Varadkar, the head of the Irish government, announced that the country would be holding a referendum on legalising abortion the following summer.¹ This referendum, currently scheduled for the end of May 2018, will bring to the fore one of the most sensitive and divisive issues in Irish politics. In doing so, it will raise questions on the changing nature of Irish society and the role of the Catholic Church in the country.

Abortion has been illegal in Ireland since 1861, when it was still a part of the United Kingdom;² however, neither the Republic, nor Northern Ireland, followed in the footsteps of Britain after abortion was legalised there in 1967. On the contrary, the early 1980s saw the formation of the Pro-Life Amendment Campaign (PLAC), a consortium of thirteen mostly Catholic groups dedicated to adding a pro-life amendment to the constitution.³ The PLAC were motivated by the Roe v. Wade case in the United States, which established a constitutional right to abortion.⁴ They aimed to alter the Irish Constitution so that a similar ruling would not be possible. In 1983, they succeeded in their goal with the passing of the 8th Amendment by referendum, receiving almost 67 percent of the popular vote.⁵

The 8th Amendment assigns equal status to the life of the mother and the 'unborn'.⁶ In effect, this means that abortion can only be performed in cases where the mother's life is at risk. In 1992, the meaning of a 'risk to life' was clarified after the infamous X Case. In this case, a fourteen-year-old girl, identified as X, became pregnant as a result of statutory rape.⁷ When it became clear that X was at risk of suicide if forced to carry the pregnancy to term, she was granted the right to an abortion by the Supreme Court of Ireland. While X miscarried before an abortion could take place, this ruling had the effect of clarifying that the 'risk to life' classification necessary as grounds for a termination includes the risk of suicide. An effort to reverse this ruling was made in another referendum in 2002, narrowly failing with 49.58 percent of the vote.⁸

At present, several thousand Irish women travel to the United Kingdom or beyond to obtain abortions every year. According to the Irish Family Planning Association, 'between January 1980 and December 2016, at least 168,703 women and girls who accessed UK abortion services provided Irish addresses' with 3,265 traveling in 2016.⁹ These numbers are conservative estimates of the total number traveling as they do not include Irish women who either did not give their address or went further afield to countries such as the Netherlands. The difficulties that naturally arise from traveling, such as transport and accommodation costs, have the consequence of creating a stratified system whereby access to abortion is significantly more difficult for those from lower income backgrounds. While it is not illegal to travel for an abortion, obtaining one illegally in Ireland carries a sentence of up to fourteen years imprisonment.¹⁰

In recent years, abortion legislation has seen an increased presence in political discussion. A number of private members bills have been introduced in an attempt

to liberalise the law in a variety of ways. While none were successful, the increased pressure coming from within the Dáil (the lower house of Irish parliament) and wider society led to the establishment of a 'Citizens Assembly' by previous Taoiseach Enda Kenny.¹¹ The Assembly is composed of 99 Irish citizens, selected to reflect the wider demographics of the country, and acts as a survey of popular opinion on a number of political issues, including that of the 8th Amendment. That such an organisation takes the responsibility of initiating a controversial referendum out of the hands of any one party or politician is likely no accident. In June 2017, the assembly submitted the results of its deliberations, with the primary recommendation that the constitution be altered to give exclusive powers of abortion legislation to the Oireachtas (Irish Parliament).

The existence of pro-choice and pro-life campaigns preceded the announcement of the referendum, having been involved in advocating or protesting previous attempts at legislation. While the official pro-choice campaign is organised by the Abortion Rights Campaign group, for many, the enduring symbol of the campaign will likely be the Repeal Project. Started by activist Anna Cosgrave, the project produced a line of jumpers with the proceeds going to the ARC.¹² These minimalist jumpers with the word Repeal written across the chest have become ubiquitous on the streets of Dublin. In September 2016, a group of six TDs wore them in the Dáil, later leading to a ban on the wearing of political slogans in the Oireachtas.¹³

Both Taoiseach Leo Varadkar and the leader of the opposition, Michael Martin, have announced their intention to campaign for repeal of the 8th Amendment despite having previously held pro-life stances. Reactions in the media to this reverse in policy have been mixed, including within the pro-choice movement. Some commentators have pointed out Martin's leadership role in the 2002 failed referendum as health minister.¹⁴ That Varadkar's announcement was widely predicted is itself telling of how attitudes towards abortion have changed in wider society over the past decade; in contrast to the 2002 referendum which received slightly under half of the vote, current polls show widespread support for liberalisation to some extent. For example, a poll conducted by the Irish Times in late January found 65 percent of respondents were in favour of repeal.¹⁵

It can be asked to what extent the changes in attitude towards abortion are part of a wider narrative of liberalisation in Irish society. Homosexuality was decriminalised in 1993 and divorce made legal in 1996. In 2015, Ireland became the first country in the world to legalise gay marriage by referendum, with the 'Yes' side receiving 61.2 percent of the vote.¹⁶ Varadkar himself made headlines around the world for becoming not only the first openly gay head of government in Ireland, but the first from an ethnic minority background (his father is an Indian doctor). For many, the abortion referendum is simply the next stage in an already-established trend.

However, this sentiment is far from universally accepted. The sole county to vote against marriage equality in 2015 is also the country with the highest concentration of elderly people, where many young people have left for the larger cities to find work.¹⁷ Large amounts of the population remain detached from the urban, liberal population in Dublin and other cities. This is not to mention of course, that opinions on an issue such as gay marriage do not necessarily act as a predictor of opinions on abortion. Doubtless, many individuals who voted 'Yes' in 2015 will not support repeal of the 8th and view the two issues as entirely

unrelated.

However, that the referendum is to be held at all is significant, and it is certainly true that in the last 30 years Ireland has seen a shift towards a more liberal social environment. Many Irish people see this trend as inversely related to another shift in Irish society: the declining influence of the Catholic Church. Throughout the 20th century, the Catholic Church dominated Irish social issues through a variety of means. In addition to owning many healthcare institutions and the vast majority of schools,¹⁸ the Church exerted influence through informal channels, taking a central role in many rural communities. In recent years however, the Church has been witnessing declining support. The 2016 census found 78 percent of the population identify as Roman Catholic. While that number is significant, it represents a six percent drop from 2011.¹⁹ Other measures paint a more severe picture; Mass attendance decreased by twenty percent between 2008 and 2014, and the number of priests in training has hit an all-time low.²⁰ Declining support has been compounded by several serious scandals within the last decade. Most recent was the discovery of a mass grave of children's remains at a home for unmarried mothers in Tuam, Galway which had been run by the Catholic Second Sisters.²¹

The concurrence of these two trends, decreasing support for a conservative Catholic Church and the adoption of many socially progressive policies, lends itself naturally to a narrative in which a dominating religious institution is seeing a dissolution of its power and a new secular, progressive generation emerges to shape the country. There is, without doubt, some truth to this story. As is evidenced by the PLAC, Catholic groups have had a direct role in influencing state policy. However, such generalisations risk oversimplifying what is occurring on the ground. While support for the Catholic Church is decreasing, it is still the largest religion in Ireland by a wide margin and plays a central role in the identity of many individuals and communities. Perhaps increasing liberal attitudes should not be seen simply as a result of decreasing subscription to the Church, but as part of a reorientation of the role the Church plays as an authority on social issues. Irish Catholics may just be one of many demographics that have become more socially progressive in recent decades.

Only a matter of weeks after the referendum, another historic event is scheduled to take place in Ireland; the first visiting of a Pope in nearly 40 years.²² When Pope John Paul II visited in 1979, he arrived to a country in which divorce, homosexuality, and abortion were all illegal. His Mass in Dublin's Phoenix Park was attended by well over one million Irish people; nearly a third of the country at that time.²³ Pope Francis will arrive to a very different country, one which, as most polls indicate, will likely have legalised abortion only a matter of weeks previously. Perhaps, the size of the crowd he draws will serve as an indication of whether the Catholic Church is truly in decline, or whether the country has found a new balance between its religious conviction and progressive outlook.

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Last year in Sweden

FABIAN ZUBICKY calls for a new approach to how issues regarding immigration and refugees are addressed in Sweden, arguing that the image of a 'humanitarian superpower' that had been promoted has dissolved in the face of changing circumstances.

On February 18, U.S. President Donald Trump referred to a fictional event that had happened 'last night in Sweden' as a result of the country's severe problems in dealing with immigration.¹ As nothing of the sort had happened in Sweden, the whole event incited humorous reactions. Even though President Trump's comment was unsubstantiated, the theme of Sweden's problems in handling migration was glossed over as most Swedish commentators focused on the phenomenon of Sweden being included in President Trump's 'fake news'.²

Vilhelm Moberg's book series *The Emigrants* illustrates a Sweden of poverty and despair, where Swedes migrated to America for a better life in the nineteenth century. Being a country that mostly experienced emigration up until the second half of the twentieth century, it is now the complete opposite with over 160,000 migrants accepted in 2015, making it one of the largest per capita receivers in Europe, following the Syrian refugee crisis that shook the European Union's foundations. The government under Prime Minister Stefan Löfven had a generous acceptance policy at first, emphasizing on the idea of Sweden as a 'humanitarian superpower', but this completely backfired when the apparent overwhelming numbers of migrants came in November that same year.³ Governmental institutions pushed for a stricter policy as systems became strained under the pressure to care for arriving migrants.⁴ Now, as the September 2018 elections are approaching, Sweden needs to face an obvious issue that has traditionally been taboo in terms of political correctness; how to deal with immigration and its effects.

The perception of Sweden as a country with a humanitarian tradition stems from two hundred years of declared international neutrality, several humanitarian missions starting from the aid sent down to Europe in 1945, and the actions of diplomat Raoul Wallenberg, who saved thousands of Hungarian Jews from the Nazis at the end of the Second World War.^{5,6} Additionally, it could be argued that the Sweden's Social Democratic universal welfare model based on ideas of aid and help has shaped its core.⁷ Other examples include Sweden's acceptance of a substantial number of Bosnian refugees during the 1990s, which today are seen as successfully integrated.⁸ Finally, when the widespread photograph of the drowned Syrian child Alan Kurdi was published, Swedish public opinion swung in favour of increasingly aiding the refugees.⁹

By 2017, this position was challenged when the Social Democratic-Green coalition government as they announced that the borders would be closed to refugees, and people without proper identification had to be turned away.¹⁰ Reality had hit as public opinion had turned and the public sector came under further pressure.¹¹ Eighty thousand of the 2015 arrivals were threatened with being sent back on lack of asylum grounds.¹² The promoted image of a 'humanitarian superpower' had been shattered. The Social Democratic-Green coalition has faced backlash because they have not responded to the issue with any substantial or immediate policies, which has led to a wave of criticism towards, and has strengthened the cause of, the Sweden Democrats. They are a party affiliated with the far right, and are the most outspoken critics of immigration. By the autumn of 2017, they polled as the second largest party in the country.¹³ Traditionally, no other politicians outside that party have even mentioned immigration and its associated problems, and so they became the symbol of immigration reform, which has contributed to much of their popularity.¹⁴ Since the refugee crisis began, there has been a surge of violence and illicit rumours targeting migrants and refugees with several facilities hosting them being set on fire.¹⁵ Public opinion turned against open migration policies all over Europe. Sweden was no exception, as the voter appetite for a more conservative stance on migration grew stronger.¹⁶

The main issue has not been the immigration itself, but rather how migrants from the Middle East and the Horn of Africa adapt to Swedish society, or rather the image that the Swedes themselves have of Swedish society. The long and expensive process of giving migrants the support needed to meet the high integration standards required makes for a form of continuous alienation and criticism when it fails.¹⁷ The Swedish police released a list of the fifty-three most dangerous neighbourhoods in Sweden and a substantial part of them consist of a significant immigrant majority. These areas tend to have poor schooling and high unemployment.¹⁸ Having somewhat segregated neighbourhoods with immigrant majorities is nothing new, as is illustrated by areas such as 'Chinatown' and 'Little Italy' in many larger Western cities, however, the deep segregation between the native Swedes and the new arrivals is significant. Refusal of the legislative establishment to address issues involving migration and ethnicity at all, or with any policy that acknowledges that it is a problematic process, leaves many questions unanswered, thereby furthering the prevalence of rumours on the topic of immigrant criminality. This policy gap combined with a police force that

complains about not having enough support or officers to respond rising levels of gun crime paves the way for the government being interpreted as weak, indecisive and afraid to touch upon delicate topics of humanitarian aid and refugees.¹⁹

Prime Minister Löfven indicated in January 2018 that he believed deploying the military to curtail the spiralling gang-related situation in these troubled suburbs was an option.²⁰ For many, the failure of Sweden's integration process materialised in the rise of extremist Islam, which is exhibited by the terrorist attack in April last year where an Uzbek illegal immigrant hit several people in central Stockholm with a truck, resulting in five deaths. The man had close connections to radical Islamic groups and had previously been denied asylum in Sweden.²¹

From an economic point of view, a country with demographic problems such as an ageing working population should welcome the entry of thousands of working-age migrants, especially for lower-skill labour. But the Swedish government has not been successful in deregulating the labour market enough to get a sufficient number of migrants into employment; something that is generally seen as a key component of integration.²² The generosity of the government's migration policy is juxtaposed to its negative attitude towards enabling low-skilled and low-wage labour market to meet the demands of a group that cannot compete with the native population in education or quality of labour. Anna Breman, chief economist at Swedbank, sees high school diplomas as the biggest divider between the new arrivals and the Swedes, as only half of the former have them.²³ This much is due to the idealistic Social Democratic principle of labour market regulation in order to protect workers' rights. If Sweden wants to be a country of successful immigration, this way of preventing low-skilled labour from acquiring appropriate jobs needs to change. Facing the fact that integration is a long and difficult process where one has to meet certain requirements for it to function is the only way to mitigate this trend.

