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To usher in *Leviathan's* ninth year in publication, we have meticulously decided upon a relevant and striking theme for this issue: *Elite*. Societies, communities and structures have always revolved around a politics of power asymmetry, some more egalitarian than others, but almost all, in that Adorno-like sense, producing a system of domination. This number takes the Elites to task, examining how a body of structured superiority influences the world we live in, taking a look at those who use this pool of power to their advantage, towards a collective benefit and those who challenge the thrones of violence and exploitation.

Amongst the foremost entries this issue is Jacob Milburn's piece on the Maldives, discussing socioeconomic competition between China and India following the nation's recent elections. Seemingly a bureaucratic process, Milburn analyses the events as having the potential to upset a delicate balance of power, signalling a 'major reversal...with India standing to gain...at China's expense'. Continuing with material elitism, Lochlann Atack offers a multi-theoretical discussion regarding the Irish housing crisis, unveiling symptomatic issues and 'rightfully alarming expressions of inequality'. Such insights ring especially true in globalised economies dancing at the knife's edge between prosperity and uncertainty.

In North America, Kendal LeFlore tackles the recent Kavanaugh ruling head on, contextualising the controversy and its proceedings within a history of sexual assault allegations. The article highlights the similarity between the current Supreme Court Confirmation and Anita Hill's testimony in 1991 against Clarence Thomas. '...It is evident that power and privilege have not become

any less influential on the course of American history' writes LeFlore, directly confronting sexism in the United States. Aptly, Camilla Hallman's article takes this idea further and examines a cultural superstructure that enables elites to prosper within American politics, seeing if it could 'render the US an oligarchical democracy'.

The notion of division from within reaches its apex with Latin America in Conor Maclennan's piece on Peruvian Inco-Andean culture. The author goes in great detail to unmask the perceived egalitarianism and sincerity behind the indigenous cultural revival, and how it can be used to justify and not deliver from, domination. 'As the identity of the Quecha peoples has been stripped away... their old imperial capital can only be described as a city wearing its own skin'. Although elitism may seem to choke without respite, Valentin Pyataev reminds the political community of the importance of culture in discourse both as a form refuge and clarity. Using W.B. Yeats to describe the modern world, Pyataev implores a call to intellectual bravery, reminding readers that 'the unstoppable perpetuity...should [not] be accepted'.

Many more intriguing and captivating ideas await within this issue. With great excitement both I and the rest of the Executive Committee look forward to a prosperous year of political writing, full of challenging ideas and acerbic wit that will always be welcome here at *Leviathan*. I wish all the best to the Editorial Team, the Edinburgh Political Union, our comrades-in-arms in the publishing and politics community and to Barbara Wojazer, our former Editor-in-Chief, with whom our journal would not be the prestige publication it is today.

Leviathan hopes you enjoy reading this issue.



Profile: Joyce Banda

LYDIA DEFELICE discusses the impact of Joyce Banda's role as Malawi's first, and Africa's second, female president.

Joyce Banda served as president of Malawi from 2012 to 2014, during which time she made incredible economic and social progress for women. Malawi, formerly known as Nyasaland, achieved independence from Britain in 1964.¹ It is currently one of the poorest countries in the world, with 75 percent of people living on less than one dollar a day,² and 25 percent suffering extreme poverty.³ This may be attributed to a number of factors, including inadequate enforcement of policies, agricultural land degradation, low productivity, poor access to markets, high transport costs, and climate change.⁴ Accordingly, this shortage of resources has had severe consequences for women, something Banda recognised.

Poverty has been proven to have strong links to gender,⁵ and this phenomenon is only exacerbated because the ruling elite class of most African countries is dominated by men.⁶ When governments increase the percentage of women in their administrations, public goods more closely linked with women's concerns tend to be prioritised.⁷ This, in turn, improves overall development.⁸ While no administration has the capability to solve Malawi's economic struggles in one term, Joyce Banda's presidency shows distinct progress, unlike the administrations which came before and after her own.⁹ Her life experiences, her qualifications, and her priorities as a politician are unique compared to all other administrations in Malawian history, and world-

wide. She fought for women's rights, such as reproductive rights, maternal health, and girls' education, all of which are vital both in boosting Malawi's success as a state and distinguishing Banda from other African elites as a politician. Although her reign was ultimately plagued by a financial scandal – with no evidence against her¹⁰ – the impact she made is indisputable.¹¹

Unlike other politicians, Banda truly understands the situation of women in Malawi, due to her first-hand experiences.¹² In particular, her personal life played a major role in developing her political viewpoint. In 1981, Banda and her three children escaped her abusive husband.¹³ She told BBC, 'Most African women are taught to endure abusive marriages because they are not empowered economically.'¹⁴ This sent a crucial, necessary message to the girls and women in Malawi.¹⁵ She also experienced struggles with personal health.¹⁶ She almost died giving birth only three years after escaping her husband.¹⁷ Consequently, Banda dedicated her life to fighting for women's rights, reproductive rights, and maternal health.¹⁸ Even though many people think these experiences make her particularly qualified to serve the people of Malawi, Former First Lady Callista Mutharika declared that Malawi was not ready for a female president, especially not a common baker such as Banda.¹⁹ Banda rightly argued that this is the precise reason she is the best candidate for President

of Malawi, where 80 percent of women work in the private sector.²⁰

In addition to being relatable, Banda's qualifications for presidency are exceptional. Banda holds an MA in Leadership from the Royal Rhodes University of Canada, a BS in Gender Studies from Atlantic International University, and a diploma in NGO Management from the International Labour Organization (ILO) Centre in Italy.²¹ Not only that, but in 2013, Jeonju University of South Korea granted her an honorary doctorate degree in Economics, and then in 2015 Wheelock College awarded her an honorary doctorate degree in Education.²² All these qualifications aside, she has also held a variety of leadership roles in both private charitable organisations and the government.²³ In 1989, she founded the National Association of Business Women, a group that lends money to small-scale traders, helping those in rural areas.²⁴ Subsequently, she was awarded the United States-based Hunger Project's Africa Prize for Leadership for the Sustainable End of Hunger in 1997.²⁵ The award came with a prize of \$50,000, which Banda selflessly used to fund the Joyce Banda Foundation.²⁶ By 1999 Banda had won a seat in parliament.²⁷ She served first as the Minister of Gender and Child Welfare, then as Foreign Minister, and then as Vice President of Malawi.²⁸ Furthermore, she spearheaded the campaign for the Prevention of Domestic Violence Bill, which was passed in 2006.²⁹ With

all of this experience in hand, Banda was more than qualified to assume the presidency.

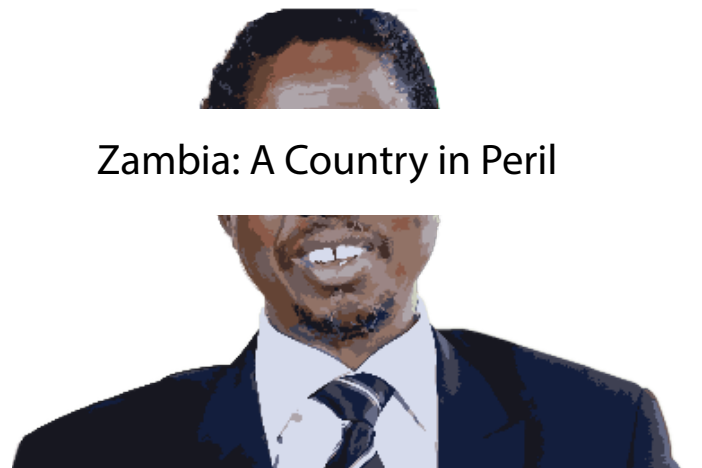
Banda's administration was committed to fighting corruption and serving only the people of Malawi, rather than the existing elite. After assuming office, Banda immediately dismissed Malawi's police chief, Peter Mukhito, who was accused of mishandling riots and causing the deaths of nineteen people.³⁰ In addition, she sold off a presidential jet worth \$15 million,³¹ cut her own salary by 30 percent,³² and disbanded her cabinet, which was rife with corruption scandals.³³ In 2014, *Forbes* magazine named her the 40th most powerful woman in the world.³⁴ These kind of self-sacrificing policies demonstrate her genuine interest in providing an honest, accountable government.

Not only did Banda fight elites' corruption, she made great strides to improve Malawi's economy. After devaluing Malawi's currency, a move former President Mutharika had refused to countenance,³⁵ the World Bank and the Millennium Challenge Corporation approved \$500 million in grants.³⁶ This was an outstanding success for Banda, considering the vast amount of aid on which Malawi depends.³⁷ As a result, in Banda's two-year term, the aggregate output growth rate rose from 1.8 to 6.2 percent.³⁸ She also repealed laws that weakened democratic institutions, infringed upon civil liberties, and restricted freedom of the press.³⁹ Banda also pushed for progress in maternal health, reducing the maternal mortality ratio from 675 per 100,000 live births to 460.⁴⁰ Some critics argue that her economic reforms hurt the average Malawian with rising prices,⁴¹ however, all these achievements still mark an outstanding presidency.

Sadly, a financial scandal, which came to be known as 'Cashgate', ended Banda's impressive term. The state of Malawi was ultimately defrauded of \$32 million dollars by a cyber attack.⁴² Hackers broke into the government software system and faked transactions until the budget allocation was finished.⁴³ Consequently, donors cut off aid, severely damaging development in Malawi, as aid makes up 40 percent of its budget.⁴⁴ Banda denied any responsibility and claimed the theft began before her term even started.⁴⁵ Regardless, the 'Cashgate' scandal cost Banda the elections in 2014 and she left Malawi in a self-imposed exile.⁴⁶ In July of 2015, the police issued an arrest warrant against her, but the Anti-Corruption Bureau said there was no solid evidence against her.⁴⁷ It is unclear if those charges have been dropped.⁴⁸

Even though 'Cashgate' diverted attention from Banda's economic and social achievements, she has not stopped fighting for progressive change. From August 2016 to July 2017, she has been a Distinguished Fellow with the Wilson Center in Washington D.C.⁴⁹

In 2018, after four years in exile, she returned to a large welcome by supporters, though it is unclear if she will ever get back into politics.⁵⁰ The 'Cashgate' scandal could be responsible for her early retirement. On the other hand, First Lady Mutharika could have been right that Malawi was just not ready for a female president.⁵¹ However, in examining Banda's personal life, qualifications, and policies while president, her influence is obvious. Rather than protecting the elite, like many politicians worldwide, Banda fought corruption. Despite criticism, she is determined to continue increasing the status of women and improving Malawi's overall development. Her impact, especially as Malawi's first female president, cannot be ignored.



Zambia: A Country in Peril

DARAGH MACDONAGH discusses the causes and ramifications of elitism in Edgar Lungu's administration of Zambia

Since the beginning of the 1700s, Zambia had been subject to brutal colonial subjugation, first at the hands of the Portuguese, and then from the end of the 19th century, the British.¹ When independence finally arrived in 1964, Zambia, like many other African nations, was ill-prepared.² There were just eight university graduates native to Zambia at the time of the country's transition to independence.³ This fact speaks to the inefficiency of Zambia's institutional framework, a necessary source of stability to facilitate the move towards self-governance. Predictably, the nation fell under the one-party rule of Kenneth Kaunda's United National Independence Party (UNIP), whose repressive political tactics fostered corruption and ineffective government.⁴ Spill-over effects from neighbouring conflicts in Angola, Zimbabwe, and Mozambique severely impacted the Zambian economy as well.⁵ Sadly, Zambia's struggles seemed insurmountable. Nevertheless, prospects slowly began to improve, largely due to the efforts of President Frederick Chiluba, who succeeded Kaunda.⁶ His party, who call themselves the Movement for Multi-Party Democracy (MMD), defeated UNIP in 1991 and worked with the IMF and World Bank to institute liberal economic reforms into the late 1990s.⁷ Indeed, between 2000 and 2010, economic growth averaged 7.1 percent, a significant achievement compared to the African continental average of 5.3 percent.⁸ Chiluba's reforms also paved the way for a competitive, multi-party democracy, which produced three different successive presidents after Chiluba - a welcomed end to UNIP's authoritarian rule.⁹

However, the current government in power, led by Edgar Lungu since January 2015, is highly elitist. Lungu's regime has reversed many of the positive trends from the last twenty years.¹⁰ In particular, Zambia now suffers precarious social and economic problems. Lungu's wasteful spending schemes have created a debt situation to which he has found no viable solution,¹¹ and the corrupt political-legal framework he presides over is beginning to inspire unrest amongst the Zambian populace.¹²

Many of Zambia's current problems can be traced back to its heavy debt load. The situation has worsened to the point that the country is now placed under the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) Initiative.¹³ Sadly, Zambia's external debt

is amongst the highest in this group,¹⁴ currently representing a debt-to-GDP ratio of 55.6 percent.¹⁵ This breaches the requirements of the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), which sets a maximum debt-to-GDP ratio of 40 percent as a precondition for membership.¹⁶ Furthermore, Zambia's fiscal deficit has averaged 7.9 percent since 2015,¹⁷ despite COMESA members being required to operate at a maximum of 3 percent.¹⁸ If Zambia does not fall in line quickly, COMESA will issue a suspension.¹⁹ This is likely to further cripple the Zambian economy.²⁰ Unfortunately, Zambia is unlikely to stop breaching COMESA membership criteria. Its debt structure makes it extremely difficult to pay off because it currently holds \$3 billion in Eurobond commitments.²¹ Zambia is estimated to have to make interest payments of up to \$300 million annually on these bonds for the next four years.²² Joseph Stiglitz, winner of the 2001 Nobel Prize in Economic Sciences, argues that African Eurobonds carry significantly higher risks than other forms of debt.²³ Many African countries are overly reliant on a particular export.²⁴ Consequently, international investors see them as vulnerable and are reluctant to invest in their Eurobonds.²⁵ Unfortunately, Zambia is a clear example of an undiversified economy, with 85 percent of the value of its exports deriving from copper.²⁶ It is evident that Zambia needs to fix its debt problem, but inexperience and ill-judgement have led President Lungu to two solutions doomed to fail. Firstly, Lungu plans to set up a 'sinking fund' to augment standard repayments on the Eurobonds.²⁷ It is estimated this would require an annual deposit of \$300 million for the next ten years to prevent defaulting on the repayment.²⁸ Zambia is unlikely to meet these demands due to the corrupt legal framework surrounding the sinking fund.²⁹ The second solution Lungu has proposed is to turn to the IMF for a bailout package.³⁰ Despite Zambia

being part of the World Bank-IMF HIPC Initiative, the relationship between the IMF and Zambia is weak. Recently, the IMF withdrew its representative from bailout discussions and classified Zambia as at high risk of external debt distress.³¹³² This has weakened the chances of Zambia receiving conditional debt relief as a HIPC member.³³ For as long as President Lungu continues pursuing such far-fetched solutions, Zambia's debt crisis will continue to worsen.

“For as long as President Lungu continues pursuing such far-fetched solutions, Zambia's debt crisis will continue to worsen.”