Another central issue that is surfacing in the aftermath of this crisis is the political correctness affiliated with the subject of immigration and its effects, as most established parties did not explicitly communicate their position on immigration sufficiently, leading to the Sweden Democrats gaining a monopoly on the issue.²⁴ In Sweden, political correctness is called an 'åsiktskorridor', literally translated to 'opinion corridor'. If one steps outside of it, one will be labelled as an extremist, in either political direction. This has contributed to a political environment of silence on the topic of immigration.²⁵ With the inertia and passiveness of the other parties, the Sweden Democrats, who have not been afraid to step outside of the 'opinion corridor', rose to become the second largest party in 2017, something many thought to be impossible only a few years ago.^{26,27}

On the 9 September, 2018, Sweden will have its general elections, and at this point it is impossible to predict what the end result will be. Immigration, and inevitably with it national identity, will certainly be a central topic.²⁸ Unlike the 2014 elections the Sweden Democrats' monopoly on addressing the topic of immigration has been somewhat toppled as the scepticism has grown and talking about the problems associated with migration are less taboo and forced more out in the open. The liberal centre-right party Moderaterna have seemingly taken a firmer stance on migration with their new leader Ulf Kristensson.²⁹ The Social Democrats have had to come to terms with the reality of implementing a harsh migration policy, which has undoubtedly affected their self-image that has been built through years of international political neutrality and welcoming refugees. Migration has become a topic more openly discussed, and the way it will be used in the build-up to the elections will certainly be different from 2014.

The key issue has less to do with the internal workings of Sweden, a country sceptical of joining in 1995, as it does with how Sweden perceives itself and its identity. It is a country, which, like much of the Western world, finds itself in a state of political uncertainty and upheavals. These trends need to be acknowledged to ensure a stable society. However, unlike many similar situations, the dissolution of traditional open migrant policies influences and threatens a paradigm that the political establishment has for long seen as a key component of Swedish identity. The public need an honest discussion of the realities of accepting and integrating immigrants from vastly different cultures instead of falling in the naïve narrative of a melting pot of cultures. It is not about stopping immigration or ceasing to accept

refugees but about politicians needing to face new and unexpected circumstances.

Immigration is not a completely unknown occurrence in the history of Sweden, but the current so-called refugee crisis still poses a challenge to the Swedish identity, as it is of a different character. The time of Vilhelm Moberg and the homogeneous Swedish population is long gone. The struggle between the cosmopolitan and the national way of organising a society is very much part of the whole Western hemisphere, but in few places is this struggle so naively ignored as in Sweden. It is not about giving into fears and rumours, but politicians need to pay more than lip service to them, or they will grow in darkness. What Sweden's actual policies on migration should be is another question, but the politicians need to be aware that the Swedish people may not be as idle to uphold the legacy and consequences of being a humanitarian superpower as before.

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Eroding the Rule of Law in Poland

ROBERT JACEK WŁODARSKI uncovers evidence of undemocratic changes in Polish politics and civil society.

On October 10th, 2017, Piotr S. stood in front of the Palace of Culture and Science in the centre of Warsaw, placed a small speaker beside him, and played a song called 'I Love Freedom'. He spread anti-government leaflets around, with a manifesto including nineteen charges to the current government, and used a loudhailer to say he opposed the unconstitutional changes taking place in Poland. Afterwards, he poured flammable liquid over himself, shouted 'I am protesting' and sparked a flame that took over his entire body within seconds. Despite spectators trying to save him, he passed away ten days later in a hospital in Warsaw.¹

The process that caused a man to take suicidal action began in 2015, when a right-wing populist party, the Law and Justice Party (PiS) won the election by a landslide.² Since then, the government under Prime Minister Beata Szydło has passed a number of radical laws, without any public consultations and despite widespread protests. Moreover, voting took place in the middle of the night so that any initiatives to protest were made difficult.³ For example, changes to the Constitutional Tribunal were finally passed on 22nd December 2015.⁴ All the major political changes that have taken place since 2015 in Poland were conducted in a similar way. These included changes to the assembly rights in 2016, the radical abortion law of 2016 and the changes to the justice system of July 2017.⁵ All of these measures resulted in widespread national protests that, with exception of the women's "Black March" of 2016, were futile.⁶ Government propaganda has intimidated all the protesters and their supporters, often referring to them as traitors and spies.⁷ Furthermore, the radical right-wing media outlets have repeatedly attacked the demonstrators, causing unprecedented social polarisation in Poland.⁸

Piotr S. claimed in the fourteenth point of his manifesto that the government illegally used its influence over the police and the prosecution system to intimidate protesters.⁹ Indeed, especially after the merging of positions of the Minister of Justice and the General Prosecutor under Zbigniew Ziobro, the police and the prosecution system have been used against any form of disobedience towards the government. This includes pressuring independent writers, such as Tomasz Piątek, and attacking journalists like Michał Krzymowski for their publications.¹⁰ Moreover, the police actions and the prosecution's fabricated charges are used to damage not only parliamentary but also local opposition. Additionally, the Law and Justice Party fight the hostile non-governmental organisations by using 'friendly prosecutors' or police investigations. Finally, the legal actions against protesters from across Poland are used to signal that demonstrating is no longer safe.

Prosecutors and government agencies intimidate critical journalists and

writers by using either blatant lawsuits or fake accusations. According to Piotr S's manifesto, this creates an atmosphere where no one feels safe to freely publish anti-government news. Tomasz Piątek, an investigative journalist who wrote a book 'Macierewicz and His People' about Antoni Macierewicz, the Minister of National Defence, is currently facing up to three years in prison.¹¹ When published in June 2017, the text was expected to spark a debate about Polish security and the position of one of the most powerful men in the country.¹² Instead, Mr. Macierewicz has repeatedly accused Mr. Piątek of treason, and orchestrated the filing of new charges through the military prosecutor's office.¹³ National Prosecution Bureau announced that based on articles 224, 226 and 231a of the Penal Code, the writer faces up to three years in prison for 'defamation of a public official' and 'threatening to use violence against a civil servant'.¹⁴

Similarly, the cases of Andrzej Stankiewicz and Michał Krzymowski provide support to the arguments of Piotr S. Stankiewicz is a journalist who explored the audits of National Association of Co-operative Savings and Credit Unions (SKOK), which actively supports the Law and Justice Party, and has since been under scrutiny.¹⁵ Initially, when he published his articles in 2015, before the general election, the prosecutor's office denied investigating the charge of 'acting to the detriment' of the company.¹⁶ In June 2017, however, when the positions of Minister of Justice and General Prosecutor had already been merged by PiS, Łukasz Łapczyński, the press secretary of Warsaw's Regional Prosecutor, stated that the investigation against Mr. Stankiewicz had been renewed.¹⁷ Having written about the purges in the PWPW, Polish Security Printing Works, Michał Krzymowski experienced a sudden attack from the state-dominated organisation. PWPW reported his articles to the regional Prosecutor in Radom with charges of 'defamation' and 'espionage'.¹⁸

These are only a few among countless examples of how legal charges are used by government against independent journalists. As Piotr S. manifested before the self-immolation, the various government agencies exploit the prosecution to prevent journalists from investigating their actions. The current central authorities skilfully orchestrate the police and prosecution to intimidate the opposition. In some cases, the Prosecutor's Office 'renews' an investigation on PiS' local opponents when their support is too high. All of these actions help the ruling party tighten the grip of power in Poland. Likewise, the government uses its influence in the police and prosecution to terrorise the parliamentary opposition. According to *Gazeta Wyborcza*,¹⁹ during the widespread protests against the government-sponsored radical judiciary reforms in July 2017, not only did the undercover officers follow and allegedly tap phones of well-known protesters such as Wojciech Kinasiewicz and Tadeusz Jakrzewski,²⁰ but they even targeted Ryszard Petru, a now former leader of the second-biggest opposition party, Nowoczesna, even following the politician to his party headquarters. The Municipal Police justified its actions by claiming it was 'merely a safety measure'.²¹ Similarly, based on a long-lasting but inactive investigation of more than five years, Zbigniew Ziobro, the Minister of Justice and the General Prosecutor called for lifting a parliamentary immunity of Stanisław Gawłowski, the General Secretary of the biggest opposition party, the Civic Platform.²² Ewa Bialik, the press secretary of the National Prosecution Bureau informed that the accusation was largely based on unrevealed evidence from the CBA, The Central Anti-Corruption Bureau.²³ Importantly, Zbigniew Ziobro is already known for the 'overzealous approach' and use of CBA, especially when it comes to opposition politicians.

There are also numerous cases where the prosecution has renewed previously rejected investigations with no explanation. This often happens to the local politicians who have higher support than the Law and Justice candidates. In the article 'Darkness is Coming', Piotr Pytlakowski presents the example of the six previously discontinued investigations against Jacek Karnowski, president of the city of Sopot, which were renewed without a stated reason.²⁴ Similarly, Ryszard Berejza, the president of Inowrocław feels 'harassed'²⁵ with the frequent CBA searches of his office and house. Again, the prosecutors ordering such inspections give no justification.

The current ruling party is also known to attack critical non-governmental organisations. As Piotr S. claims in his manifesto, the police and prosecutors have

never been as involved in civil society as they are now. By 2016, The Centre for Women's Rights (CPK) had cooperated with various central governments for 21 years. A year after the sudden withdrawal of funds in 2016, the NGO offices in Warsaw, Gdańsk and Łódź were raided by the police.²⁶ On the prosecution's orders, the officers seized all the organisation's computers and documents. For the CPK, this meant suspending almost all of the projects. Having confirmed that the raid had been orchestrated by the prosecution, Mariusz Błaszczak, the Interior Minister, called the government's involvement a 'ridiculous lie of the total opposition'.²⁷

In the same vein, in the case of the Centre for Monitoring the Racist and Xenophobic Behaviour (OMZRK) both the government and the prosecution have been blatantly involved. After Jacek Międlar, a former priest cooperating with various nationalistic parties including the Britain First²⁸ reported the organisation to the government-controlled National's Prosecutor, the NGO's offices were similarly raided by the police, and all their documents were seized. As a result, the institute was left without any working equipment, all this based on charges of 'discrimination of the patriotic societies'.²⁹ It seems apparent that there are no legal, ethical, or political boundaries the Law and Justice Party is not willing to cross in order to fight any subordination or ideological differences in the non-governmental organisations.

Finally, Piotr S. claimed the right-wing government used the police forces and prosecution to intimidate the most vulnerable part of the opposition: civil protesters. By terrorising not only renowned protesters but also grassroots demonstrators, the PiS authorities signal that no opposition will be tolerated. Anna Bogucka-Skowrońska, born in 1942, is a renowned anti-communist oppositionist from 1970s and 1980s.³⁰ In July 2017, on the wave of national protests against the changes in the judiciary system, she organised a similar demonstration in Słupsk.³¹ As a result, she was detained and interrogated by the police for 'organising an illegal protest'.³² The former oppositionist sustains that the police did not have to interrogate her, as the officers had been present during the whole protest. Bogucka-Skowrońska claims that this was an 'intimidation technique' used to discourage further protests.³³ However, the local police believe that the actions taken against the 75-year-old woman were necessary, as they had been informed about minor criminal offences.³⁴ The violations included using a loudspeaker after ten o'clock and blocking a lane on a street for an hour.³⁵ Still, according to the former oppositionist, during the interrogations the police kept inquiring about personal details of other protesters, not the official offences.³⁶

Piotr Pytlakowski describes the blatant charges pressed against nine hundred protesters, who in December 2016 demonstrated against the changes in the Assembly Rights.³⁷ Even though they had gathered in the public space in front of the parliament, the state-run prosecution accused them of infringing privacy of the MPs households,³⁸ basing their sentence on Article 199 of the Criminal Code.³⁹ Thankfully, in October 2017 the charges were lifted by the Warsaw's regional court.⁴⁰ Unfortunately, however, as the magazine *Polityka* claims, the two national security agencies ABW and CBA are by the time of writing planning to raid the offices of the law firm defending the protesters.⁴¹

All these consecutive cases prove that Piotr S. was right in at least one of his nineteen points: the current government uses full force of the prosecution and police in order to simply intimidate any form of opposition. Yet, it does not take place in a corrupt, single-party state but in the country that had been presented as a model post-Cold War success story of democracy. The citizens who dare to speak against their own chosen representatives have been either humiliated in the media or prosecuted based on blatant charges. The writers who inform society about the simple mistakes of state agencies or the cardinal issues related to the top politicians have been fought with full force by the government. The 'unfavourable' non-governmental organisations have been openly crushed. Even if this tendency changes tomorrow, Polish society will feel the long-term effects of these abuses of power for decades.

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Latin America has been seeing another great political upheaval in recent years; as the 'pink tide' begins to wane and guerrilla groups that have been fighting since the 1960s are giving up their arms, the left across the continent has been falling apart. In this issue Tom Brown writes a profile piece on the controversial former Brazilian president Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, and his attempt, now failed attempt,

to return to prominence as a political leader in Brazil. Olivia Nolan goes into how FARC (Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia), formerly one of the most powerful guerrilla groups in Latin America, was slowly bled to death by the combined forces of the Colombian government and the United States. Both of these articles do a fantastic job of describing the chaos and upheaval that exists in Latin America as some of the most influential groups and leaders of the past are now seeing their power and unity falling apart beneath their feet.

FARC is Dead! Long Live FARC!

OLIVIA NOLAN argues that the United States played a substantial role in bringing about the dissolution of one of Colombia's largest left-wing guerrilla organisation.

As the summer of 2017 began, the world watched as the Colombian guerrilla group, Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia, commonly known by the acronym FARC, handed over approximately 12 thousand arms and explosives to the United Nations in its first step towards disarmament and disbandment.¹ The peace agreement between FARC and the Colombian government was the result of decades of negotiations, with FARC being a thorn in the side of the Colombian government since its formation in 1964.² FARC defined itself as a Marxist-Leninist peasant army, and was labelled a terrorist organisation by the United Nations and the United States government.³ There have been close ties between the United States and the Colombian government since the formation of FARC, as they have shared the common aim of disarming the radical guerrilla organisation, though many of the actions the U.S. government has taken against FARC have not been openly publicised. Despite this, a great deal of evidence exists, suggesting that the disarmament and dissolution of FARC's guerrilla army can be attributed to the actions of the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) and United States government.

FARC has presented a threat to the Colombian government since its inception, which was itself a result of great political upheaval. Colombia experienced a period of civil war between 1948 and 1958 known as 'La Violencia', when Colombia's liberal and conservative political parties fought each other for power.⁴ The wars were finally concluded with the formation of a coalition government, which implemented extreme privatisation policies, forcing immense hardship on the working classes of Colombia in exchange for economic growth and stability. To combat this, peasant farmers and the urban working class formed what were known as 'peasant leagues' and 'self-defence communities', which would ultimately coalesce into the self-named 'people's army' that was FARC by the early 1960s.⁵ As this was taking place during the height of the Cold War, evidence suggests that the United States was anxious to help the Colombian government deal with these self-proclaimed Marxist-Leninists, and they quickly sent what was referred to as a 'special survey team' of counterinsurgency experts from the CIA.⁶ This plan to stamp out communist tendencies would ultimately come to be known as Plan Lazo in 1962, and would be the U.S. government's first covert operation of many to try and destabilise FARC and its control of the Colombia's peasant and working classes.⁷

Early statements from the survey team specifically highlight the need to keep their actions clandestine. The report from their first visit to Colombia states that, in order to 'shield the interests of both Colombian and US authorities against 'interventionist' charges, any special aid given for internal security was to be sterile and covert in nature.'⁸ The leader of the survey team, top-level Special Warfare Centre Commander William

P. Yarborough, discussed in more depth about how his team should use any means necessary to dissolve FARC as an organisation. He expressed his belief that the best action to take would be 'paramilitary, sabotage, and terrorist activities against known communist proponents.'⁹ This evidence makes it obvious that in order to support capitalist interests, the U.S. was set on doing whatever was necessary to keep FARC from gaining a foothold in Colombia.

Further research suggests that U.S. officials also used the growing illicit drug trade in Colombia as a means to increase their presence in the country and their military resources dedicated to weakening FARC. The 1970s saw the rise of drug trafficking as a highly lucrative trade for black market businessmen in Colombia; people such as Pablo Escobar and Jose Gacha became famous for building drug cartels that raked in billions of dollars a year from selling narcotics to the United States.¹⁰ The high profile of these cartels, and the celebrity status gained by their kingpins, made the U.S. government and drug enforcement officials eager to make statements condemning such illegal practices. They also promised lots of military and intelligence aid to the Colombian government in order to help take down the cartels;¹¹ however according to Steven Murphy, an officer for the Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA), it was not until the DEA proved that ties existed between Pablo Escobar's Medellin Cartel and the splinter communist guerrilla group known as M-19, that resources from the CIA were sent to combat the cartel problem, as the conflict began to be treated as a 'communist threat'.¹²

The fact that the U.S.'s drug-busting resources were really being allocated on the basis of communist collusion means that the fight against cartels in Colombia was slow, and still to this day remains unsuccessful in many ways. While drug barons such as Escobar and Gacha were ultimately taken down by the Colombian military with the help of the DEA, many cartels that did not work with communist guerrilla groups have been able to continue their operations to this day.¹³ Once evidence was found that FARC was using drug trafficking within its own organisation as a means of income, narcoterrorism resources were focused even more on the communists instead of other drug trafficking organisations.¹⁴

The re-allocation of resources was not the only controversial action the U.S. took to help the Colombian government get rid of FARC. Far-right paramilitary organisations acted as the counterbalance to FARC in many ways, as they both operated away from the public eye and outside of Colombia's mainstream political sphere. Journalists and third party human rights organisations have drawn attention to evidence which suggests the U.S. took the philosophy of 'the enemy of my enemy is my friend' to heart, and worked with these far-right paramilitaries on their common goal of eliminating FARC. Journalist Frank Smythe, reporting on the increase of military aid from the U.S. to Colombia throughout the 1990s writes:

'In the name of fighting drugs, the CIA financed new military intelligence networks [in Colombia] in 1991. But the new networks did little to stop drug traffickers. Instead, they incorporated illegal paramilitary groups into their ranks and fostered death squads. These

death squads killed trade unionists, peasant leaders, human-rights monitors, journalists, and other suspected 'subversives.' The evidence, including secret Colombian military documents, suggests that the CIA may be more interested in fighting a leftist resistance movement than in combating drugs.¹⁵

Smythe's evidence is based on an Amnesty International report from 1996, which corroborates his claim that security forces backed by U.S. aid were lending resources and military intelligence to paramilitary groups.¹⁶ Certainly, FARC's anti-government actions should not go unreported, with the United Nations estimating FARC and other left-wing guerrilla groups responsible for twelve percent of civilian murders in Colombia between 1964 and 2008. However the same United Nations report estimates that right-wing paramilitary groups are responsible for 80 percent, a harrowing statistic which makes the fact that the U.S. cooperated with such groups a difficult pill to swallow.¹⁷ That being said, the U.S. government's support of these right-wing dissidents would have certainly had an effect on the operations of FARC, and indeed by 1999 FARC had made its first public statement expressing a willingness to enter peace talks with the Colombian government.¹⁸ The strengthening of paramilitaries may certainly operate in a morally grey area, but it seems to have been a successful tactic for the U.S. in getting FARC to the negotiating table.

With FARC willing to talk to the government, U.S. and Colombian officials met to discuss their next steps, and in this stage of FARC's dissolution, the U.S. seems to have doubled down on their donation of foreign aid, personnel resources, and military intelligence in order to finalise the end of FARC as a left-wing military organisation. Drafted in 1999 by the Clinton Administration in the U.S. and the Pastrana Administration in Colombia, a new set of operations was officially signed into law in 2000. It was referred to as Plan Colombia, and was described as a United States foreign aid, military, and diplomatic initiative aimed at combating Colombian drug cartels and left-wing insurgent groups.¹⁹ The plan saw an increase in the U.S.'s already substantial aid package to Colombia, with 1.3 billion dollars a year being promised in foreign aid, along with 500 specialised military personnel and 300 civilian government agents to help the Colombian military and government on the ground.²⁰ This package made Colombia the third largest recipient of U.S. foreign aid from 2000 until 2015.²¹

While negotiations for disarmament with FARC would continue until a provisional agreement was reached in 2016, the operations enacted under Plan Colombia made surrender an increasingly inevitable option for the guerrillas. As an organisation, the jungle guerrillas of FARC once controlled almost half the landmass of Colombia and had a membership of close to 100,000 during the height of their operations, making them a force to be reckoned with.²² However they were no match for the intensive military operations which took place between 2000 and 2008 under the remit of Plan Colombia, which cost the U.S. approximately 2.5 billion dollars, and were carried out by Colombian military special operation squads trained by U.S. officials.²³

The slow but consistent process of dissolution for FARC had begun, and by the end of 2008 FARC lost complete control of their territory and were forced to retreat into the mountains, but would also report a membership of around 18 000 in 2008, which would continue to decrease to less than 10 thousand by the time peace deals were signed in 2016.²⁴ Plan Colombia is certainly one of the most obvious examples of how U.S. intervention aided the disarmament and dissolution of FARC, costing the U.S. billions of dollars in military aid to shut down this perceived communist threat.

While a disarmament deal was agreed upon in 2016, it took another year for the deal to be fully enacted, as the people of Colombia would reject the agreement in a national referendum held on 2 October

2016.²⁵ Some critics consider this referendum evidence that FARC was still a beacon of hope for the lower classes of Colombia who felt disillusioned with their government, however the U.S. and Colombian governments were intent on making sure the dissolution of FARC was a success. Therefore, after some amendments, the bill was again voted on, however this time by the unanimously supportive Colombian Congress and not through a popular referendum.²⁶ The deal was ratified in November, and by February the guerrillas had arrived in the transitional zone designated for the transfer of weapons and the registration of members. 8,112 guns, 1.3 million bullets, 22 tons of explosives, three thousand grenades, and one thousand land mines were surrendered by FARC to the United Nations by the end of May,²⁷ and by 27 June, 2017, FARC officially ceased to be an armed group.²⁸

The United States and United Nations were both active participants in this peace process, supplying advisors to the Colombian government's negotiations team and taking initiative in the collection of the FARC's weapons, which have now been returned to the United Nations arsenal in the United States.²⁹ It is clear that through substantial interventionist policies, both public and covert, the United States and its government agencies played a primary role in bringing about the end of FARC. Some may have seen FARC as a violent drug trafficking organisation that encouraged anti-government sentiment among the people of Colombia, while others may have viewed them as liberators who gave the peasants of Colombia hope for a better future. Regardless of the controversial place FARC holds in Colombian history, for the United States and their political allies in Colombia, it was clearly a top-priority prerogative to keep such a radical group from ever being able to succeed, and the dissolution of FARC is certainly a victory for those who wish to maintain the political status quo in Latin America.

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Crime, Punishment, and Redemption: Lula da Silva

TOM BROWN examines the highly divisive figure in Brazilian politics, Lula.

In January 2018, a major blow was dealt to the 'Pink Tide' that swept through Latin America during the last decade, with the upholding of corruption charges against former President of Brazil Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, known as Lula.¹ If he fails to win his appeal against this ruling he will be barred from running for the Presidency of Brazil in the October elections.² With Lula's Workers' Party's (PT) election strategy seeming to revolve entirely around his candidacy, this could be the first presidential election that the Brazilian left will lose since 1998.³ Furthermore, there is the possibility of a constitutional crisis if he were to win the election, then be disqualified.⁴ Currently, Lula enjoys high levels of popular support.⁵ To understand the potential change that may occur in Brazilian politics in October, we must understand Lula.

Lula was born in the northeastern state of Pernambuco on October 27th, 1945, to a poor peasant family working as sharecroppers.⁶ Throughout his adolescence, he worked in a variety of jobs to supplement the small income that his family received. In 1972, Lula left industrial labour to become a full-time union employee. During the 1970s, the organised labour movement became increasingly politically active in opposing the policies pursued by the military dictatorship.⁷ By the last

years of the decade, this activism was focused around strike action, which Lula, as a union organiser, was heavily involved in.⁸

The beginning of Lula's modern political career came in 1980, with the creation of the Workers' Party.⁹ Shortly after this, Lula made his first attempt at running for political office, vying to become governor of the state of São Paulo in 1982.¹⁰ He was unsuccessful, but it was to be the first of numerous election campaigns he would fight over the course of his life. His first electoral success came in 1986, when he was elected to the Chamber of Deputies, the lower House of Brazil's National Congress.¹¹

Lula's bid for presidency started when he ran as the PT candidate in the 1989 presidential election. Lula would go on to run for president twice more unsuccessfully - in 1994 and 1998 - until his eventual victory in 2002.¹² This coincided with the emergence of Latin America's 'Pink Tide', and Lula was quickly seen as a key figure within the movement.¹³ His victory in 2002 is often attributed to moderating his image and the policy positions of the PT,¹⁴ and thus in some ways the overtly reformist and less ideological position taken by Lula stands in contrast to the firmly leftist views of other 'Pink Tide' leaders such as Chavez.

Once in office, Lula set about on a series of projects, aiming to both grow the Brazilian economy and help alleviate the suffering of the many Brazilians who live in poverty. This attempt to pursue policies that support businesses and the millions of poor Brazilians further shows how Lula, far from being a Chavez-like radical, had shifted his views to embrace a wider view of Brazilian society. It is important to note, however, that Lula never forgot his background, being acutely aware that he was the first worker to be elected as president,¹⁵ accordingly social programs were the focus of his administration.

As president he certainly achieved large-scale reductions in the number of Brazilians living in poverty. The flagship social policy of his government was the Bolsa Família (Family Allowance) welfare program, which provided money to families as long as they kept their children in school and attended medical check-ups,¹⁶ and helped some 44 million Brazilians.¹⁷ The percentage of the population living in poverty was cut - between 2002 and 2009 - from 26.7 percent to 15.3 percent,¹⁸ and over the course of his presidency, 28 million Brazilians were lifted out of poverty.¹⁹

Despite these successes, Lula's presidency was not a smooth journey from start to finish, corruption being the principle foe he faced during his administration. The largest of these, the Mensalão scandal, emerged in 2005. This involved accusations that the PT had been paying deputies to vote in support of policies that were supported by the Party.²⁰ Whilst not being explicitly involved in the scandal, Lula's popularity was harmed by it, and it could be seen as foreshadowing the later corruption scandals that would damage both Lula and the PT.