Zambia may have enjoyed better relations with donors if the borrowed money had not been wasted through President Lungu's corrupt spending schemes. In 2017, a former government official spoke out against the government. He revealed that a

company supplying the government with a fleet of fire engines had paid bribes to procurers at the Home Office.³⁴ President Lungu also authorised the purchase of fifty ambulances at a cost of over \$11 million from a firm with links to the state, despite Toyota offering the ambulances at \$3.5 million.³⁵ These examples of cronyism amongst the elite are depriving Zambian citizens of thousands of jobs.³⁶ Corruption is rife through many sectors of the Zambian government. At the Ministry of Health, it has been reported that drugs have disappeared, and officials have been implicated in deals for fake pharmaceuticals.³⁷ \$4.7 million is claimed to have been misappropriated from the Ministry of Community Development.³⁸ There have also been calls to completely disband the national traffic police, whom have been accused of accepting bribes from drivers to waive speeding fines.³⁹ Endemic corruption throughout Zambia's public institutions is beginning to rile citizens. They see President Lungu as very much a part of this corrupt political-legal framework. Corruption will remain rife, they argue, as long as President Lungu is pulling the strings.⁴⁰

The combination of Zambia's dire debt situation and corruption amongst the country's elite has fostered a sense

of social unrest. After the second election, President Lungu said: 'I myself come from a humble background and as a result I am deeply touched by the difficulties and miseries that ordinary people experience in terms of material possessions.'³⁷ But his self-imposed image as a man of the people is becoming less and less tenable. He is the second richest person in Zambia thanks to his shares in undisclosed firms.⁴¹ This has fuelled resentment amongst the Zambian populace, the manifestations of which are creating a general atmosphere of anger throughout the country. For example, the National Democratic Congress, an opposition to Lungu's party, the Patriotic Front, has encouraged nationwide protests to rally against the government's decision to award contracts to Chinese companies at the expense of local firms.⁴² Furthermore, in early October, hundreds of students at the University of Zambia protested over delayed meal and accommodation allowances.⁴³ One student died of suffocation after police fired a tear gas canister into her bedroom and another sustained severe injuries.⁴⁴ This precipitated further marches against police brutality.⁴⁵ Unsurprisingly, the social unrest spreading through Zambia is underpinned by growing demands for President Lungu to resign. If he fails to listen to their calls, protests are likely to become more violent and more frequent.⁴⁶

Zambians now see President Lungu as a distant member of the elite who, through corrupt spending schemes, has plunged the country into a debt crisis for which he has no viable solutions. Some commentators are even beginning to argue that we could be entering an 'African Spring',⁴⁷ in which Zimbabwean President Robert Mugabe, deposed in early 2018, as the first victim. Whether this is true, the problems in Zambia will not leave unless Edgar Lungu does. He has the chance to step aside, which would placate the many Zambians protesting in the streets. In doing so, he may also avoid an ignominious Mugabe-esque ending to his presidency. This potential outcome may be persuasive to a man who has become more intent on personal wealth and pride than improving the lives of his fellow citizens.



Exploring the Geopolitical Implications of the Maldivian Presidential Election

JACOB MILBURN looks at how the outcome of a presidential election in the Maldives this past September could impact the power dynamics between China and India in the Indian Ocean region.

In the Maldivian presidential election this past September, opposition figure Ibrahim Mohamed Solih won a shocking victory over incumbent Abdulla Yameen.¹ Given that the Maldives is of great geo-strategic importance to both China and India, there has been plenty of speculation about how the outcome of this election could reshape power dynamics in the Indian Ocean. Many international observers have described the election of Solih as a victory for India and a loss for China, and it is easy to see why. Solih campaigned on a pro-India, liberal democratic platform, and most observers have predicted that his election will result in the Maldives shifting its allegiances to India.² If this shift does occur, it would represent a major reversal of current power dynamics in the region, with India standing to gain political and economic influence at China's expense. However, analysts should not be too quick to assume that this will happen. Cutting ties with China could prove difficult for the new administration because the Yameen government signed trade and investment agreements with Beijing that have significant economic importance for the Maldives. Debt is also a major issue. The Maldives is heavily indebted to China, and it will be subject to Chinese influence as long as this is the case. Therefore, the Maldives might not be able to shift its loyalties as easily as some outside observers expect.

For many international observers, the pivot towards India is a foregone conclusion given the factors at play. For one, India is the traditional ally of the Maldives, so a pivot to India would be a

return to the norm, not an unprecedented shift.³ Before Yameen came to power in the disputed presidential election of 2012, the Maldives were part of India's sphere of influence, and India was responsible for providing security for the small island nation.⁴ Notably, even after the Maldives moved closer to China under Yameen, India maintained a military presence in the country.⁵ Additionally, given that Solih ran on a liberal democratic platform, he is expected to gravitate towards India, and conversely shun China, which backed the authoritarian government under Yameen which Solih campaigned against.⁶

Statements from the former Maldivian President Mohamed Nasheed, a close ally of Solih who was forced into exile by the Yameen government in 2012, lend credence to this assessment.⁷ In an interview with German news site Deutsche Welle, Nasheed stated that, under Solih, the Maldives would 'like to have friendly ties with countries who share our democratic ideals,' and named the United States, European Union, and India as examples.⁸ In the same interview, Nasheed stated that he was sure that the Maldives' 'traditional alliance with India,' would be restored under Solih.⁹ Overall, it is clear that Solih has the political will to pivot to India. But there are a few reasons why this realignment might not be so straightforward.

One reason is that the Solih government might find it difficult to cut ties with Beijing given that existing Chinese investment is an important part of the Maldivian economy. During the Yameen administration, China began to invest billions into infrastructure projects in the Maldives, including a redevelopment of

the country's main airport, and a bridge, called the 'China-Maldives Friendship Bridge', which connects the capital city, Malé, to this airport.¹⁰ These investments have been a boon for the Maldivian economy, but they came at a considerable cost. Yameen made significant concessions to China in exchange for its investment, including making

changes to the country's constitution to allow foreign ownership of land when investments exceed one billion dollars

or when more than 70 percent of the land used is reclaimed from the sea.¹¹ The exiled former-president Nasheed excoriated Yameen for making these concessions, arguing that they would threaten Maldivian sovereignty and undermine regional security.¹² Undoubtedly, they have allowed Beijing to gain a certain amount of leverage over the Maldives. China is now a major investor in all key sectors of the Maldivian economy, and it may be difficult for the Solih administration to change this.¹³ Cutting off the country from Chinese investment would likely be economically disastrous given how deeply the existing investment programmes are currently integrated into the Maldivian economy.¹⁴ Additionally, any negative economic consequences associated with ending Chinese investment programs would likely affect the popularity of Solih's government. So even if Solih wants nothing to do with China, he may be hesitant to end Chinese investment programs due to a desire for self-preservation. Overall, separating the Maldives from Chinese investment would likely be a difficult and risky prospect for Solih, so it is possible that he will simply choose the safe option and allow the investment programs to continue. If he chooses to do this, it would allow China to retain some economic influence in the region and prevent India from re-establishing itself as the regional hegemon, thus limiting the prospect of a shift in regional power dynamics.

The issue of debt is also likely to complicate efforts by the Solih government to pivot towards India. The Maldives are currently \$1.3 billion in debt to China, and, according to analysts, are not on track to repay this debt.¹⁵ This gives China even more leverage over the Maldives,

and arguably renders the island nation the victim of a 'debt trap',¹⁶ wherein one country issues excessive loans to another for the purpose of gaining political or economic concessions when the debtor country is unable to pay off the loans.¹⁷ China is commonly criticised for using this debt trap mechanism to

"China is now a major investor in all key sectors of the Maldivian economy"

exploit countries that are a part of its 'Belt-and-Road initiative' (BRI), a series of investment projects across Asia that aim to establish favourable

trade networks.¹⁸ According to some international observers, including former president Nasheed, the situation in the Maldives is simply the latest example of China employing this 'debt-for-leverage model'.¹⁹ The Maldivian debt to China now amounts to nearly a quarter of the country's GDP, and analysts have warned that the country is now at risk of being forced to make steep concessions to

Beijing in exchange for debt forgiveness, regardless of where the new Maldivian government's loyalties lie.²⁰ There is reason to believe that this could happen, given that other countries involved in the BRI have already been forced to make such concessions.

In Sri Lanka, for instance, voters ousted a pro-China government after it took out excessive loans with Beijing to fund largely unnecessary infrastructure projects.²¹

But the new administration, despite its opposition to China, was pressured into granting Beijing a ninety-nine year lease on a major port because of Sri Lanka's inability to pay off its debts.²² The close parallels between this case and the current situation in the Maldives casts some doubt on the idea that Solih's election is a win for India and loss for China.²³ Just like the Sri Lankan government, Solih's government will be forced to choose between granting China significant political concessions or paying a huge portion of

the country's GDP to Beijing for many years. Therefore, regardless of what Solih chooses, Beijing will retain its influence over the Maldives, regardless of whether that influence is economic or political.

Overall, contrary to expectations, the outcome of the Maldivian election may not reshape the current power dynamics in the Indian Ocean region as much as some may think. While there is clearly political will on the part of Solih to pivot toward India, his administration may not be interested in ending Chinese investment projects, given their economic importance. While it is possible that Indian investments could replace Chinese investments in the Maldives now that Solih is in power, this is by no means a guarantee, and the overall level of investment would likely be lower. Ultimately this would mean that the Solih government could be forced to make some economic concessions if it wants to change its alliances to India, and this may be a difficult choice to make. For any government, keeping the economy prosperous is key to maintain-

"For any government, keeping the economy prosperous is key to maintaining popularity, and the Solih government may not be willing to cut the country off from Chinese investment and risk the political consequences of an economic downturn"

ing popularity, and the Solih government may not be willing to cut the country off from Chinese investment and risk the political consequences of an economic downturn. However, the new government may not even have the capacity to make this choice, given that the country is so heavily indebted to China. As long as the Maldives

cannot pay off these debts, Beijing will be able to extract concessions from the Maldivian government and Maldives will not be able to separate itself completely from China, allowing Beijing to retain a certain level of influence over the region. The continued presence of China in the region would in turn prevent India from regaining its status as the regional hegemon and thus prevent a complete reversal of current power dynamics in the region.

Rebuilding Ireland, But for Whom?

LOCHLANN ATACK argues that findings support that the Irish government's response to the country's current housing crisis is

In recent years, the argument that housing inequalities are connected to deeper, systemic inequalities has been made in relatively accessible forums, often by authoritative voices on housing. Madden and Marcuse have highlighted the 'permanent crisis of housing' in, 'nearly every major city,' in the world. Saskia Sassen notes the emergence of a global trend in the 'asymmetrical relation' between investors in housing and mortgage borrowers, enabled by the capability for high finance to, 'financialise just about everything.' Nadine El-Enany claims that a 'colonial logic' drove the, 'hyper-segregation and differential quality of life,' in North Kensington that led to the Grenfell tragedy in 2016. James Meek suggests that, the way things are headed, 'it will eventually be time for Dickens to come around again.' Each of these analyses express a serious hierarchy within the housing sector, either emerging or perennial. But each analysis also refers to relatively uncontroversial instances of such hierarchies. Ireland has been presented as experiencing an impressive economic recovery post-2008. By revealing how such a recovery is connected to increasing housing inequality, Sassen, Madden, and Marcuse's arguments avoid the objection that they only apply to the contexts mentioned above. Additionally it shows that these rightfully alarming expressions of inequality on an international level are applicable to the present housing crisis in Ireland, and undermines the government's current response to the crisis for its elitism.

The current Irish housing crisis emerged in 2014 as a result of a number of factors. Those who cannot cope with significant rent increases, increased demand for rental housing, and a lack of new housing supply are increasingly being evicted. The average rent in Dublin

"The average rent in Dublin increased by 40 percent between the first quarter of 2013 and the fourth quarter of 2016"

increased by 40 percent between the first quarter of 2013 and the fourth quarter of 2016. As of early September, almost 700 families have become homeless in Dublin, bringing the total number of homeless people in Ireland to a record of 9,698. The number of homeless families in Dublin – which is where 78 percent of homeless families are concentrated – increased fourfold between July 2013 and September 2016, and the total number of homeless families is nearly 2,000. A 2016 survey by homelessness advocacy group Focus Ireland found that there was a, 'persistent link,' between joblessness and homelessness, a continuing prevalence of young

parents and migrant families becoming homeless, and an, 'extraordinary competition on private sector units in urban areas.' Almost two thirds of homeless families have only one parent, 86 percent of which are single mothers. Home ownership in the top three deciles is close to 90 percent, whereas for lower income groups it is 26.3 percent.

Rebuilding Ireland: An Action Plan for Housing and Homelessness was published by the government in July 2016. Notably, neither the contemporary Prime Minister nor Housing Minister referred to the situation as a 'crisis' in their prefaces to the plan's official document. The plan sees the 'broken housing sector' as a natural legacy of the 2008 property crash. It identifies five pillars to resolving the housing crisis: addressing homelessness, accelerating social housing, building more homes, improving the rental sector, and utilizing existing housing. At the core of the plan is the allowance of 5.35 billion euros to build 47,000 social housing units by 2021. The government's immediate approach to tackling the, 'increased level of homeless presentation in recent times,' which has found hundreds of families living in

hotels and B&Bs, revolves around 'Family Hubs' and 'Housing Assisted Payment Schemes' (HAPs). Family Hubs are run by government-approved housing bodies to act as better emergency housing for families made homeless by the housing crisis. However, any families living in the Hubs must be actively searching for more private rental accommodation. HAPs are a form of social housing whereby households secure housing via the private market, but pay an agreed proportion of the rent to their local authority, who then pays the landlord the full rent.

Historically, direct provision of social housing has been widespread in Ireland. In the decades following independence, most new constructions were social housing, consequently, by 1961 almost one in five of Irish households were social housing tenants. In fact, for most of the first half of the 20th century, the government successfully relied upon social housing to compensate for the private sector during financial crises. The key to the success of this approach was that, by decentralizing responsibilities for social housing supply to local authorities, the impact of centralized fiscal problems was limited. Thus, decentralization meant social housing supply was formally independent from the national debt, and was also not a policy concern – and thus not a pawn – for the more ideologically-laden sphere of governmental politics.

However, this approach fell victim to a wider trend of centralization, beginning in the late 1950s. Since the late 1960s, when a 'tenant purchase scheme,' akin to Margaret Thatcher's 'Right to Buy' scheme, was introduced, social housing provision has been on the decline. Moreover, since payment of social housing rent was now determined by the general needs of local authorities, not limited by the cost of the housing unit, the rent paid by tenants became increasingly insufficient to service the debt of their construction. These issues resulted in a further reduction of local authority's role in providing social housing. In the late 1970s, a national Rent Supplement (RS) scheme was introduced to support

unemployed private tenants. In the early 1980s, a court judgement found that private rent controls were incompatible with the private property protections in the Irish constitution, and were thus abolished. Thus, the provision of social housing had now transitioned from being independent of the housing market to being pro-cyclical and thus entwined with the housing market.

Both the dependence on the RS scheme, and the decline in direct social housing, increased significantly through to the end of the 20th century. In 1975, social housing units represented one third of total housing provision; in 2005, social housing units represented less than five percent of the total. By 2002, one in three private rented tenancies were financed by the RS scheme. As a result, at the peak of the property bubble in 2006, there were 60,694 households availing of government subsidized private rentals – almost half as many dwelling in mainstream social housing. Consequently, in the fallout of the 2008 financial crisis, social housing was hit twofold due to its pro-cyclical nature: it both could not sustain its support of a significant portion of the private property market, and was at the mercy of government austerity. Given this context, the present government's diagnosis of the current crisis as a consequence of the 2008 crash seems at best a gross oversimplification and a perplexing display of wilful ignorance.

By not contextualising the current crisis, the government justifies the continuing centrality of the private sector in solving the issue of housing. Such a response is unequivocally elitist. Firstly, its immediate response to the increasing number of families becoming homeless is anything but compassionate. While undoubtedly more secure than living in hotels and B&Bs, Family Hubs are, at the end of the day, a form of institutionalisation. Families living in the Hubs have to agree to numerous onerous conditions, including strict curfews and being limited to three days permitted absence per month. Furthermore, HAP – which all families in Hubs must engage with

– structurally exacerbates the vulnerable situations of many of those most in need of housing. Since housing is only sourced via the housing market, homeless families must themselves go through application processes for housing units.

However, this means that they can be discriminated against by landlords in the application processes, without any third party to guarantee against this. One study cited an interviewee claiming that, 'some families have been to 35 viewings.' Thus

the HAP and Family Hub schemes clearly seem to exacerbate the discrimination experienced by the very same people the policies are supposed to help.

Secondly, the current crisis has been in large part caused by the increasing financialisation of housing. That is, by turning housing over to the whims of the private sector, Irish governments have increasingly degraded the status of housing away from an essential human right and towards a mere commodity, another instrument upon which the economy can be based. Two successive Irish governments have opened up property and land assets to private equity funds and vulture funds, who buy toxic loans and assets from governments with the aim to eventually profit off of them. While effective at generating capital during years of austerity post-2008, and increasing international investor interest, such policies have ultimately had significantly adverse effects on Irish housing. Since

2008, vulture funds have bought, 'up to 90,000 properties and hold at least 10.3 billion euro worth of assets in Ireland.' Since 2010, the percentage of investors as buyers of dwellings has increased from 21.7 percent to 37.6 percent in early 2017. Moreover, in the period since the beginning of the present housing crisis in 2014 to late 2016, the value of assets in

real estate funds in Ireland have increased by almost 300 per cent.