The 2006 presidential election more or less came and went, with Lula winning again. He began his second term by focusing on expanding Brazil's economy and infrastructure with the Growth Acceleration Program.²¹ Two years into his second term, the Global Financial Crisis occurred, which Brazil is generally considered to have weathered rather well.²² Despite the odd, decidedly leftist pronouncement, Lula maintained the path he had previously trod, between concern for the poor and a desire not to upset the financial sector.²³ As the end of his time in office drew near, Lula turned some of his political attention towards the question of who would succeed him in the PT. With Dilma Rousseff in place to succeed him, Lula left the office of the presidency at the start of 2011 with very high approval ratings.²⁴

Lula's time as president, could, however, be assessed by what he failed to do, rather than what he did. Even as early as 2006, the left wing of Brazilian politics and social movements were agitating for Lula to adopt a much more radical and overtly leftist position on matters of economic policy, redistribution of wealth, and land reform.²⁵ Here can be seen

perhaps the beginnings of left wing disillusionment with the PT, a force in Brazilian politics that would only continue to grow through Lula and then Rousseff's terms in office, leading to electoral wipe-outs for the PT in municipal elections in 2016.²⁶

Still, the political saga of Lula's career did not end in 2011. As Rousseff's presidency continued, her popularity, and the PT's, began to fall.²⁷ This would peak with Operation Car Wash, an investigation begun in March 2014 into alleged corruption concerning the Brazilian state oil company Petrobras.²⁸ What the investigation revealed, however, was the vast scale of corruption amongst the Brazilian business and political elite. Investigations into Lula's actions were opened in 2015, amid accusations that he had received bribes from corporations in return for using his influence to their benefit.²⁹ Rousseff, being under investigation herself, and facing calls for impeachment, brought Lula back into government after five years out of office to serve as her Chief of Staff, a position which brought with it immunity from prosecution.³⁰ This latest spell in government would not last long however, as Rousseff was impeached in late 2016 and removed from office,³¹ whilst the corruption scandal engulfed even more politicians from across all swathes of the Brazilian political spectrum.³²

With presidential elections scheduled for October 2018, Lula began to make it clear that he intended to run as the PT candidate. A potential third period in government was thrown in jeopardy in July 2017 when he was convicted of corruption charges and sentenced to 9.5 years in prison.³³ He lodged an appeal against this conviction, claiming that it was politically charged and intended to prevent him from running for the presidency.³⁴ The PT issued strong statements in his defence, claiming that there may be bloodshed if he was imprisoned.³⁵ This appeal was ruled on in January 2018, and his convictions were upheld.³⁶

Lula now finds himself facing an unseemly and unpleasant end to his political career. The pragmatist who cared for the poor, and rose from abject poverty to be the president of Brazil could find himself locked up, whilst his social programmes and material legacy are dismantled. As a politician he causes great division in Brazil, and the distrust and anger that many Brazilians feel towards figures such as Lula and others tainted by corruption fuels the campaigns of individuals such as Jair Bolsonaro, who has been deemed a right-wing extremist.³⁷ The shadow of corruption looms large over Lula, and perhaps due to the popularity it has cost him, he will never be able to return to the presidency and launch a defence, or consolidate his social programmes. He has pledged to fight his conviction and to continue appealing, and in theory he could take the matter as high as the Brazilian Supreme Court. He has to register his candidacy by 15 August, 2018, to be able to stand in the election,³⁸ and due to legislation he himself approved, if his convictions remain at that date, he cannot stand for election.³⁹ His downfall would mark the end of a political era in Brazil, yet whilst the 'most popular politician on Earth' might have his political legacy destroyed,⁴⁰ the material changes he brought about to Brazilian society will leave their mark for generations to come.

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The past decade in the Middle East and North Africa has been marked by many upheavals: the invasion of Iraq, the Arab Revolutions, the Syrian Conflict, and the Green Movement all appeared to be harbingers of transformation. Yet, what has truly changed and what has remained the same? Is it possible to topple the foundations of a state? And if so, what is built from the ruins, or brought back up from destruction?

Michael Drax questions whether Iraq will be able to break free from cyclical violence, which has haunted the country for almost two decades. Acknowledging the systemic issues that Iraqis and their government must overcome, he notes

that hope remains even in the face of seemingly insurmountable odds.

Antonio Dau examines the death of Giulio Regeni and what it can tell us about the state of human rights in Egypt. After the people took to Tahrir Square and brought about the fall of a dictator, the Egyptian people felt the renewed possibility for justice. President Morsi made way for President Sisi, and after events like the Rabaa Massacre in 2013,¹ is there any hope left for Egypt?

Manijeh Zargar profiles the rise of the compulsory hijab in Iran, as well as the protests which sprung from Ayatollah Khomeini's mandate. Looking at the history of hijab legal codes, she makes the important distinction between perceptions of recent protests, and the long advocacy of Iranian women for their rights. In Iran, what is old is new again.

Will Iraq break free of a cycle of violence?

MICHAEL DRAX explores past, present, and future prospects for peace in Iraq, and the impact of terror groups and government policies on the peace process.

A common Iraqi saying goes: 'the bad is behind us and the worst is yet to come.' This adage has developed from the cyclical violence that has torn the country apart, both before and since the fall of Saddam Hussein in 2003. Over the last fifteen years, 200 thousand Iraqi civilians have died, and 2.6 million people remain internally displaced.^{1,2} After the United States (U.S.) invasion sparked a renewed cycle of violence in 2003, there was a period of relative tranquillity from 2008-2009. However, quickly thereafter, the militant Islamist group known as Islamic State began to reassert itself, plunging the country back into conflict. By 2014 Islamic State held a third of Iraq and threatened to break apart the fragile sovereignty of the Iraqi nation.³ After three years of fierce warfare, Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi, who was elected in 2014, jubilantly declared the defeat of Islamic State on the 9th of December, 2017.⁴ At the end of 2017, the number of incidents across Iraq as a whole was at near-record lows.⁵ Yet, al-Abadi's celebration was met with scant optimism for sustained peace in the future.

Lasting peace remains an elusive vision as the toxic conditions that led to war persist. Polarising foreign influence, the central state's weakness and lack of legitimacy, political marginalisation, and the ongoing resilience of extremist groups are factors that have crippled the prospect of peace. The apparent calm of 2018 may just precede later conflict due to the enduring failure of addressing structural problems.

Although Saddam's reign was far from bloodless, foreign intervention in the form of the U.S. invasion in 2003 sparked a new era of violence and worsened pre-existing issues.⁶ As well as the destabilising brutality and lawlessness that came with the occupation,⁷ the policies of the Constitutional Provisional Authority (CPA) that oversaw the transition of Iraq to a democratic state exacerbated sectarian divides over ethnic and religious identity.⁸ The CPA marginalised Sunnis in one fell swoop by prohibiting all 500 thousand ex-Baathist Party members from taking public office.⁹

Furthermore, since Iraq was granted self-rule in 2005, the (U.S.-brokered) government has been dominated by the Shia majority. Only Shias have held the role of Prime Minister and political misrepresentation and marginalisation have been recurring themes of the administration.¹⁰ Fanar Haddad, a Senior Research Fellow at the Middle East Institute, explains how Iraq's Sunni minority have been treated as second class citizens, describing the attitude of the state between 2003 and 2014 as 'Shia-centric state-building and Sunni rejection.'¹¹ From the beginning then, the legitimacy of Baghdad was undermined as it was clear that not all Iraqis benefitted from the new democratic system and American patronage.

The ignominy caused by the U.S. invasion combined with polarising policies provided 'fertile territory' for extremist groups.¹² Al-Qaeda in Iraq, which later morphed into Islamic State in Iraq in 2006 and then into Islamic State in Iraq and Syria in 2013, embraced many Iraqi Sunnis who felt disregarded by the Shia-led central government in Baghdad and anger at the American occupation.¹³ These groups have been remarkably resilient, successfully using the 'carrot and stick approach,' rewarding tribes who cooperate with them and eliminating those who challenge their leadership, ensuring that Sunnis remain under their control rather than under the authority of the central state.¹⁴

The tide of violence was finally stemmed in 2008. Military success over extremist groups came about due to the increased effectiveness of the Shia-dominated Iraqi Security Forces (ISF), the U.S. troop surge in 2007, and, crucially, the creation of the Sahwa (Awakening) Movement.¹⁵ The Sahwa Movement was a Sunni tribal alliance that mobilised to purge Islamic State from their neighbourhoods.¹⁶ This collaboration between the different communities was powerful, and Renad Mansour, a Research Fellow at Chatham House, notes that in 2008 and 2009 there was a 'period of peace and greater popular participation in politics.'¹⁷ Nevertheless, this was a superficial honeymoon that glossed over issues that remained unfixed.

The political establishment failed to capitalise on the opportunity to reconcile. Nuri al-Maliki, the Prime Minister from 2006 to 2014, followed a strategy of 'blatant sectarianism [...] undermining state institutions,' thereby throwing away any hopes for national unity.¹⁸ Under al-Maliki, the Sahwa units were not fully integrated into the ISF as promised, and these crucial Sunni groups were instead 'dismissed without compensation and for overtly sectarian reasons.'¹⁹

Foreign influence did not cease after the withdrawal of American troops in 2011. Instead, al-Maliki increasingly depended on Iranian support and it soon became clear that Tehran held sway in Iraqi policy.²⁰ Al-Maliki's decision to send Iraqi fighters to support Bashar al-Assad and to establish militias that had the ability to fight in Syria closely followed Iranian interests.²¹ For both Arab and Kurdish Sunnis, these actions further undermined any conception of national unity.

Islamic State was never fully exorcised, and after 2009, they smoothly transitioned into insurgency tactics, biding their time and gradually breaking the Sahwa movement apart.²² Simultaneously, al-Maliki's divisive approach proved to be a useful recruiting tool for the extremists.²³

As noted previously, despite the hope for peace in 2009, the same underlying factors remained to sow the seeds for the violence that erupted in 2013 and 2014. Therefore, after the resounding late-2017 military victory over Islamic State, examining the status of these same factors in 2018 may reveal whether or not Iraq has a realistic prospect of diverging from the bloody status quo.

The Iraqi government is enjoying newfound strength and legitimacy. Haider al-Abadi is riding on the wave of the defeat of Islamic State that has boosted Iraqi nationalism and as of April 2017, 59 percent of Iraqis

approved of his actions compared to 33 percent in January 2016.²⁴ Unlike his predecessor, al-Abadi has not pursued sectarian policies and evidence of his commitment to reconciliation can be seen in his passing of the broad General Amnesty Law in August 2016 that appealed to many Sunnis and addressed some of the injustices committed under Nuri al-Maliki.²⁵ On the 5th of May, 2018, parliamentary elections will be held and al-Abadi's Victory Alliance, that has cross-sectarian support, including Sunni politicians such as Abdul-Latif al-Hameem,²⁶ has an excellent chance of forming a broad coalition.²⁷ Furthermore, parties now garner support by focusing on civic life and national unity in contrast to previous times when 'monolithic ethno-sectarian alliances' defined voting patterns.²⁸ The proportion of parties explicitly mentioning Islam within their party name has fallen from around 50 percent in previous elections to five percent in the run up to the May election.²⁹ The influence of newfound Iraqi nationalism coupled with a spike in political secularism is responsible for this shift as can be shown by a poll taken in August 2017, that found that secular/civic candidates received the greatest support from the electorate, namely 24.2 percent, whereas religious candidates only had four percent.³⁰

The rise of a shared, uniting Iraqi nationalism in Iraqi politics suggests that the previous marginalisation has come to an end. However, many people still feel disenfranchised. Iraq ranked 166 out of 176 in the 2016 Corruption Perception Index,³¹ and distrust in the government will continue as long as corruption remains. Despite al-Abadi's efforts to broaden political engagement beyond the Shia heartlands, many Sunnis and minority groups feel detached from Baghdad. For example, Osama al-Nujaifi, a Sunni politician from Mosul, and his allies want greater devolution and demand their own semi-autonomous region.³² Some Sunni Blocs have even considered boycotting the vote until the 2.6 million internally displaced people have returned home, owing to fears that the participation of these, mostly Sunni, citizens in the upcoming elections may otherwise be limited.³³

Unlike his predecessors, al-Abadi has done well at eliminating dependence on only one foreign state. Iraq now draws support from both the U.S. and Iran, and has recently improved relations with Saudi Arabia.³⁴ Moreover, popular opinion in Iraq is more resentful of foreign intervention, with 28 percent of Iraqis blaming such intervention for rise of Islamic State.³⁵ Prominent Shia figures such as Muqtada al-Sadr and Ammar al-Hakim who were arguably once glorified Iranian proxies are increasingly independent, now instead preaching Iraqi nationalism and emphasising cross-sectarian movements.³⁶ For example, al-Sadr now leads an inclusive protest movement that focuses on tackling corruption and opposing excessive Iranian influence with slogans such as 'Iran, out, out.'³⁷

Nevertheless, foreign influence continues to debilitate the unifying efforts of the federal government. Throughout al-Abadi's tenure, solving the issue of the Popular Mobilisation Forces (PMF) has proven beyond his capabilities. The PMF was created in 2014 and evolved into an umbrella organisation including at least 60 different militias.³⁸ One faction of these militias, including Asaib Ahl al-Haq and Kataib Hezbollah, are seen to be Iranian proxies.³⁹ This faction follows the foreign policy objectives of Iran rather than Baghdad.⁴⁰ As well as delegitimising the state, the PMF has also 'deepened ethno-sectarian and partisan fault lines'⁴¹ because of the abuses committed by pro-Iranian Shia militias in Sunni majority areas like Fallujah, Ramadi, and Mosul.⁴² To make matters worse, many pro-Iranian militias do not want to demobilise, instead wishing to have a greater role in politics.⁴³ The new Fatah Coalition includes many of these militias and is preparing for the 2018 election;⁴⁴ thus, the PMF and the spectre of Iran will continue to undermine Iraqi sovereignty.

As well as improved trust in the government, greater positivity towards the national security forces has damaged the recruiting efforts of extremist groups. The ISF is no longer perceived as the 'Safavid forces' (serving Iranian interests) as they were under Nuri al-Maliki.⁴⁵ 77 percent of people believe the ISF is there to represent all Iraqis.⁴⁶ Furthermore, Islamic State has fewer

opportunities to use recent foreign influence as propaganda as it was the Iraqi Security Forces that did the majority of the fighting on the ground.⁴⁷

Despite these progressions, the resurgence of extremist groups is still an existential threat. In the same way that it did after 2009, Islamic State is transitioning from a conventional fighting force to an insurgency.⁴⁸ Since the fall of the caliphate, many Islamic State fighters have been freed up to engage in insurgent attacks, as seen by the recent increase of violent incidents in January 2018 in Diyala, Salahiddin, and Baghdad.⁴⁹ Fundamentally, the conditions that foster Islamic radicalism have not been dealt with. Paradoxically, while the war with Islamic State has fostered unity, it has also created rifts. There are many accounts of extra-judicial killings, arbitrary detentions, forced displacement, and torture committed by militias and even state forces in principally Sunni areas.⁵⁰ These injustices only bolster extremist propaganda that the Iraqi state does not protect all of its citizens equally. The widespread devastation has left behind a bill of 100 billion U.S. dollars for reconstruction.⁵¹ Yet, the fact that only 392 million U.S. dollars have been procured and that significant international support is not forthcoming reveals that comprehensive reconstruction is unlikely.⁵² Iraq's 120 billion dollar debt only compounds these economic woes.⁵³ If the rubble is not cleared, Iraqis will only feel more resentful of a government that is more comfortable with bombing than building.

Iraq has come a long way since 2003 and 2008. The new administration has made steps towards defeating extremist groups, dealing with the lack of political representation, and delicately balancing foreign influence. However, more needs to be done. Many past mistakes have already been repeated, as demonstrated by the indiscriminate violence waged in West Mosul. Despite recent celebration, Islamic State continues to undermine the government, while corruption continues to run rampant. The state is being forced to share legitimacy and power with the PMF, and Iran retains a strong influence on Iraqi policy. Against the backdrop of these ongoing issues, it is unlikely that the May election alone will make the future of Iraq any clearer, and although a later collapse into violence seems probable, the unifying efforts of al-Abadi combined with the nationalism of al-Sadr is the best hope Iraq has.

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Profile: The Hijab and Protest in Iran, Past and Present

MANIJEH ZARGAR explores the history of the legally mandated wearing of hijab in Iran and charts the progress made by those who have protested against it.

The hijab has a long and divisive history in Iran. Shortly after the Shah was overthrown in 1979, Ayatollah Khomeini supported a compulsory hijab law noting that 'in Islam, women should wear a veil...The woman can choose any clothes as long as it covers her body.'¹ This mandate outraged women and feminist groups throughout the country.² A demonstration was organised by women; and on the 8th March, 1979, veiled women and those without hijab stood side by side to condemn the compulsory hijab.³ This article identifies the changes that have occurred to the hijab and hijab protests during the 38 years since the revolution. It contends that these changes are the outcome of a complex triangular interaction between legal codes, especially Article 683 of Islamic penal code, state violence and the moral police, and how the resistance of women have

changed the image of hijab, from a symbol of restriction towards a tool of protest and subversion, as they continue their campaign to end compulsory hijab.

The electoral gains of the Islamic forces ensured their place of power within Iran, and very quickly the change that Ayatollah Khomeini's remarks signaled began to set in. There was some opposition, with figures such as Ayatollah Taleghani, the second most influential religious leader in Iran,⁴ stating that the hijab was a personal issue, not a social one.^{5,6} Unfortunately, the opposition to the compulsory hijab was not powerful enough to stop the passage of Article 102 of the penal code in 1983, which legally mandated the wearing of hijab.⁷

Compulsory hijab in Iran was initially enforced by the armed forces under the command of Hassan Rouhani and later in government offices.⁸ Article 102 was the first law on women's clothing, which was later annexed into Article 638 of the Islamic Penal Code of 1996.⁹ Originally, women could receive up to 72 lashes if they did not follow the codes set by the new government.¹⁰ Under Article 638 of Islamic penal code, this was changed to ten days or a two-month sentence, or a fine of 50 thousand to 500 thousand rials.¹¹ Under these clothing regulations, women had the 'option' to choose between a roopoosh (a long jacket-type cover worn over the clothes) with a headscarf, or a chador and veil.¹²

Any law needs state enforcement in order to be implemented, and the compulsory hijab law is no exception.¹³ The Islamic Republic of Iran has assigned a considerable amount of its budget to the moral police and its subsets. These forces are present in every public area, such as main streets, universities, airports, banks, and government offices since Article 102 was passed. Yet, the dress code is not simply limited to what women wear, but includes their makeup and their general appearance. The punishment for violating these codes can vary from a verbal warning to a prison sentence.¹⁴

The severity of the violence that the state wields in order to uphold these codes depends on various factors. In the 1980s and early 1990s, the pressure on women was more intense, and the moral police and Basij forces carried out brutal punishments.¹⁵ During the Reformists' reign in the late 1990s, the situation improved somewhat, though not consistently throughout the country. In the early years of Khatami's presidency, discussion began about the citizen's right to choose their clothing. Things seemed to be regressing in 2005, when a sixteen-point decree aimed at improving hijab compliance and chastity was implemented.¹⁶

In his pre-election speech, Ahmadinejad stated that the country was facing many problems, and the issue of young people's appearance was not extremely relevant;¹⁷ nonetheless, his two presidential terms between 2005 and 2013 were some of the most difficult times for women in terms of clothing restrictions. In his first term, he initiated a campaign to improve public security, and, in the summer of 2006, there was an increased presence of Gasht-e-Ershad, the morality police focused on ensuring observance of hijab, who were frequently seen in their green vans patrolling the streets.¹⁸

For a few years now, the appearance of the Gasht-e-Ershad vans has marked the beginning of summer, in addition to the deployment of seven thousand undercover police officers, organised in order to implement Ahmadinejad's moral security plan.¹⁹

Iranian women's defiance to the compulsory hijab, legal codes, and state violence used to enforce these codes has been changing the image of the hijab.²⁰ Despite government propaganda, women resisted mandatory dress codes in numerous ways, including creative expressions,²¹ organising anti-compulsory hijab demonstrations, and 'positive resistance'.²²

At the time of the original dress code implementation in the 1980s, women were forced to wear loose black or dark clothing, their hair had to be completely covered, and the only body parts that could be exposed were the face and hands.²³ Women in public places started to wear more colourful roopooshes and headscarves; and the roopooshes meant to cover women's bodies from their shoulders to their ankles became shorter, inch-by-

inch.^{24,25} Wearing such clothing could lead to police harassment or a short jail sentence, but Iranian women continued to resist.²⁶ Growing up, I saw almost every fashion trend, including makeup, banned by the government before it became a norm, showing how the non-stop silent battle between women and the government is changing the enforcement and meaning of mandatory hijab.^{27,28}

Despite how current protests are being framed, demonstrations against compulsory hijab started mere days after Ayatollah Khomeini's speech in 1979.²⁹ Thousands of women took part in protests in Tehran to show their disagreement with the new rules; in response, the officials at the time called these women 'monarchy supporters', which gave them an excuse to suppress the unrest.³⁰ In continuation of this protest, other demonstrations were organised by feminist groups such as 12 June, 2005, protest that also took place in Tehran and led to the arrest of a number of women's rights activists who were sentenced to more than two years in prison.³¹

The new phase of the resistance, referred to here as 'positive resistance', started with online campaigns such as 'No To The Compulsory Hijab'³² and 'My Stealthy Freedom'.³³ Masih Alinejad, who started the 'My Stealthy Freedom' campaign in 2014 invited Iranian women to take a photo or record a short video of themselves in public areas without hijab.³⁴ The campaign quickly became popular, with thousands of women sending photos and videos with a short description of their daily life experience under the compulsory hijab law. Notwithstanding the expected backlash targeting Alinejad's campaign, the importance of this campaign in encouraging women to resist the limitations of their society is undeniable, as images and stories from the My Stealthy Freedom website attests to the small, everyday resistance of Iranian women against a regime, which seeks to control their bodies and their lives.³⁵

After the recent unrest in Iran, 'positive resistance' has become more radical. Following the protests around the country in early 2018, Vida Movahed known as 'The Daughter of Enghelab Street' tied her white headscarf to a stick and waved it to protest against the mandatory hijab.³⁶ Following her arrest, men and women performed the same symbolic act to support Vida and her cause and so far 29 of these supporters have been arrested.³⁷

Despite the way it has been depicted around the world, these Iranian women's resistance against compulsory hijab is not new, but rather follows a tradition of protest and represents a long simmering anger within Iranian society. Women's resistance to the legal codes and to state violence may have appeared in different ways over the years, but there has been a consistent call for the end of compulsory hijab and the reinstatement of women's freedom to choose.

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The Murder of Giulio Regeni and the State of Human Rights in Egypt

ANTONIO DAU assesses the condition of human rights in Egypt, focusing on the case of murdered Italian graduate student Giulio Regeni.

The night of 25 January, 2016, Italian graduate student Giulio Regeni disappeared in Cairo.¹ His last message was sent at 7:41 p.m., local time in Egypt.² His mutilated and tortured body was found nine days later on the outskirts of Cairo.³ Two years have passed, and no one seems to know what really happened to the Italian student. In fact, the

Egyptian authorities have consistently neglected to become involved in the investigation, and have even been implicated in his death.⁴ This case confirms that the human rights situation has not improved, seven years after the Egyptian Revolution. In fact, it may be in even more of a precarious position than ever before.

Egypt was deeply affected by the 2011 movements that shook the Arab world. The majority of these countries had one goal in common: overthrowing the rulers from their life-long regimes after decades of oppression, corruption, and abuses. Hosni Mubarak, was one such ruler, who had been in power since 1981 – hoisted to a position of authority after Anwar Sadat's assassination at the hands of an extremist Islamist student.⁵ Following that event, the new president imposed a state of emergency,⁶ which would persist until May 2012.⁷ Mubarak inherited a population consisting of masses of angry people, and he would wield the 'Emergency Law' to suppress his opponents by any means necessary. Many of those who opposed him became political prisoners, and opposition media was blotted out.⁸

Since the 2011 uprisings, many human rights abuses have taken place in Egypt. The above mentioned 'Emergency Law', which has been imposed on a regular basis since it was first approved in 1981, provided a legal basis for arbitrary detention and unfair trials.⁹ According to a Human Rights Watch report published in 2010, for three decades the police have acted as the 'primary implementers of repressions'.¹⁰ Egyptian lawyers and domestic and international human rights groups agree that the practice of torture in Egypt has been systematically used in order to 'glean confessions and information, or to punish detainees'.¹¹ Finally, the report affirms that 'the result is an epidemic of habitual, widespread, and deliberate torture perpetrated on a regular basis by security forces'.¹²

Freedom of press was also brutally repressed.¹³ Bloggers and online journalists were frequently intimidated by security officials, who broke into their email accounts, Facebook accounts, and both political and non-political blogs,¹⁴ as a consequence there has been a rise in censorship and control over cyber-activists. On 6 June 2010, Khaled Said, a 28-year-old Egyptian blogger, was beaten to death by the Egyptian police on the streets of Alexandria.¹⁵ His death, and mobilisation through the country, led Egyptians to the streets demanding an end to these abuses.¹⁶

The fall of Hosni Mubarak raised expectations for a democratic transition in Egypt. The first election after the uprising took place in May 2012. The new President Mohamed Morsi was a member of the Muslim Brotherhood and ran for the position as member of the Freedom and Justice Party, nominally independent, but with strong ties to the Brotherhood.¹⁷ Morsi was criticised for additions to the constitution, which gave him extraordinary new powers.¹⁸ During his mandate, 'the Tamarod' (rebel), a new grassroots protest movement, played a large role in the nationwide protests against President Morsi.¹⁹ Tamarod managed to collect around 22 million signatures complaining about the security level, which had not been restored after the 2011 revolution.²⁰ His presidency did not last long; just one year after his election, army chief Abdel Fattah el-Sisi gave him an ultimatum – leave office, or fix the situation.²¹ On 3 July, 2013, Sisi ordered his arrest, and in May 2014, Abdel Fattah el-Sisi became President of Egypt.²²

The majority of the current Parliament are el-Sisi's supporters,²³ and the jails are filled with his opponents.²⁴ Among them are not only members of the Muslim Brotherhood, but also lawyers, journalists and aid workers – totalling around 40 thousand people.^{25,26} He has justified this repression by highlighting the need to protect the country from the danger of extremists. It is true that Egypt has been one of the main targets for Islamic State militants, who have maintained a solid base in the Sinai Peninsula since 2014.²⁷

According to human rights organisations, between 2013 and 2017 around 60 thousand people were imprisoned.²⁸ The 2016 report by Human Rights Watch focused on Cairo's Scorpion Prison, and indicated that the majority of those detained are political prisoners.²⁹ The conditions in that prison

are said to be particularly harsh; prisoners suffer from torture, including beatings, interference in medical care, and forced feedings.³⁰ The prison authorities do not allow inmates to possess the basic necessities of comfort and hygiene, or items such as books, paper, or any writing instruments.³¹

According to Amnesty International, although it is very complicated to identify the real number of forced disappearances, through documentation and figures provided by different Egyptian NGOs and rights groups, it is clear that at least several hundred Egyptians have disappeared since the beginning of 2015.³² On average, three to four people have been subjected to forced disappearance every day since January 2015.³³ In most cases, those subjected to forced disappearance were accused of being opponents of Sisi.³⁴

The case of Giulio Regeni's death showed the outside world the extent to which a state of repression still existed within Egypt.³⁵ After attending university, Regeni lived in Cairo in 2013, working as an intern at a United Nations agency.³⁶ For his graduate research, Regeni decided to focus on Egypt's independent unions and their role in the country after 2011.³⁷ As part of his research, Giulio started interviewing street vendors around Cairo.³⁸ Before him, two other foreigners had run into trouble,³⁹ underlining the severity of the situation in Egypt.

His autopsy, indicated that he had been subjected to torture.⁴⁰ More detailed analysis in Italy showed that he had also been hit repeatedly on the head.⁴¹ His body presented cuts, bruises, and abrasions, which exhibited different stages of healing.⁴² This indicated that Regeni had been tortured numerous times before his death.⁴³ His hands and feet had been broken, as well as his teeth.⁴⁴ It also seemed that his torturers engraved letters into his skin, a well-documented practice of the Egyptian police.⁴⁵

Giulio Regeni is just one of the many tortured and forcibly disappeared people in Egypt since el-Sisi came to power. The Egyptian government has always denied any kind of involvement with his death and, unfortunately, apart from empty denunciations, foreign countries have not done enough to condemn the human rights violations in Egypt.⁴⁶ Despite recalling their ambassador in 2016, the Italian government sent a new ambassador to Cairo in September 2017.⁴⁷ Notwithstanding, a statement by Rome's chief prosecutor Giuseppe Pignatone declared that Regeni had 'solely been killed because of his research'.⁴⁸

The case of Giulio Regeni has drawn particular attention to the human rights issue in Egypt. NGOs such as Amnesty International⁴⁹ and Human Rights Watch,⁵⁰ continue to condemn the Egyptian government for the ongoing situation in the country. The security state in Egypt has only continued to expand since the fall of Mubarak and the abuse of human rights has reached shocking and unprecedented levels.⁵¹ It is obvious that the human rights situation in Egypt has not improved since 2011, but what occurred to Giulio Regeni and those who have suffered a similar fate, remains unanswered.