Such activity appears to be directly connected with one of the causes of the present crisis: a shortage of housing stock. Of the total land with potential for development sold by the National Assets Management Agency to investors, only 5 percent has been built on. The government's justification for, not only tolerating, but encouraging the jettisoning of public assets to private investors is that it depends on the private sector to reach the ambitious targets for social housing set out in 'Rebuilding Ireland'. Public-Private Partnerships mandate that any private development has to have 30 percent of its units reserved for social housing. One serious limitation of this model is that it literally hands control of social housing provision to private entities. That is, the government's central policy for providing housing for those most in need of it – recipients of social housing – is almost entirely dependent upon the whim of private property developers.

The Irish government's response to the current housing crisis rests on an inadequate diagnosis of the problem. This suggests a wilful ignorance on the part of the Irish government. The motivation for this ignorance appears to be explained by the government's faith in the private sector to resolve issues of fundamental

importance to the well-being of its citizens. Moreover, the disproportionate impact of the current Irish housing crisis on the nation's least privileged citizens, and the empowering of the private sector, suggests the present government's response to the crisis as eminently elitist.

This conclusion

should both embolden proponents of the argument that global trends in housing inequality are no mere coincidence, a la Sassen, Madden, and Marcuse, and alarm and outrage Irish citizens that the government is party to the same kind of elitist policies that are exacerbating housing crises internationally.

“The government justifies the continuing centrality of the private sector in solving the issue of housing. Such a response is ...elitist.”

“The disproportionate impact of the current Irish housing crisis on the nation's least privileged citizens ..suggests the present government's response to the crisis as eminently elitist.”

Europe on Fire

BEN MALCOMSON interviews Kati Marton, a Hungarian-American journalist, to discuss the rise of illiberalism in Europe

The European Union is in crisis. The tide of right-wing authoritarian regimes is rising across Europe, most notably in Poland and Hungary. These nations, hailed until recently as promising young democracies, have both recently elected ruling parties who show more than just tinges of authoritarianism. Some shared policy initiatives include media clamp-downs, revamping of judicial systems to suit political aims, and blatant fear-mongering propaganda campaigns. Both countries are now facing disciplinary measures from the EU, the two 'illiberal democracies' have thus far been successful in defending each other against any consequential penalties by exploiting the European Union's stridently democratic nature. To draw attention to this worrying trend, I recently had an illuminating discussion with Kati Marton, a Hungarian-American journalist and author, whose remarkable life and career have given her a unique perspective on Europe's illiberal turn.

BEN MALCOMSON BM: Broadly, what would you say are the political implications, in the EU context, of Hungary's defense of Poland?

KATI MARTON KM: Well, this is a real test for the EU. It was meant to be a gentlemen's club of like-minded democrats, and I don't think anybody foresaw an outcome such as the one that's played out, particularly coming from two countries that had been occupied and lost all their freedoms for half a century under the Soviets. For them to embrace authoritarian rule, as they seem to have done, was not on anybody's agenda. So the EU rules are, frankly, not up to date: you need unanimity to use the so-called 'nuclear option' [disciplinary procedure] of Article 7, so Poland and Hungary will continue to defend each other. It's already an important symbolic slap at Poland and at Hungary too, as Hungary is now also under fire from the EU. But yes,

under the present rules, they can get away with this. But you know, everybody is onto them now, so to speak, and the stigma is devastating for these two fledgling democracies which have now re-baptised themselves as 'illiberal democracies', which is a contradiction in terms.

I'm a trustee of Central European University, which is under attack by Orbán. He has declared a vendetta against George Soros, his chosen scapegoat for every damn thing, who founded and funds CEU. Soros was the foremost supporter of the whole process of democratisation of Hungary, and has invested hundreds of millions of Euros in nurturing Hungarian democracy, which Orbán is quickly unravelling.

BM: So you would say the majority of Hungarians are still not on board with what Orbán is doing?

KM: So Ben, here's the thing. There's a playbook these authoritarian heads of state all use, be it Putin, Erdoğan, Duterte, Kaczyński, Orbán, whoever. The first thing that goes is the free media. Once you have eliminated media freedom, that is to say a contesting voice saying something other than what the leader says, it's not all that challenging to persuade people, as these men have, that all the world is your enemy. That only I, the father of your country, can protect you, only I have your interests at heart. People with grievances are easily swayed, and we in the United States are facing the same global phenomenon, and it is global, a global war against the media. And it's only beginning. Once you control the media, the next step is the judiciary, as we've seen in Poland, and everything else then falls into place. This is the time for us all to be, frankly, on fire.

BM: In terms of political maneuvering in Hungarian and EU politics, what do

you think are the motivations behind this defence of Poland, besides the obvious one of common ground between the two right-wing regimes?

KM: So, I've known Victor Orbán since 1989. I first encountered him when he was this charismatic young speaker when the Iron Curtain fell, and he emerged as a future leader and we were all very impressed. In the

subsequent years, we got to know each other well and I can tell you that he had a single program, and that was power. Self-sustaining power is his program. Like most demagogues, they will do pretty much anything to keep themselves in power. They are not interested in their own country, they are interested in power, and in keeping their families and circle of oligarchs close to them by sharing their financial and political bounty.

BM: I think that's demonstrated when Orbán, this was in the early 90s I believe, had a complete shift, upon ascension to party leadership, from classically liberal to the far-right positions he holds today.

KM: Exactly. He's not about a particular ideology, he's not a man of faith, he's a nothing. He's an opportunist, and a very cunning one. He's not a fool. He's much smarter than Trump, for example.

BM: So, this past September, the EU invoked upon Hungary the same disciplinary mechanism, Article 7, that it had previously attempted to use on Poland. Do you think this will get any further in punishing Hungary than it did with Poland?

KM: Probably not, they're covering each other's backs, that's their unwritten agreement. Hungary has now been severely retaliated against by its own EU political grouping, the European People's Party, the grouping of Christian Democrats, and that's a blow to Hungary's pres-

"There's a playbook these authoritarian heads of state all use ...the first thing that goes is the free media"

tige, particularly as it relies on Germany for trade and support. To have Hungary's own political allies saying, 'Viktor, you've gone too far and you're embarrassing us with your anti-immigrant anti-Islam policies,' that's quite a blow. And by the way, Ben, there are almost no Muslims or immigrants in Hungary, but just as you don't need Jews around for anti-semitism to thrive, you don't need immigrants for anti-immigration fear to take

hold if your leader plays to it. All over Hungary, they have billboards showing George Soros literally piloting a plane filled with turbaned terrorists. It's shocking. Shocking! But once you capture a nation and wall it in through control of the media, you create this zone where you can sell anything. It's almost like a new Iron Curtain. You'd think in the internet age people could pierce that curtain, and of course those Hungarians who are internet-literate are not buying this, but then there's the other phenomenon of internet penetration by fake news, which cost us the election here in the States. It is pervasive, and it's tremendously damaging. We can't assume that just because we've had several decades of smooth sailing, democracy doesn't need more care and feeding, more than just showing up every four years to vote. It obviously needs more from us. It turns out that citizenship is a proactive responsibility.

BM: Orbán's rhetoric is anti-globalist and divisive. This may be best expressed in a quote that you employed in your piece on him in *The Daily Beast*: 'We are on one side, millions of people with national feeling, while on the other is the elite of 'world citizens.' National and democratic forces are on one side, and supranational and anti-democratic forces are on the other.' Despite this overt disdain for everything the EU represents, he has not expressed any desire to leave it. Why?

NM: This is exactly the hypocrisy of the man. He has benefited tremendously from the EU's bounty, which is what the EU has to be a little more cognizant of. Budapest has never looked better, thanks

to the EU — there's no rubble left! It's all spit-shined, and he takes credit for that while the EU funds it. My belief is that we cannot let the Orbáns of the world own the term 'patriotism'. They've turned

"Once you capture a nation and wall it in through control of media, you create this zone where you can sell anything. It's almost like a new Iron Curtain."

patriotism into a right-wing thing, but we're patriots. We care about our country. We can't just yield that to the right wing, because patriotism is not about exclusion as Orbán and his ilk have twisted it. Yes, it is about pride and love of country,

but countries simply cannot be walled off from the rest of the world, particularly not a small country like Hungary. When it has thrived in the past as an incubator of talent, it was open and tolerant, welcoming new people and ideas. I wrote a book about a Hungarian wave of immigration to America, from which the United States benefited as it always does from large waves of immigration, because they bring talent. That's not so clear now. I think America too is going through a testing time. We'll see in the midterms what our fellow citizens care about.

BM: Could Orbán's actions foreshadow a right-wing, populist, international political elite? The irony of such a notion is not lost on me, given that the members of such an elite are both anti-elite and anti-globalist, but the question stands.

NM: They are not blessed with such a sense of irony. I don't necessarily foresee that. Whatever they claim, the world is too globalised, and they are too much a part of the global marketplace of ideas, to seal themselves into a ghetto of autocrats spewing anger and grievance. They know that. It's tragic that the United States is no longer engaged in protecting these values. That is to say, not simply as a salesman of armaments, but as the one standing for the values on which we were founded, and Germany was founded, and the EU was built. It's a hinge moment in the world. And of course, in the wings are China and Russia ready to exploit the situation. That said, people are not lining up for Chinese visas in the way they always have for America. The US cannot be lumped with these countries we're talking about, it has too many levers of power,

too many checks and balances. The media can't be controlled in that same way. But even so, this is still a dangerous moment. We need to be on fire.

BM: To close out, I would put to you a question that you asked at the CFR panel I mentioned at the beginning: did we overestimate the allure of democracy?

NM: We took it for granted that democracy was the highest value, and we stopped paying attention to the need of people to have an identity beyond the global identity. We all need to be from some place, and we underestimated the extent to which not everyone was benefiting from globalisation. We in the US and the global village weren't watching that part. People do need identity, which is why I say we need to reclaim the value of patriotism. Not a patriotism that is exclusionary, but one that allows people to claim and be proud of their heritage, customs, nationalities. If we have Muslims in our neighbourhood, they need to learn our ways and respect them as we would respect theirs if we moved to an Islamic nation, but they should be allowed to practice their faith the same way I'm allowed to sing Hungarian songs and teach them to my children, and cook Hungarian dishes at certain times of the year. We can't just pretend that all of this has been washed away by this hyperconnected age.

We also have to listen to people, to the 'other guy.' I remember accompanying my husband, Richard Holbrooke, when he was negotiating in the Balkans. Each tribe claimed that their grievance was deeper and more rational than the other guy's, and that was the challenge that Richard faced in bringing these guys to the table. You can't move forward if people are so invested in their history. Orbán and Kaczyński and Erdoğan are all trying to recreate a past that is gone. It's simply gone, and it's not coming back. You have your history and family traditions, and I'm not going to tell you that mine are superior to yours, but they are different. I'm perfectly interested in learning about and accepting yours as long as you don't come into my house and say, 'From now on you can't cook those Hungarian dishes, or sing those Hungarian songs.'



Nord Stream 2 divides the EU

EMILIE SANBYE argues increased dependency on Russian energy supply is carving a divide within the EU as criticism seems to be brushed off as exaggeration or unnecessary 'Cold War rhetoric'

Russian gas accounts for almost two thirds of all gas consumed in Germany. The first Nord Stream pipeline was built in 2011. Starting in Vyborg, Russia, and ending in Griefswald, Germany, the 1,224 kilometres of pipeline supply Europe with 55 bcm of natural gas, but 120 bcm of European gas supply will need to be compensated within the next 20 years to close the import gap. Nord Stream 2 AG, registered as a private company in Switzerland but mostly owned by the Russian state-owned energy company Gazprom, now wishes to finalise an expansion of the existing pipeline after the German Federal Cartel Office announced its approval in 2015. Under the headline: 'A new pipeline for Europe's energy future', the project seeks to accommodate the future rapid rise in European energy demand. Described as 'ultra-reliable', the project simultaneously claims to be able to both enhance the EU's security of supply, strengthen the competitiveness of the gas market and support EU decarbonisation and climate goals. But is it really 'ultra-reliable'?

From a Russian perspective, the main benefit is to avoid risky gas transport through Ukraine, which indicates that Moscow might have geopolitical as well as commercial motives. It would be ignorant to claim that the project is purely a commercial venture, and Russia only wants a peaceful, bilateral trade deal. Russia has, after all, played its part in destabilizing the region in which it already transports large amounts of gas.

For example, several gas disputes with Ukraine over the years and sanctions imposed on Georgia have political subtexts. Several researchers within the energy security field point at the remarkable fact that Russia has price differentiated their gas export to their neighbours; for example, gas prices in Armenia, Belarus, and Ukraine under President Kuchma – before the Ukrainian-Russian gas conflict – have been heavily subsidized, whereas Georgia, Moldova, the Baltics, and Ukraine under former President Yushchenko have endured much higher prices and supply disruptions.

For the German government, Nord Stream 2 is purely a commercial project to fulfill its long-term natural gas contracts and vital for German stakeholders; according to Mario Mehren, the CEO of Wintershall, Germany's largest crude oil and natural gas producer, the project is simply about commercial investments. Opponents in Ukraine and Denmark are perceived as, 'emotional.'

So far, Germany has not experienced any Russian attempts to use energy exports politically, but Germany might be paving the way for the possibility: the EU is dependent on Russian energy because Germany is. Furthermore, proponents of the Nord Stream expansion point to the fact that trade relations with Russia have been peaceful throughout the 2000s and less so in the 2010s due to the European attitude. On the contrary, one might argue that it could be because the Russian GDP in the 2000s was half of

what it was in the 2010s, and Russian foreign policy has changed dramatically. The Russian Ministry of Energy even wrote on their website in 2011 that Russian energy resources are, 'an instrument in domestic and foreign policy.' Furthermore, the Russian Middle Term Strategy 2000-2010 on energy issues describes that the strategy's aim is to preserve Russian, 'national interests and strengthen the image of Russia in the world.' It is evident that Russia knows energy is politics. This is not to conclude that Russia will inevitably use the pipeline politically, but Europe is currently creating that opportunity.

An EU interest divide and the Energy Union

From the outset, Germany's mistake was to launch its *Energiwende*, independently setting a date for phasing out nuclear power in 2020, and creating a large gap in the demand for energy that now needs to be covered by natural gas. The German energy strategy was launched without prior discussion with neighbouring countries, causing Poland, in particular, to be frustrated by Germany's rogue action. The explanation partly lies in Poland's energy mix; Poland's reliance on coal as a domestic source of energy by state-owned companies has for long secured its supply compared to EU-28, where the share of solid fuels consumption is immensely higher. However, Poland has laid out some sustainability priorities in its comprehensive energy plan, the National Plan for Responsible Development. Among the goals are lower

energy costs for consumers and diversification of oil and gas supply sources. But with no aims of phasing out nuclear, the coal sector is to undergo modernization rather than a substantial reduction. This will support Polish state-owned companies and thus employment in the energy sector, which in 2012 was still more than double the EU average. The Polish economy and welfare is therefore heavily reliant on the energy sector. Poland also relies substantially on Russia for gas, which was 64 percent of its imports in 2013. This current lack of diversification in its imports partly explains why Poland is strongly opposing Nord Stream 2: the Poland-Gazprom contract runs out in 2022 and is seen as much more of a geopolitical issue than a commercial one, which makes Poland willing to pay for supplies from anywhere but Russia.

At the time of writing, Denmark currently stands as the last country from which Nord Stream needs to receive a territorial permit. Denmark accepted a bill at the end of 2017 that made it a political possibility to deny the application filed by Nord Stream, and therefore deny Gazprom enforced access to Europe. From the commercial perspective, The Danish Energy Association's opinion is that increased interdependence is a peacemaker, whereas the Danish Institute for International Studies (DIIS) sees it as, 'the most important decision in Danish foreign policy since the Cold War.' According to DIIS, a 'no' to Nord Stream 2 will mean that a delayed alternative route will result in extra expenses for the European energy consumers. Therefore, a 'no' would be a political manifestation likely to result only in higher costs for the poorest consumers in the EU.

Meanwhile, Germany still maintains that the Nord Stream project is solely a commercial venture, while ignoring its commitment and solidarity with the Energy Union. There are commercial interests at stake, both from German companies, the Danish Energy Association, Russia, and the transit countries, especially in the realm of the consumer cost aspect of energy supply. However, as argued by critical researchers, to reduce Nord Stream 2 to a commercial project would be to ignore its economic, legal, and political repercussions. Energy is deeply connected to the external affairs of both commercial and political actors,

where Russia and the EU emerge as almost polar opposites.