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Is the United States of America splitting at its seams? In recent months, a dizzying number of men in positions of power have been revealed as sexual aggressors, provoking a national debate around definitions of harassment and misconduct that is anything but dispassionate. Sam Cooper-Phillips profiles the woman behind 'Me Too', Tarana Burke, and the evolution of her ethos and vision for the movement. As political polarisation in the United States mounts, some individuals and groups are

questioning the fundamental unity of the country's federation. Linus Younger examines the most prominent of Californian secessionist groups and what this political faction means for the nation as a whole. Far from California, in Appalachia, the Opioid epidemic worsens daily. Abigail Wise details the precursors to this public health crisis, and explains, in the context of West Virginia's history, why this state has become the 'ground zero' for the abuse of prescription painkillers and heroin. As the Trump Administration enters its second year, political dissent and crisis in America appear to be anything but dissipating.

Getting to the Bottom of America's Crippling Opioid Crisis

ABIGAIL WISE explores how West Virginia has become the epicenter of the country's worst addiction epidemic.

On 26 October, 2017, President Trump declared America's opioid epidemic a public health emergency.¹ The worst year in U.S. history, 2016 saw more Americans dying from opioid addiction than died during the Vietnam War, or have died from HIV/AIDS, or even gun violence.² Around 170 Americans die from overdosing daily, mainly from opioids-related issues.³ While these are certainly harrowing figures, the scariest fact about America's opioid crisis is that many of the drugs at the center of this epidemic are completely legal.

The current opioid epidemic is rooted in the American prescription drug market. Since the mid-1990s, pharmaceutical companies have encouraged doctors to prescribe OxyContin for the management of chronic pain, rather than its intended usage of mitigating pain associated with debilitating illness.⁴ One agency, Purdue Pharma, began distributing coupons for OxyContin at medical conferences in 1996, which doctors could hand out to patients for free 30-day trials.⁵ The number of OxyContin prescriptions written annually skyrocketed to over six million per year by 2002.⁶ Purdue Pharma was making billions of dollars in profit through these efforts by downplaying the highly addictive nature of OxyContin, or by claiming that the drug was not addictive at all.^{7,8} Today, between 21 and 29 percent of patients misuse the opioids they are prescribed, with four to six percent moving on to heroin abuse.⁹ Almost 80 percent of heroin users admit to having started by abusing prescription opioids.¹⁰ The current crisis is nationwide, but Appalachia has been hit hardest. Within that region, one state stands out as the 'ground zero of opioid addiction' – West Virginia (WV).

West Virginia straddles a few different regions of the U.S. In the northwest, a slim section of the state divides Ohio from Pennsylvania between the major 'rust belt' cities of Pittsburgh and Cleveland. The Eastern Panhandle is under 75 miles from Washington, DC. In the southeast, it borders rural Virginia, and to the southwest, it frames the famous coal-mining counties of eastern Kentucky. West Virginia is the only state to be entirely encompassed by the geographical, cultural, and social region of the United States known as Appalachia. Deep in coal country, large-scale mining operations shaped the state's economy from its formation during the American Civil War.¹¹ Previously a part of the state of Virginia, the mountainous terrain of the region did not lend itself to the plantation economy of the rest of Virginia. The area that became West Virginia did not want to secede from the Union over the issue of slavery, at least in part because of this economic diversity.¹² When Virginia seceded from the Union, West Virginia did not follow. Instead, it broke away to form an independent state.¹³ Today, the mining

industry still exists, but has significantly declined. The supposed 'war on coal' promoting sustainable energy, along with decreased demand from China has left major coal companies struggling.¹⁴

Coal mining built the West Virginian economy, and the whole state was impacted by the industry's decline. Many of the most lucrative areas for mining were remote and unsettled areas, which means coal companies built company towns throughout the state to staff their operations.¹⁵ With coal's relevance declining, these towns have little else driving them. McDowell County, in West Virginia, produced the most coal in the entire state during its heyday. It is also West Virginia's poorest county since the days of JFK.¹⁶ It was there that the first qualifying Americans received food stamps, and where President Lyndon B. Johnson declared the 'war on poverty.'¹⁷ Even nation-wide welfare initiatives have not spared the county, and extreme poverty persists. Between 2009 and 2013, the poverty rate in McDowell County was 36.3 percent, with the county median household income for the same time being a mere \$22,252, or about \$20,000 less than the median household income found across the state, and \$30,000 less than the national average.^{18, 19}

Not only are counties like McDowell reeling as the United States moves away from coal, they also continue to struggle with economic diversification due to lack of technological infrastructure. America's 'Information Age' has bypassed the entire Appalachian region, and as a result, the modern economy of the area is suffering.²⁰ The lack of access to high-speed internet in the area echoes the Great Depression, during which time Appalachians were only able to access electricity and telephone service after President Franklin D. Roosevelt made the issue a priority under the New Deal.²¹ Today, as the United States becomes a country of start-ups and other service-based outfits, Appalachia is once again lagging behind. From 1996 to 2000, tech-sector job growth reached 53 percent, country-wide, but in Appalachia, that figure was less than half that – only 21 percent.²² Most other industries are increasingly reliant on digital communications, to which the Appalachian region has poor access. This ripple effect also hurts young people in the region, who do not have access to electronic educational resources in public schools.²³ In 2001, the Appalachian Regional Commission reported that of West Virginia's 55 counties, only three were home to DSL Telephone companies' central offices.²⁴ Three other counties were the only ones to have cable modem service.²⁵ As such, formerly coal-exclusive economies such as that of McDowell County have been left not only with few alternatives for jobs, but with few people who would be qualified to work in any other field.

All of this makes West Virginia predisposed to the effects of the opioid epidemic. The economic despair found in the area can quickly become systemic, and some residents begin to self-medicate in order to cope. Considering the drastic physical toll of coal mining, it is not hard to believe that the region has seen its fair share of residents seeking relief from chronic pain. Couple this with the state's lack of mental health services, and it becomes a perfect storm.²⁶ Many young people feel they

have few educational or career opportunities in their communities, and even fewer opportunities for leaving the region. This hopelessness can lead some to drug abuse. These days, when anyone under 60 dies, many obituaries in local newspapers do not list the cause of death. They don't need to. It is almost always an overdose.²⁷ West Virginia is unique in that it is a state that has a public burial fund for residents who could not otherwise afford funeral costs.²⁸ The fact that baby boomers are now starting to die has put this program under some stress recently, but with the state seeing so many premature deaths from opioid addiction, the program has run out of funding every year for the past five years.²⁹

In the fall of 2016, people across the U.S. were shocked when the police department of East Liverpool, Ohio released a photograph on social media of a West Virginian couple passed out in the front seat of their van from an overdose while their child sat in the backseat, just across the Ohio River from the West Virginia cities of Weirton and Wheeling. The police department in East Liverpool defended their decision to post such a photo, saying that they were trying to raise awareness of what had become an almost-daily occurrence for their officers.³⁰ Similarly, police in the town of Martinsburg, WV have reported responding to calls from children as young as five trying to revive their parents who had passed out in front of them.³¹ Infants are frequently born addicted and undergo withdrawal in neo-natal intensive care units for their first few weeks of life, often in extreme pain.³² The number of children being raised by someone other than their biological parents has also grown as the opioid crisis worsens, owing to the death of addicted parents or parental custody loss.³³ In any case of the placement of a child in foster care, the goal is to reunite parents and children as soon as possible, however, in cases of child removal because of parental addiction, reunions happen in fewer than 25 percent cases in the state.³⁴

As West Virginia is at an economic and social crossroads, its political landscape has also changed. Once a deeply Democratic state with a strong commitment to unions and to the social reform policies of FDR and JFK, it has voted for the Republican presidential nominee in every election since 2000.³⁵ Former Senator Jay Rockefeller, great-grandson of oil tycoon John D. Rockefeller, was a longtime Democratic senator for West Virginia until his retirement in 2014.³⁶ Today, West Virginia's senators are moderate Democrat Joe Manchin, and Republican Shelly Moore Capito. Governor Jim Justice, who won election in 2016 as a Democrat announced in summer 2017 that he was switching parties to become a Republican.³⁷

In the 2016 presidential election, Donald Trump won the state with 67 percent of the vote. Trump was pro-coal, which meant other issues hardly mattered. Now, as President, his plans to dismantle Obamacare could leave the state as one of the most vulnerable, with a projected 184 thousand West Virginians losing health insurance, along with a potential loss of 16 thousand jobs by 2019 and a revenue decrease of \$350 million over five years.³⁸ In a state struggling so heavily with an addiction crisis, having insurance is literally a matter of life and death. Narcan, a drug meant to reverse the effects of an overdose costs only a few dollars for someone with Medicaid or private insurance. For someone without coverage, it could cost hundreds.³⁹ The privately insured have access to rehabilitation facilities anywhere in the country, but with a population largely dependent on Medicaid or without any insurance at all, many West Virginians do not have the option to get clean.⁴⁰ A doctor in Martinsburg has begun hosting free classes on administering Narcan which can save time and lives, eliminating the need to wait for someone to be transported to the hospital in order to be treated for an overdose. While this is surely helpful, it unfortunately may not be enough. Part of the problem with addiction is the two-front approach needed to combat it. Current opioid addicts need treatment to get clean, but people must

be educated on the dangers of addiction to prevent further cases of substance abuse before they start. Given the scope of the current opioid crisis, new approaches to education and treatment may be required. Otherwise, the worst public health crisis in American history will continue to spiral out of control.

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Exit Pursued by the Bear: How Political Polarisation is Driving Californian Secessionist Movements, and why it is consequential

LINUS YOUNGER explains how America's growing political divisions inspire secessionist groups to campaign for the political dissolution of California or its ties to the Union, and how this link has serious domestic and geopolitical ramifications.

Though the idea of secession in California is hardly a new one,¹ it appears to have picked up considerable steam in the past few years, especially in the wake of the 2016 election. A 2017 poll conducted by Reuters/Ipsos found that 32 percent of Californians would support California's secession from the United States (U.S.), a twelve percent increase from a similar poll conducted in 2014.² However, groups that campaign for the division or independence of California face significant difficulties in achieving their goal. Ultimately, the prospect of a fragmented or independent California is a very unlikely one. However, secessionist groups in California should not be dismissed out-of-hand. California's secessionist movements bear considering because they demonstrate a link between the rise of political polarisation and the rise of secessionist sentiments. This suggests that political polarisation does not impact the sense of unity on a merely superficial level: it has the potential to inspire secessionist groups to actively campaign for the concrete dissolution of states and the Union itself. Finally, because these secessionist groups can potentially be exploited or supported by foreign states, the case of California demonstrates that America's domestic political divide has serious geopolitical ramifications as well.

It is important to note that the composition of secessionist movements in California is diverse; there is no single, dominant pro-independence movement in the state. Rather, California's secessionist groups can roughly be divided into two different types: the first type consists of those who campaign for independence from California, but not for independence from the United States. The second type consists of those who campaign for California's entire secession from the U.S. a proposition dubbed by many as 'Calexit'.³ These two forms of Californian secessionism differ greatly from each other in many ways, be it their background, base of support, assets, or political agenda.

The former type consists of fiscally and socially conservative rural citizens who wish to secede from what they see as an urban, liberal state that does not represent their interests or values. The group representing

the so-called state of 'Jefferson,' for instance, justifies their movement to secede from California with the belief that they are underrepresented in the state and national legislatures compared to the Los Angeles and San Francisco Bay areas. They also resent the state legislature establishing what they see as high tax rates and excessive regulation, which undermine the free-market.⁴ They have also criticised the state for providing services to undocumented immigrants.⁵ A similar group called 'New California' garnered attention in the press for claiming independence from California and establishing a new state in California's rural territories, similarly justifying their 'secession' by arguing that California's fiscally liberal policies have left the state 'ungovernable.'⁶ The group also includes in its grievances the belief that both legal and illegal immigration, specifically from Latin America and Asia, negatively affect the state's inhabitants, while also claiming that living in the state was difficult due to Californians' historical support of the Democratic Party in elections.⁷

The latter type consists of those groups that advocate for California's entire secession from the United States. One of these groups is 'Yes California,' a group that generated considerable attention from the press, after launching a campaign to petition the state government for an independence referendum.⁸ Like the conservative groups, Yes California has justified its advocacy for secession on the basis that the government (in this case the national government) does not represent Californians' political, economic, and social values. They have also claimed that the Federal government's military, environmental, and fiscal policies endanger Californians.⁹ Another group campaigning for independence, the Californian National Party (CNP), possesses a similar progressive platform, and, like Yes California, claims that independence would allow California the autonomy from the U.S. it would need to pursue progressive policies.¹⁰ Yes California has also attempted to capitalise on grievances felt in the wake of the 2016 election and the inauguration of Donald Trump, to appeal to liberal Californians to support their cause. Marcus Ruiz Evans, the vice-president of Yes California, claimed that the election of Trump would ultimately be good for groups such as Yes California, as it would demonstrate to Californians how alien Washington D.C., and the rest of the United States, are from California.¹¹ Essentially, secessionist groups in this category, though they differ greatly from the former category in their political views, possess a similar goal of independence from what they see as a government that does not represent their political, economic, and social values.

Though there are many active secessionist groups in California, the secession or fragmentation of California is certainly not a foregone conclusion. In fact, the odds of success are ultimately unlikely for several reasons. Though polls such as the earlier mentioned Reuters/Ipsos poll noted a significant amount of support for Californian independence, they do not yet indicate that a majority of Californians desire secession.¹² There is also no clear legal path for how California could actually secede, nor is there any clear legal path for secession of almost any kind (a fact quite aptly demonstrated by the American Civil War).¹³ Considering the apparent futility of secession efforts in California, why are they worth considering?