The Energy Union is the foundation of the European Commission's work for 2014 to 2019 and has the objectives of securing a green transition, low consumer costs, and security of supply. In 2000 and 2006, Nord Stream was announced as a priority project for the then-current Commission. The EU later changed its mind, and the concept of the Energy Union was first introduced in 2014 after the Russian-Ukrainian gas conflict. Despite excitement in the 2000s, President of the European Council Donald Tusk said in April 2014 that, 'massive dependence on Russian energy makes Europe weak.' Similarly, the World Energy Council believes that the greatest threat to the EU's security of supply is gas conflicts with Russia.

In the white papers for the Energy Union, it is clear that underlying solidarity and trust is an absolute prerequisite. German decisiveness over constructing Nord Stream 2 has caused a divide in the EU and is a threat to EU cooperation, with other Central and Eastern European countries paying the price for unstable energy transits benefitting Germany and Western Europe.

Massive lobby efforts

Investors should not be blind to the circumspect and elitist nature of the company setup behind Nord Stream. Journalist Jens Høvsgaard has looked into the peculiar circumstances of the company and mapped out the venture. The company Nord Stream is mostly owned by the Russian state-owned company Gazprom. Proponents have commented that Putin represents a more Western outlook compared to his predecessors, as he, for example, speaks fluent German – a skill he acquired when working undercover as a KGB agent in Dresden for five years. Similarly, the Nord Stream CEO, Matthias Warnig, is involved in several other state-owned Russian companies and was a Stasi spy for fifteen years during the Cold War. The lobbying efforts to convince transit countries to support Nord Stream have been led by Gerhard Schröder, the former Social Democratic German Chancellor, after he lost the German election in 2005. The recruitment of Schröder has been a major boon for Nord Stream, as they have been able to use Schröder's profile to guarantee political capital. Through

Schröder, Nord Stream has managed to establish relations with former Social Democratic Swedish Prime Minister Göran Persson, who was previously known as an environmentalist, climate activist, and a member of the board of Al Gore's think tank. Soon after, Persson was hired as a lobbyist for the communications firm JKL, which represents Nord Stream's biggest auctioneer, E.ON. The Danish consultancy firm Rambøll, which was responsible for developing the mandatory environmental report for the Danish government on potential environmental damages in expanding the pipeline, was simultaneously responsible for building Gazprom's new headquarters in Saint Petersburg. The body of employees in Nord Stream is, in general, made up of a Western elite of former political advisors from exactly the states that Russia needs permission from in order to construct the pipeline.

Most importantly, the question of whether or not Nord Stream 2 is a political project or a commercial venture lacks consideration of internal EU solidarity. The European Commission is concerned with the security implications and the impacts it might have on energy poor countries like Ukraine, but the Commission does not have the legal competences to prevent it; the current EU gas directive regulates the EU's internal market only and will not affect pipelines from third countries. If Gazprom builds and operates Nord Stream 2 on its own, as first predicted, it will be the first direct gas connection solely under its exclusive control. The question is, therefore, now how security threats, instability, and socioeconomic and commercial interests conflate with a common wish for a strong and independent future for the European Union in global affairs.

Instead of speaking of 'Cold War rhetoric' or 'trustful bilateral trade' with Russia, the partners to the pipeline project ought to take their EU commitments into consideration. The continuation of gigantic bilateral energy imports is contributing to an East-West divide and creating winners and losers within the EU. To allow Nord Stream 2 while imposing European sanctions on Russia is mocking the Energy Union that EU member states have committed to.

Profile: Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador

MARCO GARCIA questions whether President-Elect Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador is up to the task of bringing about a historic 'fourth transformation' in Mexico

One might argue that in the political world, six years is not enough for significant political change. However, Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador (popularly known by his acronym AMLO), a 64-year-old politician from the Mexican state of Tabasco, required no more than that time to establish himself as one of the most prominent politicians in the recent history of Mexico. Obrador has contributed to one of the most stunning political moments in Mexico's history by being at the centre of an unprecedented democratic transition. This movement has resulted in a massive change in Mexican political attitude towards traditional elitism; conceivably a 'fourth transformation'. However, Obrador's self-proclamation as a 'messiah' of this political transformation has proved to be contentious among Mexico's political scientists and historians.¹ Indeed, it is worth analysing the puzzling scenario of how a man who was deemed politically dead six years ago is now labelled the leader of a new political era, and arguably one of the most important figures in Mexico's history.

Obrador's rise to power elucidates his political views. Born in the poor municipality of Macuspana in the state of Tabasco in 1953, his political life started early when he witnessed the continuous marginalisation of indigenous peoples in his hometown.² He went on to earn a degree in political science and public administration from the National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM), a degree that took him fourteen years to finish due to his active political life.³ By the time Obrador graduated, expressions of leftism and social democracy had manifested in his character and policy.⁴

Mexico has already had three key 'transformations' in its political history. The first was the movement for independence from Spain in the early 19th Century, which gave Mexico political independence and sovereignty for the first time⁵ Then the Wars of Reform came in 1857, which separated church and state and repealed Austrian rule over Mexico, giving the country a foundation

for democracy.⁶ And third, the Mexican Revolution, arguably one of the biggest events in the Twentieth Century, which resulted in the current political constitution the country uses today and established a fairer distribution of land among the peoples of Mexico.⁷ Obrador argues that his election and subsequent reforms will result in changes of a similar magnitude.⁸ All three 'transformations' had three key characteristics: a unified and relatively well-accepted leader or set of leaders, a series of large impacts on the mechanisms of Mexican politics, and an unprecedented event to kick-start the movement.⁹ Obrador intends to appeal to Mexican history in his constant quest to become one of the great political symbols of the country.¹⁰

Priest Miguel Hidalgo, who, along with his small militia, inspired the eleven-year struggle for independence from Spain, led the Mexican Independence movement.¹¹ The result was the establishment of a sovereign Mexican state that governed itself. Thirty years later, President Benito Juarez led the resistance to colonial rule of a foreign government.¹² This put the control of the army in civilian hands and effectively separated church and state.¹³ In 1910, Francisco A. Madero led the first democratic elections in Mexico since the Wars of Reform.¹⁴ This nationwide revolution resulted in the current constitution of Mexico.¹⁵ Obrador

promises changes of such proportions, changes that will destroy the current political duopoly, based on his belief that personal virtue will be enough to carry out a transformation once more.¹⁶

Obrador has tantalised Mexican society with a fourth transformation; one that will tackle corruption, protect people through social and economic programs, eliminate fiscal inefficiencies caused by corruption, and discredit the current po-

litical elite.¹⁷ Although none of those ideals sound revolutionary, his 'flawless' electoral campaign and impact are notorious. Based on current evidence, Obrador does seem to have an unprecedented level of support.¹⁸ Historians to come will analyse this election for the amount of political power Obrador amassed: 'the country's first democratic landslide.'¹⁹ MORENA, the political party he founded a mere four years ago, incorporated groups with disparate interests into its political coalition. It includes the unconventional combination between a worker's party and an evangelical-based party, giving him a unique appeal that runs across the political spectrum – a trait that even advanced and well-established democracies such as the United States might deem unfeasible.²⁰ At the presidential election, he won over 53 percent of the votes, winning 31 of the 32 states in the Mexican Republic and cementing a 30 percent lead over Ricardo Anaya, the runner-up.²¹ Along with an impressive geographic performance, he performed well with many of the demographic groups voting in the elections. He won a plurality of voters in every single category; from men to women,

from young and old, and from the educated to the uneducated.²² At the congressional elections, MORENA achieved a majority in both houses of Congress.²³ Moreover, of the eight state governorships that were

"Apart from his effectiveness in challenging the status quo, Obrador has shown signs of extreme populist measures"

up for election, his party won four.²⁴ If that was not enough, MORENA won the seat for Mayor of Mexico City, often seen as the second most powerful position in Mexican politics after the presidency.²⁵ Such unique undertakings were symbolised by a singular achievement, which Obrador deemed the most important of his campaign promises: defeating the traditional elitist political powers both in Congress and for the most influential

posts in Mexico.

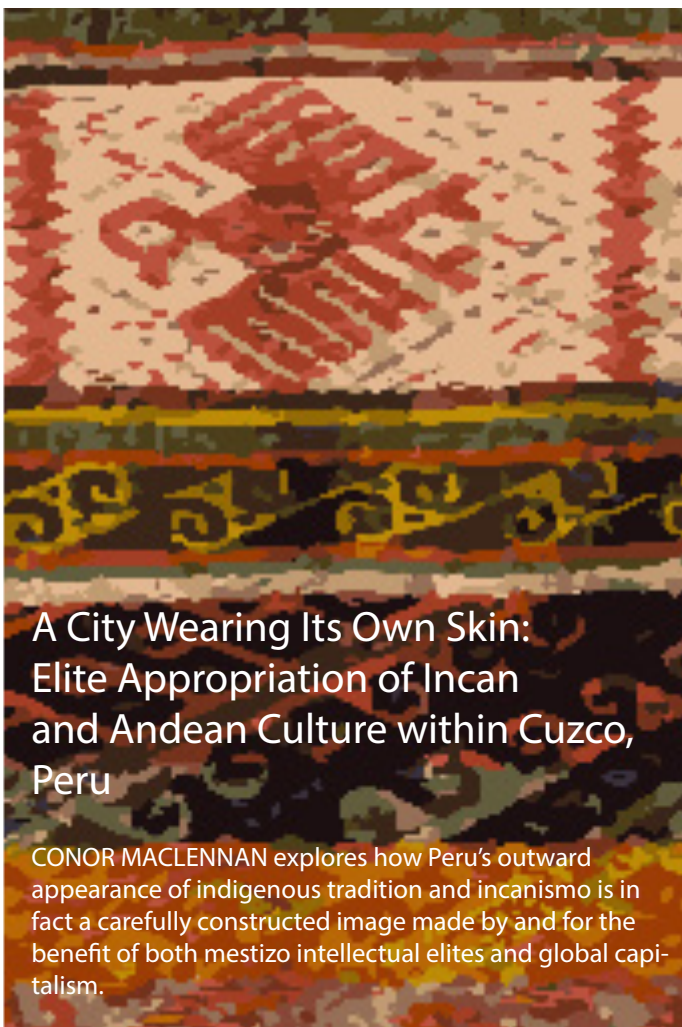
Most people attribute the 'transformation' not only to Obrador, but also to the whole Mexican political system.²⁶ Although Obrador did destroy the political duopoly that existed in Mexico between PRI and PAN, the country demonstrated the strengths of its democratic values and institutions this electoral cycle. After the results were announced, everyone across the political spectrum congratulated the president-elect and called for national unity. During the voting hours, no incidents were reported.²⁷ The other candidates swiftly recognized the results and stated their support for the new government.²⁸ Labour unions and high-profile businessmen expressed their willingness to work with the new administration, revealing a renewed sense of national integrity and the conditions necessary for a smooth transition between PRI and MORENA.²⁹

His Hyperbolic promises of biblical proportions have led prominent Mexican thinkers, such as Enrique Krauze, to dub Obrador a 'tropical messiah'.³⁰ AMLO has demonstrated idiosyncrasies throughout its political life befitting the moniker 'messiah' – a leader or saviour of a particular cause. During his early tenure as director for the Indigenous Institute of Tabasco, he committed himself to helping the Chotales people to the point of living among them under severe situations of poverty.³¹ He led two self-titled 'exoduses' against PRI from the state of Tabasco to Mexico City – one 'for democracy' and another to stop the privatization of PEMEX – shepherding his people under the motto 'first eat, then pay'.³² From there, in 1996 he ran for president of the Revolutionary Democratic Party (PRD) – a centre-left wing political party he helped to establish in 1988.³³ Obrador's achievements as head of the PRD cannot be neglected; in his three year tenure he secured PRD as the second biggest force in the Chamber of Deputies.³⁴ In 2000, he was elected Mayor of Mexico City, gaining attention for working from six AM, practicing personal austerity, and offering press conferences everyday, amounting to over 1,500 during his tenure.³⁵ Every two years, he ran public polls on whether he should remain in office, averaging a satisfaction rate of over 90 percent.³⁶ It was with sayings such as, 'for the good of the people, the poor first', and 'there cannot be a rich government with poor people', that lead Obrador to be dubbed an extremely successful mayor.³⁷

However, along with Obrador's aspirations of 'salvation' came features which critics dubbed 'worrying' and even 'populist'.³⁸ Apart from his effectiveness in challenging the status quo, Obrador has shown signs of extreme populist measures during times of discontent. After running unsuccessfully for president in 2006, losing by a razor thin margin to PAN candidate Felipe Calderón, he refused to concede, blaming the 'mafia of power' for manipulating the results and subverting the will of the Mexican people.³⁹ His supporters held the Zocalo – Mexico City's and Latin America's biggest square – on lockdown for over a month.⁴⁰ After 48 days, Obrador held a national convention, labelled the elected president a 'wimp', accused him of being part of a 'simulated republic', and took an oath in front of his supporters as the 'legitimate President' of a 'parallel government'.⁴¹ The 2012 elections showcased a similar story, with Obrador obtaining only a third of the popular vote and once more refusing to recognize the results, again blaming 'the mafia of power'.⁴² His biography describes his life as epic, illustrating his 'tireless' struggle for his people, his 'exoduses' for democracy,

the 'electoral fraud' he unfairly underwent, and his 'travels to inform the people that a movement exists to bring about the real transformation of Mexico'.⁴³

AMLO's claims of his intention to lead a 'fourth transformation' have sparked debate over whether he truly has the potential to see it through, or if his pledges of the 'promised land' are inflammatory rhetoric.⁴⁴ It is difficult to see whether the president-elect will indeed deliver, but with support from the Mexican people, control of the legislature, and support across the political spectrum, Obrador does seem to have the tools to guide the country into a genuinely new direction. However, it is up to him to either help the republic to flourish or to allow his protectionist and nationalist impulses, claims of dark conspiracies against him, and a polarizing personality get the best of him.



A City Wearing Its Own Skin: Elite Appropriation of Incan and Andean Culture within Cuzco, Peru

CONOR MACLENNAN explores how Peru's outward appearance of indigenous tradition and incanismo is in fact a carefully constructed image made by and for the benefit of both mestizo intellectual elites and global capitalism.

The Republic of Peru, especially in recent decades, has incorporated Incan imagery extensively into its national imagery. Quechua, the language of the largest empire of the Americas and the largest Amerindian language, shares official status with Spanish and Aymara.¹ A recreated version of the annual festival Inti Raymi, in honour of the sun god in the city of Cuzco, the former Inca capital and the capital of neo-incanismo, fills Cuzco's hotels to capacity.² Peru is one of the few countries in the world where Coca-Cola is not the most popular soft drink;

that crown instead belongs to Inca Kola, a golden-coloured cola branded as 'the drink of national flavour'.³ At the turn of the millennium, political candidates began affecting incanismo to secure a sense of legitimacy. Alejandro Toledo, President of Peru from 2001 to 2006, notably referred to himself as the legendary Inca emperor, Pachacutec, and held an inauguration ceremony at Machu Picchu involving Incan priests and animal sacrifice after his election.⁴

However, despite this overt display of the nation's indigenous roots, this image is largely separated from indigenous Andean communities within Peru for the benefit of urban (often mestizo) intellectuals, as well as global capitalism and tourism. This often serves to separate these communities from their identity or status as 'indigenous' or 'Incan', while also leaving them unable to take part in this aspect of Peruvian or cusqueño national image that they theoretically represent.

Peru has had a different outlook on race compared to most nations, in both historical and modern contexts. 85 percent of the population identify as either Amerindian or mestizo, and during the colonial era there was a large native nobility that answered to the Spanish king as well as white Hispanic nobles.⁵ Intermarriages between the two groups were common.⁶ As such, while the Bolivarian tide did remove the privileges of the indigenous aristocracy,⁷ it left postcolonial Peru with a much more Amerindian-flavoured mix than most other South American nations. As race science became prevalent across Europe during the Nineteenth Century, Peru would develop its own interpretation of eugenics.⁸

Peruvian intellectuals, notably the mid-century historian Manuel Atanasio Fuentes, proposed that the successes of the Peruvian ruling class was due to their racial mixture rather than racial purity, with Fuentes comparing Lima to, 'a multi-coloured garden'.⁹

This sense of pride in being of 'mestizo' rather than purely white heritage would later blossom into a series of intellectu-

al movements beginning in the 1920s called indigenismo.¹⁰ Primarily centred around Cuzco, indigenismo promoted a vision of Peru that draws as much from Incan tradition as from Spanish, and was responsible for re-inventing and innovating a number of traditions based on supposedly indigenous roots.¹¹ In addition to Inti Raymi, other festivals and offerings related to indigenous traditions and spirits, such as the Earth Mother Pachamama, are performed publicly, and this movement gave birth to an explosion of artists and performance groups who drew from Andean lore.^{12 13} An official language academy for Quechua was founded in 1954, with its founder being a prominent architect of the revived Inti Raymi ceremony.¹⁴

However, while it may initially seem relatively progressive to place value on a mixed ethnic identity, problems begin to arise when one considers the groups that have remained 'pure'. For example, poor rural Andean indigenous communities have fallen prey to this, in contrast to the wealthy mestizo elite of Lima or Cuzco.¹⁵ The early 20th century was marked by both the beginning of the indigenista movement and the treatment of Andean indio communities as semi-civilised and a problem for Peruvian society. There was thus a need for 'liberation' or 'rescue', 'from the misfortune of being indigenous'.¹⁶ Natives were also demonised for their perceived lack of sanitation, and there was considerable panic over their use of the coca leaf, despite its use being largely to create non-addictive substances and cocaine use being relatively rare outside of cities.¹⁷

It is important to note that due to the widespread racial mixing in Peru, terms such as indio or mestizo are often sources of self-identification, and typically associated with cultural practices; while a mestizo may live in the city, an indio or campesino is typically an indigenous peasant farmer in the serrano.¹⁸ As the indigenistas were largely concerned with the revival of an imperial Incan culture that no longer existed, it is perhaps unsurprising that they would generally not trouble themselves with the plights of

rural communities. The reinvented term indigenista does not have any connotations of any currently-existing system of living, but instead with a fictitious vision of a long-dead empire: 'Stripped of his social reality and converted into a fictitious entity [...] the indigenista allows even the mestizos and Creoles to identify themselves with him'.¹⁹

Indigenous dances and festivals have come to form a large sector of Cuzco's modern artistic life, from the pomp and extravagance of Inti Raymi to smaller performances by grassroots groups.²⁰ To a passing tourist or limeño, the city is resplendent with a sense of indigenous 'authenticity'; an authenticity which has been in fact carefully manufactured by intellectual and social elites. In the case of the larger and more standardised ceremonies, the pioneers of indigenismo began by drawing upon native rhythms, styles, and other features for their reinvented performances; however these were deemed to need 'purification' for the modern day.²¹ The official bodies of folklore of the mid-century placed demands upon ceremonies, insisting they be deemed 'authentic', which included movements and routines that urban academics perceived as 'suitably Indian', and the purging of European elements considered 'discordant'.²²

A similar obsession with purity can be found with how indigenista intellectuals have treated the Quechua language, most notably through the Academy of the Quechua Language (AQL). Partially founded by Faustino Espinoza Navarro, who was also responsible for the reinvention of the Inti Raymi festival, the AQL is similarly concerned with aristocratic reverence.²³ Their standardised form of Quechua, Qhapaj'simi, is supposedly a reconstruction of the language as it was taught to the royal family, which has no basis in any of the modern dialects still spoken today, of which there are several across Peru, Ecuador and Bolivia.^{24 25} An example of this would be the AQL's insistence on polyvocality (having five distinct vowel sounds), the same as Spanish, when most dialects are trivocal.²⁶ This, Niño-Murcia argues, not only reflects the, 'belief that the language of nobles is always better than every other',²⁷ but is also designed to confer a sense of authority of power and respect upon Cuzco. The AQL's official position is that Quechua

"Peru has a different outlook on race compared to most nations, in both historical and modern contexts "



originated within Cuzco, although this has been widely disputed.²⁸ The obsession with language purity can perhaps best be exemplified in local Quechua speakers being unable to understand the Quechua spoken during *Inti Raymi*: 'Once again the elite have appropriated the indigenous cultural patrimony but excluded the Indians from it.'²⁹ *Inti Raymi* is also notable for requiring the parts of the guards of the Inca to be played by Peruvian servicemen instead of indigenous groups, to give the ceremony a national character.³⁰ In short, 'Quechua' and 'Incan' identities are no longer in the hands of indigenous communities within Peru, but rather a small group of mestizo urban elites who decide what is or is not authentically native.

It is true that many performers in Cuzco, like the aforementioned grassroots groups, do come from the rural Andes.³¹ However, they often face pressure to present their performances, who are often based off authentic Andean tradition, in a way that is 'de-Indianised' in order to be taken seriously.³² This concern is one that has been taken to the highest political arena during the 2001 presidential election and subsequent Toledo administration. Toledo publicly celebrated his rural Andean roots, and surrounded himself with Andean and Incan symbols during his election.³³ However, it was also framed within the context of him being a *chollo*. This denotes, 'an ethnic status that indicates a socially mobile and educated migrant to the coast,' marking him as distinctively indigenous, but not 'overly' indigenous.³⁴ While initial hopes were high for Toledo to lift the fortunes of struggling native communities, his attempted reforms, most notably the foundation of the National Commission for the Andean, Amazonian and Afro-Peruvian Peoples (CONAPA), came under fire for financial corruption and for making decisions behind the backs of the indigenous groups it was supposed

to represent.³⁵ This eventually resulted in CONAPA being entirely disbanded due to lack of support in 2004.³⁶

This is not to say that indigenous peoples have no place in Peru. Under neoliberalism, Cuzco has found a new kind of visitor: the mystical tourist. New Age mysticism has painted an air of spirituality all over Cuzco's commercial sector; everything from restaurants to, 'a child selling finger puppets to tourists [...]' is likely to draw on discourses of Inca mysticism.³⁷ As the Andes have become marketed as a centre of spiritual energy, it has created both formal and informal culture industries within Cuzco and the surrounding countryside.³⁸

Professional shamanism has become common in the area, with tours involving 'spiritual rites' performed by shamans popular in tourist advertisements.³⁴ Such traditions may not quite be authentic to the peoples themselves, however. Gómez-Barris cites the example of the Centro de Paz y Luz (CPL) in the Sacred

Valley of the Inca, which offers 'spiritual' tours involving rites performed by the Q'ero people.³⁹ However, the methodology of the rites used by CPL were originally invented by Alberto Viollida, a white anthropologist in California.⁴⁰ It often strips back and simplifies elements of actual Q'ero practice, such as their *despacho* offerings to Pachamama.⁴¹ The traditional variant, 'takes several hours, has multiple layers, and is accompanied by music and dance,' yet the version taught in CPL workshops lasts under an hour to better appeal to tourists' attention spans and sensibilities.⁴² Additionally, the workshop often replaces actual Quechua language and religious customs with New Age jargon such as 'heart knowledge'

or 'higher intention.'⁴³ Most Andeans involved in the tourist trade do not work as shamans, however, but as porters for tourists, and in both cases native communities receive a very small share of the profits made from their work by multinational tourism companies.³⁸ By the 21st Century, the appropriation of Andean customs and culture is no longer just the pastime of the cusqueño urban elite, but have now been appropriated by the elite of the entire world.

A cursory glance at Cuzco could almost convince one that the Inca were never truly conquered, and instead merely entered a state of syncretism with the

"This not to say that indigenous peoples have no place in Peru. Under Neoliberalism, Cuzco has found a new kind of visitor: the mystical tourist."

Spanish colonists, as the Son of the Sun once again performs the ritual worship of his father in the sacred citadel of Sacsayhuamán during the winter solstice. The wisdom of the mountain spirits can be found all around the area, from the spiritual trails maintained for tourists by underpaid porters

and shamans, to the names of the expensive restaurants the same tourists enjoy.⁴⁴ Yet this overt layer of Inca-ness and spirituality was not an organic creation of the Andean groups it supposedly represents. Instead, the idea of what constitutes an authentic Inca or Andean identity is decided for them by mestizo intellectuals or multinational corporations for their own artistic vision, or for the purpose of profit. As the identity of the Quechua peoples has been stripped away from them for the purposes and gains of others, their old imperial capital can only be described as a city wearing its own skin.

The Death of Red Shiism: Rise of Elites in the Shia Lebanese Community

ABRAHIM ASSAILY explores the changing identity of Lebanese Shiites and how their community has been affected by the new class of elites which has emerged

The Iranian intellectual and revolutionary Dr. Ali Shari'ati was fascinated with the concept of 'Red-Shiism' throughout his life. This theory posits that the Shiite sect of Islam, of which Shari'ati himself was a follower, has two dialectical natures. According to Shari'ati, there is a revolutionary and progressive 'Red-Shiism,' and a reactionary 'Black Shiism.'¹ This theory, at the time of its inception in the mid-1960s, rang particularly true for his Shia followers in Lebanon, as many found themselves at the centre of revolutionary and egalitarian movements.² Many of the most influential members of the Lebanese Communist Party were members of the Shia community native to Lebanon.³

However, since the Iranian Revolution, the Arab Spring, and the rise of groups such as Amal and Hezbollah in the 1980s, there has been an influx of a new elite in the Lebanese Shia community, so that the community now includes a large number of wealthy Shia businessmen who own major construction, banking, and food companies.⁴ This massive shift from a deprived, excluded, and disenfranchised group of people to one which wields immense socio-economic power in Lebanon can only be explained by looking at the historical and material factors at play in the country and in the wider Shia community.

The Shia of Lebanon have historically been an oppressed group within Lebanese society. Despite making up 27 percent of the population at the time of Lebanon's founding, the Shia held only 3.6 percent of government positions within the country's newly formed democracy.⁵ The majority of Shias lived as impoverished farmers in the regions of Jabal 'Amil, in the south of Lebanon, and the Beqaa Valley in the east.⁶ Their impoverished lifestyle would continue throughout the early post-independence period, with the Lebanese Marxist and scholar Fawwaz Traboulsi going as far as to claim that the Shia constituted a religious-proletariat group within Lebanon.⁷

This destitution and lack of inclusion in government would push the growing intellectual and working-class communities to join popular fronts in great numbers, such as the Lebanese Commu-

nist Party, in an attempt to gain better representation. Professor Rula Jurdi Abisaab, a scholar on the history of Shiism, describes how 'several leftist [Shias] saw communism not only as a program for secular political change and economic improvement, but also as a moral system resonating with Shi'ite emancipatory and spiritual symbolism.'⁸ This is reflected by the fact that even religious clerics, such as Sayyid Ja'far Mushin al-Amin, joined communist organisations and began espousing Marxist ideals.⁹

The rapid increase in Shia communists progressed during the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s, as Arab nationalist and Ba'athist movements continued to view Shias as 'non-Arabs,' and the liberal and far-right parties continued supporting the sectarian system that oppressed the Shia community.¹⁰ However, in the years preceding the Lebanese Civil War, which would eventually break out in 1975, the first bourgeois elements of Shia society began to emerge.¹¹ The Lebanese left was becoming increasingly dominated by Christian elites, which led many Shias, particularly clerics, to consider the creation of a left-wing party led and run by the Shia people, so that they could exist autonomously and separately from the other popular fronts being controlled by the Christians.¹² This would culminate in the creation of the Lebanese Resistance Regiments, or Amal, by Imam Musa Sadr in 1975.¹³ The founding members of this group would go on to become the leading elites of Shia society in Lebanon today. Intellectuals, revolutionaries, and politicians such as Nabih Berri, Sayyid Hassan Nasrallah, Naim Qassem, and the recently deceased Mohammad Hussein Fadlallah were among the early ranks of Amal, along with many others who now make up the economic and political elite of Lebanon.¹⁴

When the Civil War did break out in 1975, the Shia community was on the front lines of the communist brigades, which were led by the Syrian Social Nationalist Party (SSNP) and Amal, among others.¹⁵ The Shia's prominence within the communist war effort led a number of prominent figures becoming low-ranking commanders, which provided a new strength and organization in the Shia

community.¹⁶

The Israeli invasion of 1982 and the 1979 revolution in Iran both contributed to the formation of Hezbollah in the mid-1980s.¹⁷ The ideology of Hezbollah as originally stated in their 1985 manifesto, is a fusion of Khomeini-style Islamism and leftist anti-imperialist discourse.¹⁸ Hezbollah became incredibly popular very quickly among the Shia, both because of their motivating rhetoric and the fact that they paid a higher salary than any other militia at the time.¹⁹ Hezbollah ranks were massive by the time they began their resistance against Israel.²⁰ Eventually, when the fighting was over, Hezbollah's resistance initiatives against Israel were seen to have been a major factor in Israel's ultimate withdrawal from Southern Lebanon, and this, along with the role they played in the peace deal known as the 'Taif Accords,' which officially ended the Civil War, would cause their numbers to swell even further.²¹

Following the end of the war, both Amal and Hezbollah became involved in the electoral politics of Lebanon, both running candidates in the first post-war election, which took place in 1992.²² Both parties saw a great deal of success in this first election and have continued to receive immense support from the Shia community in Lebanon to this day.²³ In the most recent election, all but two of the 27 Shia seats went to either Amal or Hezbollah candidates.²⁴ It is not only in electoral politics, however, that these two parties have established an active clique of elites.

Both Amal and Hezbollah have also become active in the Lebanese trade unions, with Amal becoming heavily involved in the leadership of the General Confederation of Lebanese Workers (CGTL) and Hezbollah controlling the powerful al-Wafaa union.²⁵ They also played a large role in paying Shia-controlled construction companies that were paid to rebuild cities and towns in the south and east of Lebanon which had been destroyed from the Civil War.²⁶ Through economics and politics, Amal and Hezbollah increasingly sought to institutionalise their organisations and provide a source of economic development for the Shia community.²⁷

Another telling example of this economic investment in the Shia community is the development of the Shia slums in Beirut after the civil war.²⁸ These slums had been around since the mass Shia immigration into the cities in the 1960s.²⁹ During the rebuilding process after the war, many of these slum buildings became very valuable properties due to their proximity to downtown Beirut and the waterfront, which had been developed into a wealthy cosmopolitan neighborhood.³⁰ However, it was not the Sunni and Christian upper classes moving in, but the the new Shia elites who had allied themselves with Amal and Hezbollah.³¹

According to the World Bank, the Shia majority region of Southern Lebanon has seen consistent economic growth since the end of the civil war, with a two percent increase in their GDP from 2016 to 2017.³² Although this is a positive change for Lebanese Shias, it is not one which is felt across all social classes within the community. Only a small amount of land owners and businessmen have been able to see the fruits of this development.³³

This move toward a more elite, hierarchical, and business-oriented community was a natural progression from the perspective of Amal leaders, who had founded the group on an anti-socialist and pro-development platform.³⁴ However, Hezbollah, which had been formed on the ideology of anti-imperialist and populist rhetoric,³⁵ was being forced to reconsider its positions. Thus, the party leaders rewrote Hezbollah's manifesto in 2005, making the party platform more aligned with neoliberalism and marketisation.³⁶ Despite this more elitist approach to their activities, both parties maintained vast support among the Shia of Lebanon, mainly because they were still seen as the party which presented the strongest opposition and protection against Israeli Forces, which were still seen as a great threat to the southern Lebanese population.³⁷

These changes have come in more recent years, as this new elite has become increasingly evident over time. The actions taken by Hezbollah and Amal to align themselves with the political and economic elite, as opposed to the disenfranchised, has increased scepticism among the Shia working class as to whether these parties are still worth supporting.³⁸ This was clearly demonstrated in the 2015 teachers union elections.³⁹ The election was between a candidate backed by both the pro-Syrian March 8th Coalition, which includes Hezbollah and Amal, and a candidate only backed by the Communist Party and a few minor organisations.⁴⁰ The candidate backed by Amal and Hezbollah won, but the other secured 42 percent of the vote, which was almost entirely made up of Shia voters, proving that the parties' hold over the Shia community, within which they were originally formed, is now at risk of disappearing completely.⁴¹

The rise of the new Shia elite has been called by some the 'Lebanonisation' of the Shia community and Hezbollah. All of the other religious sects that make up Lebanon have existed for decades, with a special few dominant political parties and economic elites running their communities.⁴² This system is in many ways rooted in the sectarian nature of Lebanon's polity that is characterized by each religious community being forced to compete with one another for political dominance.⁴³ This removes opportunities for a secular or progressive government to take root as the main societal cleavage is not economic or ideological as it is religious.