They are worth considering because the aforementioned secessionist groups are emblematic and symptomatic of a much greater concern for most Americans: political polarisation. A USC study found that political polarisation in the U.S. is at its highest level since the American Civil War.¹⁴ Another study, meanwhile, found California to be the most politically polarised state in the entirety of the U.S.¹⁵ Several scholars have argued that the presence of such polarisation, and politically polarising events, can create a rise of separatist sentiments. Jason Sorens of Dartmouth College, for instance, notes that growing feelings

of antipathy between party members can cause citizens of a state to deeply distrust a government which is led by an opposing party and feel they are underrepresented in the nation, increasing the desire of that state's citizens to secede. He also notes that secession would have been considerably less likely in the mid-20th century because there was considerably less political tension.¹⁶ Meanwhile, other experts argue that, while an atmosphere of political division might not directly inspire secessionism, it creates an environment where citizens will respond more radically, and will be more likely to favour secessionism, in the aftermath of unfavourable political outcomes. Guezlo and Hulme of Gettysburg College argue that this is the case in present-day California, where the major victories of the Republicans in the 2016 election caused a surge in support for Calexit, an outcome they compare to the South's reaction to the election of Lincoln in 1860.¹⁷ Lee Drutman, of the New America think tank, argues that the removal of Trump in 2020 could potentially trigger a similar reaction in deeply conservative states, though as in the case of California, success would be unlikely.¹⁸ Considering these conclusions, it is arguable that California's secessionist groups are a direct result of America's great political divide. After all, groups such as Yes California, the CNP, New California, and the 'state' of Jefferson all are politically driven, whose rhetoric and manifestos largely try to appeal to politically similar citizens by attacking politicians, citizens, districts, or states on the opposite side of the political spectrum. The State of Jefferson movement argues that they are underrepresented, as conservatives, in what they see as a predominantly progressive state.¹⁹ Similarly, Yes California argues that they are underrepresented as progressives, in what they see as a predominantly conservative country.²⁰ It is also of relevance to note just how distinct California's secessionist movements are from secessionist movements elsewhere, such as those in Europe: pro-independence groups in Scotland or Catalonia, for example, are driven partly by feelings of possessing a distinct national identity. Similarly, Rogers Brubaker, a scholar on European nationalism, argues secessionist groups in Eastern Europe arose partly because minority groups did not desire to live in a particular state and felt an 'ethno-cultural affinity' to a different homeland.²¹ Unlike those in Europe however, movements in California do not want to secede because they feel Californian or 'Jeffersonian,' and based on the ethnic, cultural, and political diversity of California (and its secessionist movements), the existence of an 'ethno-cultural affinity' for the state is unlikely to exist either. Instead, California's secessionist groups are clearly motivated by their strong sense of political identity – as opposed to an ethnic, national, or cultural identity – and wish for that political identity to be the dominant one in their state. The extremely politically charged nature of secessionism in the western U.S. mirrors the extreme political polarisation of American society as a whole, and demonstrates, if not causation, then a strong correlation between societal polarisation and rising secessionist sentiments.

As a result, California's secessionist movements are also worth considering because they demonstrate the potential geopolitical ramifications of Californian secessionism, and by extension, political polarisation, with these geopolitical ramifications being the exploitation or covert support of U.S. secessionist movements by foreign states. The case of Yes California demonstrates such a phenomenon. The group that aimed to gather petitions for a Californian independence referendum by appealing to the considerable percentage of Californians that supported secession was confronted by scandal when it was discovered that one of its leaders had links with the Russian government.^{22,23} Both the San Diego Union-Tribune and BBC reported cases of Russian Twitter accounts or Russian Twitter 'bots' encouraging Californian independence.^{24, 25} Further, it was discovered that Yes California's leading members had recently attended a conference in Moscow on the topic of Californian

independence, and had even opened an unofficial Californian ‘embassy’ in the city as well.²⁶ In *The Atlantic*, Conor Friersdorf argued that the group’s ties to Russia were especially suspicious because the group’s leading members, Louis Marinelli and Marcus Ruiz Evans, despite their recent use of anti-conservative rhetoric, had been registered Republicans at the time of the group’s foundation.²⁷ Friersdorf also points out that Marinelli, at one point, had spent more of his life in Russia than he had in California.²⁸ Ultimately, the scandals forced Yes California to suspend its signature-gathering campaign, even though it continues to operate. The group gained a reputation, as the rival CNP put it, of being ‘a Russian puppet organisation.’²⁹ The case of Yes California’s links to the Kremlin demonstrates the potential geopolitical consequences of U.S. secessionism, and arguably by extension, political polarisation. Russia’s support of Yes California demonstrates that such independence movements can represent somewhat of a geopolitical vulnerability for the U.S. government: they can be exploited and supported by rival states for the purposes of undermining the U.S. Further, if the rise of secessionist sentiments can be linked to the rise of political polarisation, the case of Yes California arguably demonstrates that political polarisation itself thus has the potential to create serious geopolitical consequences.

To conclude, the case of California demonstrates that there is a strong correlation in America between political polarisation and the rise of secessionist sentiments, and also demonstrates that those sentiments have the potential to be exploited and supported by states hoping to undermine the U.S. on the world stage. Though California, in all likelihood, will remain a part of the Union, for the time being, these are still important lessons that the U.S. should learn, if political polarisation continues to divide the country.

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Profile: Tarana Burke

SAM COOPER-PHILLIPS considers the evolution of the ‘Me Too’ movement and the vision of Tarana Burke, who popularised the phrase.

The phrase ‘Me Too’ burst forth from the internet and into the public eye in the weeks following the revelations of Harvey Weinstein’s record of sexual abuse.¹ The phrase, disseminated through the world as a hashtag on Twitter, crossed the boundary into print media and network news after its message was shared by actress Alyssa Milano on 15 October 2017.² Although propelled to the fore of cultural discussions in America and beyond by the spotlight of Hollywood starlets, the movement did not originate as a hashtag. The first trickle of the ‘Me Too’ phenomenon originated with Tarana Burke, a 44-year-old activist from the Bronx.³ The #MeToo movement drew on Ms. Burke’s decades of work and sprouted from her general ethos of support for victims of sexual abuse and harassment, but – as Ms. Burke herself acknowledged – the movement is not under her control,⁴ and her vision of ‘Me Too’ is at risk of drowning in the wider movement.

The #MeToo movement has attracted a substantial amount of praise and criticism in the months since its appearance. The furor around Weinstein has been eclipsed by a wave of scandals, and the hashtag has been integral to the dismissal, public shaming, and legal action levelled against scores of sexual predators at the top echelons of entertainment.⁵ The breadth of the movement has touched not

only popular entertainment, but also the conductors of opera halls and renowned ballet dancers.⁶ In a movement that covers everything from rape accusations to discomfort over workplace dating, many have worried that these acts are somehow equated in the campaign against sexual harassment.⁷ Accompanying this are fears that the expository nature of the movement has the potential to mutate into a ‘warlock hunt.’⁸ Other columnists speculate that the hashtag marks a watershed turn towards the establishment of ‘affirmative consent’ – where all romantic and sexual interactions, from holding hands onward, requires explicit verbal consent – as a new cultural norm, to the consternation of most of the movement’s supporters.⁹ As these discussions play out in the media, the differences between the #MeToo movement and the ‘Me Too’ vision of Tarana Burke become important.

Ms. Burke coined the phrase ‘Me Too’ as the mantra of a movement following her experience working at a charity youth camp in Selma, Alabama, in the late 1990s.¹⁰ She recalls when ‘Heaven’ – a pseudonym for a thirteen-year-old girl at the camp – told her about the sexual abuse she suffered at the hands of her mother’s boyfriend, Ms. Burke cut her off and directed her to another camp counsellor.¹¹ For Ms. Burke, herself a victim of childhood molestation,¹² this is a moment of deep regret. More than anything, she wishes she could have supported Heaven and told her she was not alone; she wishes she could have said, ‘me too.’¹³ This personal moment inspired Ms. Burke to found a not-for-profit organisation, originally called Just Be Inc. and renamed Me Too in 2007, dedicated to giving support to victims of sexual abuse and helping those victims heal from traumatic experiences.¹⁴ For Ms. Burke, the phrase and its associated social movement have always been focused on community healing, with survivors supporting each other and dispelling the shame that often accompanies sexual violence and harassment.¹⁵ This is the core element of Ms. Burke’s vision that risks being lost. Her first reaction to seeing the phrase trending on Twitter was, in fact, panic and fear that her coined phrase would be used in some project that puts pressure on women to reveal experiences they were uncomfortable sharing.¹⁶ This has since calmed and Ms. Burke overall feels that the hashtag has been good for her movement’s goals.¹⁷ Its tremendous, viral popularity has allowed more women than ever before to realise how wide the community of fellow survivors is; Ms. Burke believes that knowing this network exists is important for many survivors of abuse, so that they know they are not alone.¹⁸

Despite the initial alleviation of Ms. Burke’s fears, the current trajectory of the #MeToo movement is set deviate significantly from the course of healing and support set by Ms. Burke. While, like every mass movement and especially those spawned online, it contains multifarious tendencies, the core sentiment of the hashtag would appear to be holding abusers, especially men of privilege, accountable for their past actions through public outing and retribution. For Ms. Burke and others, this was never the point of the movement. For one, this prosecutorial focus is centred on the abuser, with the abused becoming mere anonymous shadows and whispers circulating through cable news and online blogs.¹⁹ The approach of ‘Me Too’ under Ms. Burke was to prioritise the voices and experiences of the abused, particularly individuals of a minority status, who are typically ignored.²⁰ Although exacting justice, whatever that may be, is an important part of Ms. Burke’s approach, it cannot consume the conversation.²¹ She reiterates, if exposing an abuser and signalling support online is the end of the ‘Me Too’ movement, then it has failed those who still struggle with their experiences of sexual abuse and harassment.²² The success of #MeToo has been its ability to support victims of sexual abuse by letting them know that they are not alone, but this is a fairly limited degree of support. Ms. Burke would like to see the focus of the current online campaign – exposure of the

scope of sexual harassment in all societies and the staggering number of those impacted by it – as the first step in giving support to those abused. As she points out, there are a plethora of opportunities to help victims: manning support phone lines, volunteering, reaching out to friends affected by abuse. The campaign needs to remain active and expand to these methods, so that healing engendered by the movement can be as far-reaching as the phrase itself.²³

Making sure that Ms. Burke's message of radical community healing stays embedded in the phrase 'Me Too', even as it mutates and transforms in cyberspace, is important for the impact the movement has the potential to make in American society and abroad. The other side of #MeToo, which drove Louis Székely from the stage and Lorin Stein from his office, is inherently limited and restrictive. A 'Me Too' movement focusing on prosecution or retribution against abusers would fail the abused on three counts: it would be restricted to a certain class of women, it would become legalistic and demand a parsing out of evidence, and it would fail to provide healing to victims. Even if all the accusations made were instantly and uncritically accepted, and the response was always to remove the abuser from power, this recourse would still only be available to women, primarily white women, of the middle and upper managerial class.²⁴ Ms. Burke advocates for the support of anyone, regardless of race, creed, class, location, gender, or ability.²⁵ As a Black woman, Tarana Burke is herself a minority within the feminist movement, and actively seeks to expand her discussions to include and incorporate the experiences of forgotten and overlooked groups.²⁶ To have 'Me Too' crystallise into a movement unable of addressing the needs of working class women, especially Black and brown women, would be a betrayal of the intersectional and inclusive vision of Ms. Burke. When the phrase 'Me Too' can encompass everything from inappropriate flirting to sexual assault, defining terms becomes important. This has led some women to be cautious participating in the movement, unsure whether rude catcalls can stand next to allegations of rape or molestation.²⁷ However, Ms. Burke says, trauma is trauma, regardless of whether its source is verbal or physical.²⁸ What Ms. Burke brings to the movement is the dissolution of the culture of shame and silence that pervades sexual abuse. In the coming months, and perhaps years, as the 'Me Too' movement develops, it is important that the ideas and ethos of Tarana Burke are not lost. The removal of every serial abuser from positions of power may be unrealisable, but within the movement there is still room for the vision of Ms. Burke to provide healing and support, and a moment for someone to say, 'me too'.

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As we observe the dissolution of old norms and international rules, frameworks perceived to be secure and unwavering are being challenged by new actors and developments. This gives rise to questions around the stability of the current international order, sometimes threatening established regimes. Changing dynamics mean a shift in the way we perceive International Relations, causing adjustments to the way we write about politics in the international sphere. While international in scope, many of these changes have impacts on regional structures and intra-regional

trade relations. Peter Catterall's piece looks into the ramifications of waning US influence in the Asia-Pacific region, especially concerning its withdrawal from the Trans-Pacific Partnership.

Though dissolution is often associated with destruction, the reversal of progress, and uncertainty, it can also be a source for innovation and progress. Orson Gard explores how to reconcile traditional notions of development through economic growth with a broadening development agenda. Questioning the social and economic development dichotomy, the Holistic Development Strategy he writes on offers a more complex and inclusive alternative.

What Debate? The Case for a Holistic Development Strategy

ORSON GARD examines the arguments surrounding the Holistic Development Strategy.

Historically, the literature on development has suggested that there exists a long-term interest in the relationship between social and economic progress as a means of enhancing human wellbeing. A United Nations research paper from 1965, compiled just two years after the founding of the United Nations Research Institute for Social Development (UNRISD), concluded that 'a rational development policy must be able to look at [economic and social development] as a single entity,'¹ illustrating the desire to promote a holistic development policy. Nevertheless, the academic literature produced in the following decades suggests a divergence between the social and the economic, with some claiming that the two are unrelated phenomena,² or that one must necessarily precede the other.^{3,4}

Dambisa Moyo, a respected Zambian economist and policy analyst, has contributed to this divergence with her views regarding economic growth and poverty reduction. Her 2013 speech at *TEDGlobal* in Edinburgh neatly summarised her opinion that economic growth should be pursued at the expense of civil liberties,⁵ a view that should be rebuked by contemporaries considering her eminence in the field of developmental economics and subsequent influence in the sphere of public policy. Indeed, although she claims to support the implementation of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs),⁶ targets which go some way to harmonising social and economic objectives, her piece on the matter focusses solely on economic issues.⁷ By asserting without qualification that 'we should all care about redressing all manner of issues plaguing economic growth and placing continual human progress at risk,'⁸ Moyo is blurring the line between economic growth and human development.