Today, Fawwaz Trablousi's statement that the Shia constitute a unique religious-proletariat class within Lebanon is no longer true. The Shia of Lebanon have instead become more similar to the other religious sects of Lebanon since the end of the civil war.⁴⁴ They have more structural power now than ever before. This is due to organisations such as Amal and Hezbollah developing and defending the interests of the Shia across Lebanon's socio-economic landscape.⁴⁵ However, these changes have not affected everyone within the Shia community equally, instead creating a group of elites that claim to speak and act on behalf of the wider Shia population.

Quds Force: The Operatives Who Helped Bring Assad Back from the Brink

ROB HASWELL profiles the secretive Quds Force, their role in the Syrian Civil War, and their fight against the Islamic State in Iraq

Since the Islamic Revolution and the toppling of the Shah by Ayatollah Khomeini in 1979, the newly minted Islamic Republic of Iran has undertaken several projects to expand its sphere of Shia influence across both the Middle East and the world at large. Much of this strategy is implemented through the arming and organising of proxy forces and foreign terrorist entities; most notably, it has been conducted through Hezbollah and various Shia networks in Iraq during the American occupation, and later during the Islamic State (IS) conflict.¹

Underpinning all of these actions was the Quds Force, a special operations organisation formed within the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) shortly after the Islamic Revolution.² Whereas the IRGC works to maintain Islam within Iran, the Quds Force operates abroad against foreign targets. Described as a, 'sharp instrument of Iranian foreign policy, roughly analogous to a combined C.I.A. and Special Forces',³ the Quds Force reports directly to the Supreme Leader of Iran, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei.⁴ While much of the organisation's training is unknown, its members are described, 'extremely talented [and] they tend to be the best in the IRGC'.⁵

Although it is primarily focused on the Middle East, the Quds Force has been suspected of conducting operations on nearly every continent.⁶ Despite this, Iran's Quds Force remains an obscure and relatively unknown force outside of specific intelligence and political communities. With very little credible information about the organisation, the Quds Force has successfully operated in various capacities across the Middle East since its inception.⁷ The ongoing Syrian Civil War and its spill over into Iraq has proved to be the unit's most ambitious mission to date. Fighting on two fronts, the unit has effectively been working to counter two of the greatest threats currently facing Iran: the annihilation of the Assad regime in Syria and the proliferation of IS forces in Iraq.

Major General Qassem Soleimani is the unit's commander,⁸ a man shrouded in nearly as much secrecy as the Quds Force itself. Described as, 'the single most powerful operative in the Middle East',⁹ Soleimani is both admired and feared in the

Western and Middle Eastern security and intelligence communities. Soleimani is an overt and covert veteran of every Iranian war that has taken place since he joined the IRGC in 1979.¹⁰ Distinguishing himself during the Iran-Iraq War, Soleimani became known as a company commander who was renowned amongst his men for his bravery and compassion, during a time when, 'Iranian commanders indiscriminately sent very, very young children to the front line.'¹¹ Assuming command of the Quds Force in 1998, Soleimani sought to establish connections not only across the Middle East, but around the globe as well.¹² Following the 9/11 attacks, he had a fluctuating diplomatic relationship with American diplomats and military personnel, providing intelligence against Taliban targets, but taunting senior American personnel during the Iraq War in order to gain the trust of those opposing the American forces.¹³ Arriving in Syria in 2012, Soleimani took personal charge of the Iranian effort and was described by American observers as, 'running the war himself.'¹⁴ Further deployments to Iraq against the IS on the part of the Quds Force only consolidated this image in the minds of foreign observers.

The Quds Force's role in the Syrian Civil War can be traced back to 2010. The Arab Spring began on 18 December 2010 in Tunisia, following the death of fruit vendor Mohamed Bouazizi.¹⁵ After the humiliating confiscation of his fruit cart by state security officers, resulting in an inability to provide for his family, Bouazizi committed suicide by self-immolation. In combination with high internal stressors, this act angered many, and sparked large anti-government demonstrations.¹⁶ These demonstrations spread rapidly across the Middle East and North Africa, reaching Syria in March 2011. The initial demonstrations broke out following the detention and torture of sixteen-year-old boys by regime forces for drawing graffiti stating: 'the people want the downfall of the regime' in Daraa.¹⁷ Just as the Syrian military was quick to apply violence as a means of quashing the protests, so too were protestors who armed themselves against the regime.¹⁸ As the Arab Spring transitioned into the Arab Winter, Syria began its long slide into a bloody, divisive, and protracted conflict.

Iran acted as one of the first

foreign nations to intervene in the then expanding Syrian Civil War in 2012.¹⁹ As one of Iran's longstanding Middle Eastern allies due to both isolation in the Arab World and a shared Shia faith, Syria's growing war and prospect of the Assad regime losing was deemed an 'existential threat' for Iran.²⁰ Militarily, Iran responded by sending IRGC and the Quds Force into Syria. Like with many other Middle Eastern conflicts the Quds Force, under the leadership of Soleimani, began to establish both offensive and logistical strategies. Using Iraqi airspace, Iran was able, 'to fly men and munitions into Damascus, and without this aid, the Assad regime would have collapsed.'²¹ With arms and ammunition in the hands of their Syrian counterparts, the IRGC and Quds Force quickly began to develop targeting networks before engaging in kinetic operations against rebel groups. This did not go unnoticed by the United States government and officials, who noted that, 'they were spread out across the entire country.'²² Within Syria, Soleimani, and the Quds Force in general are widely credited, 'with delivering the strategy [...] that has turned the tide against rebel forces.'²³ Currently, the Assad regime is acting as nothing more than a 'client state.'²⁴ The Assad regime's, '2016 victory during the Battle of Aleppo, a battle fought primarily between the Quds Force and the Sunni opposition, signalled the beginning of the final victory by the regime.'²⁵

The Quds Force and IRGC have had significant help in Syria from the Lebanese based Hezbollah. Hezbollah was established in 1982 during the Lebanese Civil War following IRGC incursions, 'to help organise Shiite militias,'²⁶ in Lebanon, similar to the operations undertaken by Iran twenty years later during the Iraq War. As one of Iran's most well known and successful proxies, Hezbollah has a close working relationship with the Quds Force.²⁷ In some cases, they have even been described as, 'the recruiter and trainer for the Quds Force in Arabic-speaking countries.'²⁸

The prominence of the IS is also a relevant analysis point when attempting to profile the Quds Force and their role in Syria and Iraq. The United States' invasion of Iraq in 2003 saw two highly significant and inadvertent effects on the region with regard to Iran. First and foremost, the deposition of Saddam Hussein

worked to empower Iranian hardliners, as Hussein had previously acted as a proverbial barrier between Iran and the West.²⁹ Secondly, by empowering the Shia majority in Iraq, the United States unintentionally caused Iraq to pivot along a 'Shia Crescent' and form much closer ties with Iran.³⁰ Due to the influence of Iran, and more particularly the influence of Soleimani, who had many personnel connections in Iraq, it was Iran and not the United States that Iraq looked to for aid following IS' invasion of the country.³¹ The Quds Force began operations against the IS forces shortly after the establishment of the Caliphate, quickly becoming the, 'most influential foreign actor in Iraq.'³² Iran began conducting airstrikes against IS in July 2014, while the Quds Force personnel, including Soleimani, moved into Iraq.³³ Much like in Syria, Iran was able to rely on the presence of proxy forces in Iraq.³⁴

Many of these Shia militias, such as Asaib Ahl al-Haq (AAH), were pre-existing, having been cultivated by Iran during the American reoccupation of Iraq and re-mobilised against the IS.³⁵ The Quds Force and its Shia proxies stood at the centre of the world's attention during the Second Battle of Tikrit, one of the largest offensives launched against the IS.³⁶ Soleimani himself was present for both the planning and execution of the battle, one that was, 'more deliberate and better planned.'³⁷

That being said, many of the Quds Force activities within Syria and Iraq remain unknown. Photographic evidence shows Soleimani as a sort of spectre, disappearing and reappearing in different regions of either country.³⁸ In a sense, this exemplifies Soleimani and the Quds Force. Periodically, IRGC remains are returned to Iran from Syria or Iraq, something on which the Iranian regime rarely comments, asserting that the individuals found were merely there in an 'advisory' role.³⁹ Many observers have highlighted concerns of mission creep within the IRGC and the Quds Force mandate,⁴⁰ but for the time being Tehran is happy to support its allies. Russian air support and Iranian ground logistics have bolstered the Assad regime to a dominant position within the Syrian Civil War, and, for now, the Assad regime sits on the brink of victory.⁴¹

The Elite in America: Does a 'New' Elite Further Render the US an Oligarchy Rather Than a Democracy?

CAMILLA HALLMAN explains and identifies how elitism permeates US politics



The word 'elite' is defined as, 'the people who have the most wealth and status in a society, the most successful or powerful group of people.' These are the people that democracy in the United States (US) benefits, the people so often criticised in populist rhetoric, the oppressors of the masses. Their presence in US politics has rendered the US an oligarchy rather than a democracy. The fear of an immobile or permanent elite is on the forefront of the average American's mind; they feel as if their voice is not being heard in their democracy. Elite theory, or the idea that a small minority of economic and political elite hold the most power within a state, independent of democratic elections, is not new, but it is important to recognise that both the traditional elite and a new 'social elite' have risen to power in the US. While some will point to the election of President Trump as evidence against elite control over democracy, this is in fact emblematic of a form of social elitism, combined with more traditional economic elite forces, that together continue to disenfranchise the masses in the US.

In the short history of the US, there have been consistent patterns of action to support the idea that elites have been controlling the people. US history can be seen as, 'a repeating cycle of anti-elite revolt,' according to Beverly Gage of *The New York Times*.² Despite revolting against the political elite of Great Britain, the early political and military leaders of the US, often referred to as the founding fathers, were themselves a class of social and economic elites. The Cold War era brought a unified

political, commercial, and military elite in the US, whilst the 20th Century saw a rise in the trend of politicians investing and interacting with national corporations – intertwining their political and commercial interests. Economic elites are those who have substantial economic resources, such as large amounts of wealth, large portions of private property, or ownership of business firms and commercial interest groups. As much as politicians have publicly scolded interest groups or sworn that they were not influenced by lobbyists and their money, the fact remains that they require large sums of money to campaign, and therefore remain under the thumb of interest groups and wealthy supporters. In 2016, the cost of winning an election in the House of Representatives was about \$1.5 million and the cost of winning a Senate election was about \$10.5 million. Individual donors of a thousand dollars or more were responsible for nearly 50 percent of all money given to Senate candidates, and nearly 40 percent of all House candidates.

This might be less controversial among US citizens if these elites were to represent the interests of the majority, however this is not the case in practice. President of the Winston Group Corporation and former Republican staffer, David Winston, quotes voters in focus groups as saying, 'The elites get their say every day [...] They override my vote,' and, 'I don't think my voice is heard at all [...] I'm insignificant.' The fact that elites run the government frustrates American voters because these elites do not understand the problems the masses face and,

therefore, do not represent them. These sentiments do not come without evidence. In a 2014 study, Professors Martin Giles of Princeton University and Benjamin Page of Northwestern University demonstrated through multivariate analysis that the average citizen has little to no independent impact on government policy, whereas economic elites and business interest groups have substantial independent influence. While Giles and Page hypothesised the possibility that an elite figure might be able to make more informed decisions, their results indicated that despite access to more information, elites were not able to understand the factors that influenced a member of the general populace's wellbeing – such as Medicare, social security, food stamps, etc. – nor were they more inclined to work for the common good.

The USA's history of anti-elite sentiment paves the way for a perilous future. As this sentiment grows, the likelihood of populist movements, such as the 2016 election of President Donald Trump, increases. While some viewed the election of President Trump as a monumental overthrow of the status quo and as a symbol of a rising anti-elitist movement, it is important to recognise that Trump himself is an elite, who paraded under the façade of anti-elitism in order to gain political power. Trump did not conform to traditional Republican or conservative ideology and was thus able to turn his voters against 'the elite' politicians in power. During the 2016 presidential race, Trump's chief executive campaign officer Steve Bannon said that the, 'elites have taken all the upside for themselves and pushed the downside to the working and middle-class Americans.' Rhetoric like this encouraged Trump voters to view 'the elite' as a condescending force conspiring against the masses. Trump is a political opportunist who used this rhetoric, on top of his celebrity, his wealth, and his media connections, to campaign and win without the support of most of the Republican Party. What most politicians running for office on both sides failed to realise during the 2016 election was that the American people were not concerned with political ideology, they were frustrated by their lack of voice. Donald Trump currently has a net worth of \$3.1 billion, he is an upper class white man who inherited wealth, and he has been steadily

building his celebrity since the 1980s. However, Trump was able to convince the disenfranchised populace that he would give them a voice, despite clearly being a member of the elite himself. Now the voters Trump rallied to his side with his anti-elite rhetoric continue to be marginalized. Despite Trump's victory, voters have not seen, 'change in the attitude of the elites toward them, the [recognition of the] value of their contributions to society, or [understanding of] the challenges they face.'

The election of President Trump has shown is that the traditional economic elite are not the only elite that exist. It is no longer those who are politically in power – those who have won election after election due to connections with wealthy donors and a steadfast dedication to party ideology – it is social elites who also contribute to this power dynamic. The definition of elite should be broader than that given in Giles and Page study and should include a social elite and an economic elite. Widespread social elitism in the US has resulted in groups of minorities and the lower-income persons becoming completely prevented from influencing elections or policy, while the wealthy, or those whose names carry weight, have a disproportionately large influence on the political decision-making.

Theoretically, the US offers the right to vote to everyone, but voter suppression of the non-elite has been seen in past elections and in the 2018 midterm elections, in both legislation and in actions by the political elite. This results in the fact that the, 'wealthy tend to vote more frequently. Non-voters are more likely to be poor, young, Hispanic or Asian-American,' and, 'white American voters are more likely than minorities to be frequent voters.' Many states with a Republican majority, such as Florida, Georgia, and North Dakota, have introduced new legislation under the guise of preventing voter fraud that actually prevents specific minority groups, whom would typically favour democrats, from voting. Polling centres in Kansas have been moved outside of city limits by Republicans and made inaccessible by public transport from minority-dominated cities. A study reported: 'In 2014, about 75 percent of people who made under ten thousand dollars and about 69 percent of those

who made under thirty thousand dollars did not vote.' Many of the working poor cannot afford to vote – not only due to laws, but because of employment obligations, lack of transportation, or failure to register. Members of the social elite also include affluent social manipulators such as Trump. Celebrities using social media have unprecedented influence in politics, especially following the 2016 election. Campaigning has always been about reaching voters and creating name recognition – long before social media. Celebrity endorsements have been a backbone to name recognition throughout modern electoral politics, with standout examples such as the Rat Pack's support of John Kennedy, Ronald Reagan's support of Barry Goldwater, Frank Sinatra's endorsement of Ronald Reagan, and Oprah's endorsement of Barack Obama. The manipulation of social media allows for news to take hold quickly and become viral. The effect of social media endorsements have immediate ripples – in the 24 hours following Taylor Swift's Instagram post on 8 October 2018, nearly 65,000 Americans aged 18 to 29 registered to vote. It remains to be seen what direct effect this will have on the midterm elections, but this phenomenon makes clear that celebrity in the social media age is a force to be reckoned with. Trump used this to his advantage during his own campaign. He used his name recognition, his social media savvy, and his independent wealth – all qualities of an elite – to help him succeed.

Both social and economic elites clearly hold the power in governmental policy and do their best to manipulate voters. However, the US still has 'free' elections and this affluent elite does not have dictatorial power. The US remains a democracy, but, 'if policymaking is dominated by powerful business organisations and a small number of affluent Americans, then America's claims to being a democratic society are seriously threatened.' Elite domination over politics ultimately renders the US an oligarchical democracy, where a relatively small group of people have a disproportionately large amount of control over the governmental system. If the US continues erecting further barriers to prevent voting and allows for even more monetary influence in politics, then it faces the danger of becoming an oligarchy all together.