In his book *Development as Freedom*, Amartya Sen attempts to dissolve the boundary between the economic and social that has characterised debate in the literature by expressing development as an expansion of freedoms – both positive and negative.⁹ He advocates for the reorientation of development goals from purely materialistic objectives (the expansion of GDP, for example) to the augmentation of freedoms, such as the freedom to work, to access healthcare and to receive an education to shield oneself from illiteracy.¹⁰ By positioning freedom as the defining concept of his thesis, Sen transcends pre-existing debates that tend to perceive economic and social development as competing objectives.

Democracy and good governance are fundamental in ensuring that

the benefits of economic growth are distributed equally, promoting income development in the long-term. Recent research on the matter has looked at the value of 'social capital' in developing nations – the way in which societal relations interact to promote or hinder development.¹¹ Staveren and Knorringa noted that 'undemocratic tendencies' tend to exacerbate pre-existing power asymmetries within society, promoting policies and corrupt practices that entrench income inequality, ultimately reducing the role of economic growth to the poverty reduction process.¹²

Moyo attempted to dismantle the 'democracy as pro-growth thesis' in her 2009 book *Dead Aid*, claiming that 'aid-funded democracy does not guard against a government bent on altering property rights for its own benefit' and even going so far as to claim that democracy can hamper development by promoting policies that would be detrimental to economic growth.¹³ Inevitably, one questions what policies Moyo suggests should be sacrificed to promote growth. In the short-term, actions converse to human development such as a lowering of labour rights would certainly augment aggregate output, but with little positive impact for those in poverty whom Moyo claims would benefit from such growth. Furthermore, research on the relationship between good governance and aid effectiveness has consistently shown that countries with strong policy development processes, characterised by high levels of democratisation, allocate aid funds in a manner which has a more meaningful impact on poverty reduction.¹⁴

India, the world's largest democracy,¹⁵ has huge potential in this sense were it not for the economic and social barriers that prevent individuals from fully participating in the democratic process. Indeed, it is argued that the erosion of such hindrances would accelerate India's development by imbuing societal elites with the political will to enact progressive social policies.¹⁶ Jean Drèze sees the dysfunctionality of India's democracy as a key reason as to why the country's malnutrition crisis has persisted, yet still advocates that democracy is the ultimate 'form and method of government whereby revolutionary changes in the economic and social life of the people are brought about without bloodshed'.¹⁷ In other words, the key to poverty alleviation in the world's largest democracy is the enhancement of its liberal institutions and the fundamental right of citizens to participate in the governance of the nation.

Essentially, to understand the issue regarding economic growth one must grasp that although national progress is partly contingent upon economic expansion, such growth does not always secure development.¹⁸ It is this paradox that defines the problem that has plagued policy-makers, and which must be subsequently addressed to ensure the benefits of economic growth are shared equitably. Accordingly, the key to successful development policy design lies in strengthening the link between economic growth and the broader concept of development – a connection characterised by the expansion of social and political rights.

Nevertheless, the promotion of such rights must not preclude

the intrinsic importance of economic growth in the development process, nor should they be seen as a mere means to such growth. As has been aforementioned, expanding and protecting basic provisions such as education, healthcare and the right of citizens to participate in governance should be a policy aim in and of itself, alongside the promotion of economic growth. The dichotomous argument that growth precedes social rights, or vice versa, denies the understanding that both processes facilitate one another, contributing to a sustainable developmental symbiosis.

Case Study: Education Reform in Pakistan

Recent education reforms in Pakistan illustrate the extent to which social policy can meaningfully impact human wellbeing, adding weight to the view that social development is of equal importance for progressing human development. For many years, young people in Pakistan had been robbed of their potential by a system plagued by corruption and patronage.¹⁹ As noted by an influential report on the issue, this has severely impacted Pakistan's development trajectory in multiple ways; poor educational standards not only impact the ability of young people to access meaningful employment, they also perpetuate the pre-existing problem of militant terrorism which has undoubtedly hindered socio-economic progress in the long-term.²⁰

Yet the report, published by the Wilson Centre's Asia Programme, did not seek to merely highlight the prevalence of poor educational standards in Pakistan. Instead, it sought to redress the narrative on how the issue should be approached and, in doing so, promoted the view that increased public spending does not automatically translate into improved attainment.²¹ Thus, the argument that rapid economic growth reliably accelerates social development was somewhat dismissed, despite the increased capital spending that growth can sustain. This is compounded by the revelation that upwards of 87 percent of education expenditure in Pakistan is devoted to teacher salaries,²² symptomatic of a bloated staffing system and of the corruption that is rife within the profession.

Indeed, the report and subsequent reforms focussed primarily on restructuring the Pakistani education system, rather than augmenting pre-existing issues through increased funding. *The Economist* recently characterised the changes as the 'most frenetic education reforms in the world',²³ highlighting the paradigmatic shift in provision from the public to the private sector in an attempt to make spending more accountable. Coupled with a 'results driven' approach taken by reformers,²⁴ local authorities hope this contributes to a necessary transformation of Pakistan's educational prospects.

In relation to recent academic debates, this case goes some way in promoting Sen's notion that social freedoms can facilitate economic growth.²⁵ At the most basic level, increased literacy rates will enable young people to seek better paid jobs, attract foreign direct investment, and help to grow the national economy in a more equitable manner. Yet the impact of education on the wellbeing of the individual, regardless of subsequent economic impacts, are as equal a justification for the promotion of such policies.

Moyo claimed in 2015 that 'economic growth is the defining challenge of our time'.²⁶ But in nations across the world where rapid growth has not translated into meaningful improvements in human wellbeing, it is increasingly vital to see development as a holistic process encompassing economic, social and political progress. For human wellbeing is not merely characterised by income, but by the wealth of opportunities afforded to individuals and the benefits this provides for society as a whole.²⁷

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Trans-Pacific Trade Relations: A Breakdown of International Economic Governance?

PETER CATTERALL assesses the shifting undercurrents shaping 21st century trade relations through an analysis of notable actions taken recently by a range of actors across the Pacific Rim.

With the stroke of a pen on 23rd January 2017, President Trump fulfilled one of his major campaign pledges by ordering the immediate withdrawal of the United States from the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP),¹ a proposed multilateral free trade agreement that stood to shape regional and indeed global economic activity for decades to come. The move jolted business and political leaders around the world.² The future of the deal appeared bleak. One year later, however, the eleven remaining countries have agreed to go forward with a revised agreement – the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP) – which will not include the US and which all parties will formally ratify in March 2018.³

The deal was not just about trade. For the Obama Administration and other Western actors, the TPP represented a powerful tool to be deployed within the larger effort to counterbalance perceived geopolitical threats that accompany the rapid rise of China.⁴ The Trump Administration's apparent dismissal of this secondary but fundamental political motive for the trade deal fits into a larger narrative of current affairs in the region, marked by the receding presence of American leadership and the simultaneous ascent of an increasingly powerful and assertive China.⁵ As exhibited by vast infrastructure proposals that will span the continent and beyond, as well as a more robust foreign policy and investment initiatives, the Chinese government stands to play a much more active role in both regional and global affairs.⁶

To determine whether these recent changes truly represent a breakdown of trade relations in the Asia-Pacific, it is necessary to trace the development of Trans-Pacific economic relations over the past several decades. From the 1950s through the 1980s, observers witnessed a post-war 'economic miracle' in Japan. The Japanese economy surged and became the second biggest in the world. At the same time, 'East Asian Tiger economies' – Hong Kong, Singapore, South Korea and Taiwan – emerged.⁷ It was not until the 1980s economic reforms under Deng Xiaoping, and the country's accession to the World Trade Organisation (WTO) in 2001, that China began to rise to the status of economic power in the Pacific Region. It is now the world's largest economy based on Purchasing Power Parity (PPP).⁸

The model of growth that East Asian economies employed shared several important structural features. The rapid economic expansion and advances in human development experienced by these countries were enabled by a combination of industrialisation, state investment in domestic infrastructure and education, and a massive increase in exports.⁹ Crucially, this development strategy depended on a liberalised arrangement of global commerce that would limit trade barriers and allow for the efficient exchange of capital across borders. Secondly, the presence of a foreign buyer or set of buyers willing to accumulate large trade deficits through the sustained purchase of goods produced abroad at a comparatively low cost.¹⁰ The United States played a major role in establishing both criteria through setting up a system of international

institutions to promote free trade and assist developing economies, as well as through serving as the primary external market for goods produced in Asia.¹¹

The close economic relationship that emerged between the United States and East Asia was influenced and motivated by a parallel pattern of military alliances between the blocs.¹² Within the context of the Cold War, the U.S. adopted an explicit strategy of forging economic partnerships with countries around the world that would also allow for the expansion of American military presence at the international level.¹³ To date, the U.S. has over 23,000 troops stationed in South Korea – its largest military presence in any Asian country.¹⁴ For the U.S., the ability to expand its hard power around the globe is largely contingent upon the opening of its markets to foreign goods, often through negotiating wide-ranging bilateral or multilateral trade deals.¹⁵ There have been a number of economic and political alliances that include provisions for trade regulation as well as collective security, such as Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC).¹⁶ The role of multilateral institutions has thus been instrumental in the economic revitalisation and securitisation that has taken place within East Asia over the past few decades.

The present question has to do with whether or not the United States is in fact receding from its once central role in arranging and promoting economic activity across the region, creating what one commentator has referred to as a ‘gaping hole in global economic governance’.¹⁷ There are a number of signs to suggest this is the case. One of the most obvious signals is the aforementioned withdrawal of the U.S. from the TPP as one of the Trump Administration’s first acts in office.¹⁸ Furthermore, the administration expressed intentions in April 2017 to reopen negotiations or even dissolve the United States–Korea Free Trade Agreement (KORUS FTA), an expansive bilateral trade agreement between the U.S. and South Korea.¹⁹ These moves could be seen as a geopolitical victory for China, which stood to lose out from enhanced economic relationships between the U.S. and other East Asian countries. However, the Trump Administration has also taken on a far more aggressive tone towards the Chinese government, accusing it of deliberately undervaluing its currency in order to ensure the continued success of its exports in foreign markets.²⁰ American officials have refrained so far from implementing punitive measures towards China, but there is a rising concern within the global financial community about the possibility of a trade war between the world’s two largest economies.²¹

In 2017, the United States has also introduced new tariffs and penalties on imports as part of the current administration’s ‘America First’ strategy.²² In January 2018, President Trump approved a hike in duties and protections against the import of solar panels and washing machines, which will undoubtedly significantly impact China and South Korea, in addition to a number of other producers in the region and beyond.²³ These measures represent the first major changes to American import regulation under the Trump Administration. However, recently concluded investigations into alleged Chinese theft of foreign intellectual property as well as the negative impact of steel and aluminium imports have prompted rumours of a forthcoming wave of tariffs and duties directed at China.²⁴ The United States has also imposed tighter sanctions on Chinese and North Korean firms in an attempt to put pressure on Pyongyang following repeated nuclear tests and threats.²⁵ Collectively, these new regulations stemming from the America First approach of the Trump Administration suggest a reconsideration of America’s once steadfast support for liberal free-market economics in the Asia-Pacific.

Apart from recent decisions made by American policymakers, there are reasons to believe that the decline of U.S. influence in trade relations

within the Asia-Pacific is largely due to factors beyond its control – that shifting realities in global politics and economics have already cemented the end to American regional leadership. First, the vast amount of American currency that has accumulated as reserves in the central banks of many East Asian countries is sustainable only insofar as the dollar can continue to enjoy the stability and universal credibility that enabled its global reach in the first place.²⁶ Current trends could see the Chinese yuan gradually acquiring a comparative advantage over the dollar in terms of attracting foreign investment from private actors and its usage in storing public wealth in central banks.²⁷ This scenario would provide incentives to countries within the Asia-Pacific region, and indeed around the world, to enhance their economic ties with China and weaken pulls for greater integration into American markets.

The Chinese government has also been playing an active role in the re-organisation of trade in the region. The One Belt One Road initiative, a major infrastructure strategy announced in 2013, has the potential to fundamentally transform communications, transport and trade across the Asian continent and would bolster China’s standing in international commerce.²⁸ The total cost of the project, once complete, is estimated to surpass one trillion U.S. dollars – over twelve times the size (in real dollar terms) of the Marshall Plan, the American investment initiative that sought to rebuild Europe after World War II.²⁹ New maritime trade routes in the Arctic region, which have been opened up due to receding ice caps as a result of global warming, are being actively pursued by the Chinese government as a more efficient means of shipping goods to foreign markets in Europe.³⁰ Furthermore, geopolitical confrontations in the South China Sea have seen Chinese officials adopting a more assertive and proactive posture in dealing with its neighbours.³¹ Overall, these patterns are testament to a general shift towards China as the new political and economic centre of the Asia-Pacific region.

There is reason to conclude, therefore, that trade relations in the Asia-Pacific are not in a state of dissolution. They are merely transforming: American political and economic leadership in the region is in decline, leaving a gaping vacuum of power in its wake. The fluctuations in economic governance could be stabilised by new hegemonic power such as China, with a proactive outward approach and a willingness to serve as the new regional leader. Enhancing multilateral forums such as ASEAN, as well as bilateral trade agreements could also fill the gap. For the near future, the U.S. and East Asia will continue to share close economic interconnectedness, but the shifting sands in global geopolitics and economics must be considered. It is in the interests of the international community that East Asia and the U.S. maintain a close and transparent relationship, but the precise nature of this relationship has yet to be defined.

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