From Thomas to Kavanaugh: Putting the 2018 Supreme Court Confirmation in Context

KENDAL LEFLORE evaluates the evolution of power and privilege in the United States since 1991 through a comparison of the recent Kavanaugh controversy to the first time a man was able to claim a seat on the Supreme Court despite allegations of sexual assault



27 years have passed since Clarence Thomas's place on the United States Supreme Court was confirmed despite the sexual assault accusations made against him by former colleague Anita Hill. In the three decades since, Clarence Thomas has sat upon 'the highest court in the land', while the battle for women's equality continues to rage on across the country. From the development and proliferation of Fourth Wave Feminism to the topical '#MeToo' Movement, female presence in the workplace and in the government continues to rise and awareness of sexual harassment has reached an all-time high. When Christine Blasey-Ford spoke out against Supreme Court nominee Brett Kavanaugh in September 2018, the nation was forced to re-evaluate the progress it had made since Anita Hill made her allegations in 1991. As Kavanaugh's pursuit of the Supreme Court seat began to dominate national conversations, conspicuous similarities between his case and Thomas's arose. By looking at both cases' background and the key figures, the parallels between both confirmation hearings, and the reactions and consequences that occurred as a result, it is clear that Kavanaugh's promotion to the Supreme Court demonstrates how little has changed in the United States government since the early 1990s, and that power and privilege continue to shape the course of American history.

When Thurgood Marshall, the legendary Supreme Court Justice who was both the first African-American to serve in the role and a prominent liberal judge, announced his retirement in 1991, the search for a viable replacement ensued. For many Americans, the chaotic and highly-politicised process of placing a new Justice on the Supreme Court was a familiar one, a struggle inevitable in the wake of any Supreme Court vacancy. When Bush nominated Clarence Thomas, predictable debates arose – debates that would be mirrored 27 years later. The nominee had a strong history of conservative adjudication, and many worried that his presence on the court would mean the reversal of landmark cases on issues such as civil rights, abortion, and secularism. Others wondered whether his confirmation would result in a victory for the Republican party that would endure for a lifetime – or whether he would turn out to be a centrist, ruling in favour of the left on some cases and the right on others.

This mirrored predicament is not the only thing the 1991 and 2018 political situations had in common. The context behind Thomas's nomination also has many intriguing similarities to Kavanaugh's. In 1991, it was Thurgood Marshall retiring from the Supreme Court, while in 2018 it was Anthony Kennedy, a similarly beloved Justice who was also a crucial tie-breaking vote in many landmark liberal cases. In 1991, Bush issued the

nomination; in 2018, it was Donald Trump, another Republican president looking to gain a conservative foothold in the Supreme Court. The two nominees also share strikingly similar career paths. Both were graduates of Yale Law School, and both worked for a Republican president's administration. Both Thomas and Kavanaugh also served on the same Court of Appeals in Washington, D.C. Perhaps the most conspicuous and relevant similarity between these men, however, was that they both held an immense platform of power, the kind that only an Ivy League-educated, politically-backed man of high repute can stand upon. The very fact that they were each the president's first choice to sit on the court implied they each retained a high level of authority and credibility.

The challenge to this power came in the form of two women: Dr Anita Hill and Dr Christine Blasey-Ford. Both came forward with unsettling stories implicating the two most-talked-about men in America at the time, and both women willingly sacrificed their right to anonymity and normalcy when they stepped into the national spotlight. Dr Anita Hill, the first tenured African-American professor at the University of Oklahoma, claimed that Thomas harassed her while they were both working for the same government agency. Allegedly, Thomas exploited his position as Hill's supervisor, repeatedly asking her to go on dates with him or bombarding her with graphic references to sex. Working under constant threat of these humiliating encounters, Hill underwent severe mental distress that led, at one point, to a five-day period of hospitalisation for 'acute stomach pain'. As one example of the pressure she was under to keep quiet, Hill, 'vividly' recalled Thomas saying, 'it would ruin his career,' if she ever spoke of his illicit behaviour. Hill's account of paralytic power structures within the workplace, systematically coercing women to stay silent in order to preserve their career and their reputation, was a testimony that resonated deeply with women across the country, themselves all-too-familiar with workplaces fraught with fear and frustration.

Dr Ford's alleged assault occurred not in the workplace, but in another scenario in which women have learned to be cautious: a high school party. While attending an all-girls private school in Washington D.C., Ford and her peers often mingled with students of nearby schools, including Kavanaugh's elite high school for boys. It was at one such social event around 1982 that, according to her testimony, Ford was locked in a bedroom by Kavanaugh and his friend Mark Judge. Kavanaugh allegedly pinned her down on the bed with the weight of his body before attempting to remove her clothing. To silence her screams, he covered her mouth with his hand. The attack has haunted

Ford, now a professor of psychology at Palo Alto University, throughout her life, leading her to seek therapy to assuage the lasting trauma. Ford said her most enduring memory of the incident was her attackers, 'uproarious laughter,' and their blatant joy at watching her struggle. Although the alleged attacks were quite different in nature, each demonstrated a clear disparity of power: Thomas tried to use his professional superiority to extract sexual favours from Hill, while Kavanaugh used his superior strength to physically overpower Ford.

For both women, coming forward was a matter of dignity and of truth. The assaults had stripped them of the former, and so they felt it their obligation, or, as Dr Ford put it, their, 'civic duty,' to reveal the latter, before either man was elevated to the highest court in the nation.

Although there were originally plans to overlook the accusations and move the Senate confirmation vote along as planned, it was agreed that the Senate Judicial Committee would call forth first the accuser and then the accused, allowing each to testify. During their hearings, Dr Hill and Dr Ford were both generally regarded favourably by the media, which considered them soft-spoken and apologetic. In 1991, as she was berated with indiscreet, often accusatory, questions, The New York Times reported that Hill's, 'demeanour impressed friend and foe of the nomination alike,' while Time Magazine called her, 'prim,' and, 'reserved [...] given more to listening than to talking.' In 2018, Dr Ford had a similar manner, described as speaking with, 'raw emotion and precision,' by The Guardian and as, 'extremely credible,' by Fox News host Chris Wallace. The nominees, on the other hand, went on the offensive, slinging insults and aggression at the senators on the committee rather than defending against the women's allegations themselves. 'During the past two weeks, I lost the belief that if I did my best, all would work out,' Thomas said, and, in condemnation of the senators before him, he added that he would, 'be lynched, destroyed, caricatured by a committee of the U.S. Senate rather than hung from a tree.' In 2018, Kavanaugh, also rarely mentioning his accuser, declared that the, 'coordinated and well-funded effort to destroy

my good name and destroy my family will not drive me out.' The New Yorker described his behaviour as containing, 'unmistakable notes of fury and bullying,' while psychiatrist Brad Greenspan wrote that, 'he behaved with hostility and belligerence.' Rather than adopting the patient and impassive characteristics of judicial settings, Thomas and Kavanaugh utilised their elite reputation and status as nominees to condemn the very fact that the hearings were taking place. This strategy of focusing on the Senate's authority over them rather than on the claims made against them was clearly an effective one, as they would both go on to be confirmed as Justices on the Supreme Court despite

"I lost the belief that
if I did my best, all
would work out,"
Thomas said"

the allegations raised against them. During both situations, the scope of the narratives grew from the hearings themselves to overarching political disputes, leading to party skirmishes that wholly omitted the women at the centre of the respective controversies. During Kavanaugh's testimony, Republican Senator Lindsey Graham did not pose questions to the nominee regarding his interactions with Dr Ford, but stated, 'this is hell,' and accused the Democrats of wanting to, 'destroy this guy's life.' The Republican party whip in 1991, Newt Gingrich, described Democrat's behaviour as, 'deliberate character assassination and a deliberate manipulation of the process.' Furthermore, Orrin Hatch, who still sits on the Judicial Committee today, repeatedly implied that Dr Hill's accounts of harassment had been fabricated by, 'slick lawyers,' with details stolen from novels and court cases. Rosalie G. Silberman, a former colleague of Thomas and Hill, said that Hill had, 'misinterpreted,' Thomas's remarks and was now, 'a pawn,' of his critics. In 2018, Dr Ford was also often described as, 'a pawn,' of the Democrats, seeking to block Donald Trump from successfully placing his nominee on the Supreme Court. By being relegated to the role of puppets for the liberal opposition, both Dr Hill and Dr Ford were effectively stripped of their agency.

Despite the distressing similarities between the two cases, there are some positive differences which also appear. For one, while Dr Hill's testimony sparked a movement in women's equality, with

1992 named 'The Year of the Woman,' Dr Ford's testimony came at the heels of the #MeToo movement, which itself successfully dethroned many powerful men who were revealed as sexual predators. This political atmosphere at the time of Ford's hearing may account for polls showed higher support for Ford than Kavanaugh, while in 1991 most Americans instead supported Thomas over Hill. Also, the Senate Judiciary Committee, made up entirely of white men in 1991, is now slightly more diverse, with four women, two African-Americans, and one Asian-American alongside their fourteen white male counterparts.

That said, the demographics of the Republican side of the committee remains wholly unchanged, and three of the eleven Republican senators who sat on the committee in 1991 remain there today, overseeing both Thomas and Kavanaugh's hearings, and supporting each nominee in turn. Considering recent movements like '#MeToo,' these senators may simply be vestiges of the past, clinging desperately to traditional ideals of power and privilege, soon to be swept away by fresh, passionate voices demanding change. Or maybe these voices for change will cry out in vain, as they did in 1991 and again in 2018, and the hope for a more egalitarian political system will remain unattainable.

From their early careers to their eventual placement on the Supreme Court, Clarence Thomas and Brett Kavanaugh had a curiously similar rise to power, one that would not be derailed by the allegations of sexual assault waged against them by Anita Hill or Christine Blasey-Ford. At each stage of the men's confirmation, from the context leading to their nominations, to their testimonies at the hearings, to the reactions that arose thereafter, they capitalised on their reputation and marginalised their accusers to claim their seat on the Supreme Court. Although almost three decades lie between the two appointments, it is evident that power and privilege have not become any less influential on the course of American history. As New York Times reporter Tom Wicker said on 10 October 1991, two days after Hill's allegations hit the headlines, 'perhaps the male world will be made somewhat more aware that it has usually preferred to blame the victim rather than question itself; but don't bet on it.'

Global Politics, Turning and Turning in the Widening Gyre

VALENTIN PYATAEV reflects on how lessons learned from W.B Yeats' century-old poetry can help us better understand modern populism and the cycles of history

Decades of progress followed by the abrupt and widespread rejection of what was learned from them, the uprooting of Enlightenment values that seemed immovable, the failure of democracy and diversity to stow away discontentment and hatred: striking parallels can be drawn between the world in which Irish poet William Butler Yeats (1865–1939) lived and that of our own.^[i] These similarities are elucidated in his work *The Second Coming* (1919). This poem spited the naivety of a world shocked that its rapid progress and prosperity could end in the atrocity of the First World War. Yeats, immediately observing after the war that ashes of division were waiting to be rekindled, warned that humanity had not yet learned from its mistakes. He was of course proven correct by the war's tragic sequel. There is a lot that Yeats' ominous prophecies can teach us about the nature and perpetuity of one of 2018's most pressing political issues: populism.

'The best lack all conviction, while the worst / Are full of passionate intensity.' Despite their brevity, these two lines provide a convincing summary of the nature of today's populism. It would be problematic to make a blatant modern-day comparison of the 'best' to liberals and the 'worst' to populists – and despite the simple terminology used, Yeats likewise did not make a case for the strict moral superiority of the contemporary equivalents of either group. Both factions are to blame for the impending chaos he describes.^[iii] Perhaps a more fitting 2018 adaptation of these lines would be 'the liberal elite lack all conviction, while the discontented populace is full of passionate intensity.' This is, arguably, the dichotomy that has given rise to populism across the globe.

Populism, whether left, right, nationalist, or socialist, is best explained by the 'thin-centred ideology' definition granted by Dutch political scientist Cas Mudde. He writes: 'Populism is an ideology that considers society to be ultimately separated into two homogenous and antagonistic groups: "the pure people" and "the corrupt elite".^[iv] This inversion of the

Yeatsian 'best' and 'worst' highlights that the blame for the rise of populism lies, arguably, just as much with the apathetic liberal elite as with the Trumps, Farages, and Le Pens. The 'pure people' have every reason to be full of 'passionate intensity'. The 2008 financial crash that was spurred by neoliberal deregulation of the banking sector was a stab in the gut to the global economy, and the torn bandages of austerity have not stopped the bleeding.^[v] Income inequality is growing – a recent report from the OECD states it 'has been growing in most wealthy countries in recent decades [...] a widening divide threatens not only the social but also the political stability of our societies.'^[vi] Other issues, such as the degrading value of human labour due to automation – exemplified by the threat of self-driving trucks eliminating two million jobs in the US – have exacerbated this economic disenfranchisement.^[vii] Furthermore, the modern political climate is being shaped potently by the mass immigration that is causing rapid change to the social structure of many European countries. A recent YouGov poll asking national publics of European Union member states about their opinion on the key issues facing Europe revealed that all but two of the eleven states surveyed placed 'immigration' and 'terrorism' as their top two concerns.^[viii] It can, therefore, be argued that the discontentment that is fuelling populism arises in part from xenophobia – but also from many reasonable apprehensions about the future of Western society. The international liberal order that has reigned through the emergence of these issues has been unable to provide convincing answers to people's pressing concerns, so their embrace of populism is to be expected. ^[ix]

These kinds of societal shifts are similar to what Yeats had in mind when he portrayed history as two alternating gyres: 'turning and turning in the widening gyre...' Visually, these are funnelling spirals which widen and contract within one another. When the outer gyre reaches its widest point before it begins its dim-

inution, it signals the end and decline of one age. Conversely, the gyre within it begins to expand and reveals the character of the next age. The two gyres swap roles and history begins to move along the path of the new dominant gyre.^[x] Global progress in international relations, science, and technology prior to World War I is represented by the outer gyre of history climaxing at its widest point.^[xi] The outbreak of war is the reason for which its 'centre' cannot hold, giving way to the unwinding of the interior gyre at its most contracted point. In this abstract way, Yeats argued that the First World War was not just a historical anomaly; it revealed the character of the dark new age to come as a greater atrocity lay waiting along the gyre's widening trajectory.

This would have been a fitting warning for liberal leaders like Tony Blair and Barack Obama, who mistakenly held firm belief in the infallible hegemony of their values. The former, in interview with the *New Statesman* in November 2016 explicitly affirmed his faith in the destiny of global liberal democratisation: 'Of course, history has a direction. There is progress, we are making progress...'^[xii] Perhaps he should have read Yeats to inform him of the real path history would take. It may be true that the Western model of liberal democratic capitalism ostensibly won the Cold War, allowing for further globalisation, cosmopolitanism, and the bolstering of an international legal and political order.^[xiii] To this extent, the world has travelled along the gyre of liberalisation for decades. Now, the gyre is at its most bloated and is ready to collapse. Third way neoliberalism was given a chance to prove its worth, but, in the face of the shockwave provided by the Great Recession and the recent European migrant crisis, it has proven itself unworthy of the public's devotion.^[xiv] As has been argued above, populism arose largely from the failure of liberalism to deal with people's concerns over issues like these. Where the liberal elite 'lack conviction' most critically is in justifying the dominance of their ideology to those that feel

left behind by it: the economic and social casualties of 'progress.' Populism is not a momentary diversion from the fixed path of liberalisation.[xv] Trump, Brexit, the rise of populist parties in Italy, Austria and Hungary, and the shocking popularity of the AfD and Le Rassemblement National in Germany and France respectively are not signs of electorates acting on a whim. The interior gyre is taking its place at the forefront of history – and it has just begun to unwind.

Yeats' vision of what lay further along the sinister interior gyre in his time may foretell our own future: 'And what rough beast, its hour come round at last, / Slouches towards Bethlehem to be born?' This is Yeats' eponymous subversion of the traditional idea of the Second Coming as foretold in the New Testament. He rejected the hopeful notion of a caring Christ ready to give guidance and healing to a suffering humanity. Instead, the poem's speaker reveals his vision of a monstrous sphinx ironically positioning itself as the Antichrist, spitefully choosing Bethlehem as its point of entry into our world.[xvi] This malevolent sphinx, as a symbol of the cruel nature of the new age, was Yeats' simplest way of warning a global society shaken by the First World War that the worst was yet to come.

But is the future of populism truly equivalent to the Yeatsian 'rough beast'? It may be contrarily argued that the megaphone offered to the voice of the people by populists is a benevolent reclamation of democracy. However, in the words of Cas Mudde, the crucial issue with populism in its modern form is that 'populists often ask the right questions but give the wrong answers'.[xvii] Populists stoke up popular discontentment, which may be founded on reasonable grounds, to an extreme pitch in order to gain influence. Jair Bolsonaro's demonisation of the press spurred on more than one hundred cases of threats and assaults against reporters covering the recent Brazilian elections.[xviii] We can see from this that a justifiable public concern (in this case mistrust of the media), when amplified by divisive 'us versus them' rhetoric by populist leaders, brews hatred and violence. The key features of liberal democracy which sensibly restrain majority rule, such as minority rights and the rule of law, are to some extent threatened by the notion of the 'general will of the people' that populists

seek to reinforce.[xix] To exemplify this, the right-wing national populism prominent in Europe and the US, which flirts ideologically with xenophobia, is especially a threat to the Western social structure rooted in inclusivity and diversity. We have already seen Trump's 'zero-tolerance' policy leading to the separation of migrant families at the US-Mexico border[xx] and the discriminatory travel ban on several Muslim-majority countries as well

as North Korea and Venezuela.[xxi] In Europe, the likes of Viktor Orbán are heartily optimistic about establishing an anti-immigrant majority in the upcoming European Parliament elections. [xxii] In short, populist policies, despite intending to be for the good of the people, do not always specify all people. What gets lost in debate when populists are in the arena is a focus on pragmatism. Majority rule simply does not always make for sound policy that results in the common good. A middle ground is needed for which the divisive nature of populism cannot yet accommodate – the reconciliation of the concerns of the disenfranchised with the sustenance of values fundamental to liberal democracy.

The reality of our situation must be conceded – populism will not fade quickly. Things will fall apart more before they can be repaired. However, that does not mean that

the unstoppable perpetuity of this cycle should be accepted. The message we should take from W.B. Yeats' work is that so long as we continue to neglect compassion and compromise, we will never break the cycle of the constantly alternating gyres of history. So long as humanity continues to be bitterly divisive and isolationist, The Second Coming will always be a prophecy of what is in store for us. A pessimistic reading of this theory would conclude that things cannot get better and that this cyclical strife is inevitable, but it is pointless to lose hope. Political polarisation, insularity, and xenophobia are all more challengeable in their twenty-first century iterations as they try to take over a world more connected, informed, and diverse than the one in which Yeats lived. It is time to learn from the mistakes made by past liberal establishments that left people behind and provide a convincing alternative to populism.

Turning and turning in the widening gyre
The falcon cannot hear the falconer;
Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold;
Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world,
The blood-dimmed tide is loosed, and everywhere
The ceremony of innocence is drowned;
The best lack all conviction, while the worst
Are full of passionate intensity.

Surely some revelation is at hand;
Surely the Second Coming is at hand.
The Second Coming! Hardly are those words out
When a vast image out of Spiritus Mundi
Troubles my sight: somewhere in sands of the desert
A shape with lion body and the head of a man,
A gaze blank and pitiless as the sun,
Is moving its slow thighs, while all about it
Reel shadows of the indignant desert birds.
The darkness drops again; but now I know
That twenty centuries of stony sleep
Were vexed to nightmare by a rocking cradle,
And what rough beast, its hour come round at last,
Slouches towards Bethlehem to be born?[ii]

Tourists and Vagabonds: When Mobility means Power in the Era of Globalisation and Migration



ANDREA PIROZZI analyses 'freedom of mobility' and explores in what way it is responsible for the allocation of power in the current 'era of migration'

Today's world is kept alive by the perpetual flow of goods, money, and people. It is like arterial blood, directly pumping into the heart of our globe. This relentless flow has the power to channel ideas and move capital at an increasingly rapid pace, as a result of the unprecedented 'time-space' compression that characterises our era. Consequently, flows of people moving around represent nothing but a perfectly logical feature of this global inter-connectivity and exchange. However, while the free circulation of some people is enthusiastically promoted and acclaimed, others are ruthlessly denied the same right. This divide underpins the distinction between different types of migrants and deepens the divide between legal and illegal movements of people. These categories profoundly shape political agendas worldwide, as the 'threat of invasion' is gaining ground as a concern. Furthermore, these categories mirror the division between the elites and non-elites of globalisation and set the scene for political and legal responses in defence of this dichotomy.

Technological progress has taught us to perceive space as a progressively dwindling dimension as a result of the faster, cheaper, and more accessible ways of moving around the planet. However, the degree of mobility – which describes the real freedom to choose where to geographically position ourselves – is creating unprecedented social hierarchies. In Bauman's view, the unparalleled reduction of distances in time and space tends to distribute power – power determines the human condition as it defines a person's freedom of choice and

social status – in a more unequal way, not a more homogenous one. To explain how the degree of mobility affects social stratification, Bauman uses the image of the 'tourist' and the 'vagabond' to describe what he considers to be the most crucial division of post-modern society. The tourist is whoever has the freedom to move according to their needs and dreams. This power of mobility, also referred to as autonomy or independence, is held dear by those who possess it, because it enables travelling to become a crucial component of a person's identity-building process and helps realise their individual freedom. Vagabonds, in contrast, do not have the same ability. These individuals usually mostly because they find the world intolerably inhospitable and have no other choice but to roam around. Tourists can move anywhere; nobody stops them, as they are not tied to a particular space. In contrast, vagabonds are tied to their particular space and time dimension and their power to move is therefore very limited.

Bauman's metaphor can be used to discern the different types of 'migrants'. The figure of the migrant is above all a contemporary political construct. It does not represent a 'fixed identity' or a 'type of person', but rather a social position that allows people to move, in accordance with their degree (or freedom) of mobility. All migrants experience some form of exclusion, depending on their political, juridical, and economic status. However, this does not affect all migrants in the same way. While for some migrating opens a door to profit, recreation, and opportunity, the majority of migrants face

a wide range of obstacles; this mirrors an utterly different experience of being on the move. In the aftermath of World War II, Hannah Arendt stressed that migrants are people who are in-between places. She argues that migrants without a legal origin or destination, in particular, feel the loss of a community granting rights in general, rather than the loss of one specific right. Arendt not only shows how frustrating the conditions for migrants can be, but she also highlights the crucial role of the nation-state in defining the right of man as the right of citizen. She describes how migrants and refugees alike are excluded from the most basic 'inalienable rights' that should theoretically be granted to every human being. Nowadays, we are facing what is considered to be the biggest migration crisis since World War II. It appears that the situation has not significantly changed since the War. Nation-states still have the power to design legal frameworks that formally categorise migrants, and most importantly, deem them 'legal' or 'illegal'.

Even in this era of globalisation, analysing the role that a nation-state's sovereignty plays in migration issues is still the best way to understand how exclusively freedom of mobility is allocated. The European Union's (EU) recent institutional, political, and legal response to migration exemplifies the EU's elitist attitude. According to this elite, it is crucial to preserve the current mobility divide in order to maintain control over borders and uphold political stability. The number of international migrants has grown rapidly since the beginning of the Twenty-First Century: from 173

million in 2000 to 258 million in 2017. While the movement of people has left its mark on the story of humanity, recent migration flows have presented new questions and problems. These include identity and cultural conflicts, which have become a new topic of debate and a source of tension in the Western World, and evoke political and legal responses by nation-states worldwide. Over the last years, EU member states have decided to strengthen cooperation to be able to deal with the increasing number of migrants and asylum seekers at their borders. Although initially reluctant to 'lose' their sovereignty, EU members were keen to achieve more equitable 'burden-sharing' and came to realise the importance of the Union to transnational issues like migration. The concerted activity of EU policymakers happens in a legislative playing field characterised by a structural 'contradiction' of international law. International law – in particular the Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) – guarantees freedom of movement, including a person's right to leave and return to a country. On the other hand, there are no rules authorising entry into a third country. The right of circulation is thus recognised, but migrants entering another country are de facto illegal and therefore exiled to a limbo of uncertainty and danger. Refugees embody a legal exception, as the principle of non-refoulement forbids countries from returning asylum seekers to a country where they would likely be in danger of persecution. This legislative discrepancy between international and national law gave rise to debates that display increasingly powerful political divisions, based both on social and cultural contrasts and on host countries' pragmatic cost-benefit analyses. The perception of an imminent 'invasion', fostered by media and political parties, is rapidly gaining ground among a growing number of Europeans. However, the political impact of African 'boat people' crossing the Mediterranean Sea – one of European countries' most recent and major concerns – is much greater than the impact the actual number of migrants would have on European society. EU policies have confirmed the general trend of sanctioning illegal migration. In addition, the EU has put very little effort into the creation of legal and safe pathways for migration and refugees.

Politically immobilised by growing fears around identity, security, and economic redistribution, the EU refrained from implementing a real burden-sharing common policy and unveiled an old-fashioned national conservatism. Single, national approaches are currently suffocating common solutions seeking to build safe humanitarian channels. This also profoundly affects refugees who should legally be granted protection, as they generally have to travel along the same routes as non-refugee migrants and face the same struggles when trying to reach Europe. The European answer to migration is therefore clear: Fortress Europe is a closed, privileged constellation inside a rapidly changing universe.

In 1999, the bodies of two teenage men from Guinea, Fode Tounkara and Yaguine Koita, were found in the undercarriage of an Airbus going to Belgium. This event shocked the European public as a moving note that was found on one of the young bodies described the reasons behind the desperate journey to Europe. These reasons were related to the unbearable situation back home: war, diseases, hunger, and poor educational opportunities gave these migrants no other choice. What was most shocking, however, was that they were aware of the danger, but decided to undertake the journey anyway. Almost twenty years later, migrants and refugees with similar motivations still die by the thousands on illegal migration routes. IOM data show that in 2018, the Mediterranean route – African migrants and refugees' main route to Europe – officially became the deadliest route in the world. The EU's policy response to the situation in the Mediterranean Sea clearly plays a role in this humanitarian tragedy. Both the EU-Turkey agreement and the shift from the 2015 Mare Nostrum project, a humanitarian Search and Rescue project at sea, to Frontex Triton, a European border control programme, leave little room for interpretation. The data indicates that the EU has failed to distribute fewer than two million arrivals – less than 0.4 percent of Europe's population – amongst its member states since 2014, demonstrating that the old continent remains sealed. Meanwhile, vagabonds drift in a spectrum of illegality, danger, and insecurity caused by their limited social and economic means, which has forced them to settle for extremely limited and unsafe

travel options. The situation in Libya is emblematic of a forgotten place, where torture, detention, exploitation, and rape are daily horrors for many refugees and migrants who are, for these reasons, trying to reach the other side of the sea. 'A living hell', as Amnesty International describes it, where the EU, aiming to stop migration flows, encourages Libya to trap people and provides the Libyan coast-guard with ships to transport migrants back to the country.

In Beckmann's view, mobility resides in immobility. Flows of people and information imply the presence of static structures (stations, warehouses, servers, etc.), which are necessary to organise these movements. Likewise, at the top-level, frontiers and bans are needed to maintain control and surveillance of such structures. The EU example clearly epitomises this type of, 'mobility contradiction.' Today's world is changing at a very rapid pace. The 'globalisation elite' feel the urge to control the perimeter of the space in which this change is happening; control rhymes with political, social, and cultural stability. Similarly, this controlled space allows the tourist to maintain the power to perform the, 'miracle of being in and out of place at the same time,' or in other words, to have the ability to move wherever she desires, without restriction. On the other hand, elites consider vagabonds disgusting and unwanted. They are called by many names: 'ilegales', 'clandestines', and 'boat people', to name a few. Vagabonds' common features are extreme poverty, and the mistrust that is tied to their movement. For the majority, this mistrust defines their identity. However, vagabonds are in fact tourists' doppelgangers. Bauman describes them as, 'the dark background against which the sun of the tourist shines so brightly that the spots are hardly seen.' These groups represent two different but very closely related realities in a world where everyone desires to be part of the miracle: everyone wants to have the freedom to move. This same freedom characterises the current 'era of migration' and represents both a privilege and a stigma for those who possess it and those who do not. At this crossroads of desire, need, and injustice, vagabonds have to play by the rules set for the underdogs – and mobility is the name of the game.

East West Street: On the Origins of Genocide and Crimes Against Humanity

By Philippe Sands (2016)

STAV SALPETER reviews one of the most critically acclaimed non fiction books of the past few years and explores the social fabric it analyses

Seven years of meticulous research and patient inward delving culminate in Philippe Sands' "East West Street", a work that unprecedentedly, in the author's words, "us[es] the lens of law to explore central issues of humanity". Sands' book focuses on the evolution of the legal concepts of 'genocide' and 'crimes against humanity' but reads like a historical thriller. In essence, Sands examines the backdrop to the Nuremberg Trials – the critical moment in which the sovereignty of the state became subject to the superlative law of human rights.

"East West Street" presents the intertwining stories of four men, who all have ties to the city of Lviv, today in Ukraine. In the centre of the narrative are Hersch Lauterpacht and Rafael Lemkin, who both studied at the law faculty of the same university in Lviv. Both of them had to flee the country during the Second World War, leaving members of their families behind, and each developed a separate theory regarding the legal persecution of mass murder. Lauterpacht suggested the appellation of 'crimes against humanity', which would address widespread attack on individuals. Lemkin, on the other hand, claimed that individuals were harmed on a large scale on account of their being a part of a group, and proposed the idea of 'genocide' to address that instead. Both genocide and crimes against humanity were referred to in the Nuremberg Trials, and eventually legislated into International Law.

Underlying the book is the constant tension between the idea of 'crimes

against humanity' and that of 'genocide', and their respective implied emphases on the individual and on the group. Philippe Sands eventually sides with Lauterpacht in favouring the former, drawing on his experience as a barrister to conclude that proving the charge of genocide in court reaffirms the very problems of divisiveness it attempts to amend. Sands has seen how the label of 'genocide' augments both the "victimhood of the targeted group and [the] hatred of the targeting group". However, even Sands acknowledges that despite the practical and intellectual attractions of focusing on the individual, we are irresistibly drawn to group identity as part of our nature. It has been argued that Sands' survey of the tension between 'crimes against humanity' and 'genocide' is too superficial, and does not sufficiently canvass the intellectual prepositions of Lauterpacht and Lemkin. While correct, perhaps such criticism overlooks the true intent of the book.

The beauty of "East West Street" lies in its ability to transcend the courtroom and explore this tension in other realms of our life, from religion and art to politics. Sands touches upon the Protestant roots of individualism and the genetic background of group identity as part of his larger narrative. Drawing on multiple sources of media – ranging from interviews and archival material to psychological inquiry and musical analysis - allows "East West Street" to explore the significance of the individual-group dichotomy from a unique interdisciplinary vantage point. As a friend of Sands is quoted to

have said, "[a]n abstract principle is not enough to be heroic; it has to be something which is emotional and deeply motivated." Perhaps these digressions are merely intended to add emotive effect to the legal questions in focus, but overall, they serve to enhance our understanding of them.

Beyond its philosophical inclinations, "East West Street" has immediately relevant implications for current political trends. According to Sands, a "hierarchy of horror" has been established, whereby genocide is considered a worse crime than crimes against humanity. Concurrently, we see a global political shift towards a focus on group identity. Sands provides the examples of Brexit and of the foreign policy of the United States under Trump, which according to him is a premeditated and methodological shift from multilateral treaties to bilateral ones. Hence, it may seem that the very basis of international law and accountability on which both Lemkin and Lauterpacht strove to establish their ideas is under threat.

In the words of Sands, "the ideas of 1945 are the right ideas", but International Law is still in its "medieval period" and challenges to its integrity are to be expected. However, as he explains, "we cannot take for granted what was achieved back then." Perhaps it is here that the importance of "East West Street" lies, in reminding us of the fragile foundation on which our current international legal system lies and encouraging us to engage in the debates it engenders.



ATONEMENT

In what ways does a sense of atonement influence global politics? Is it possible? Which nations have successfully atoned for crimes and mistakes?

Post your submissions to
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