



Reckoning With Reality

LETTER FROM THE EDITORIAL BOARD

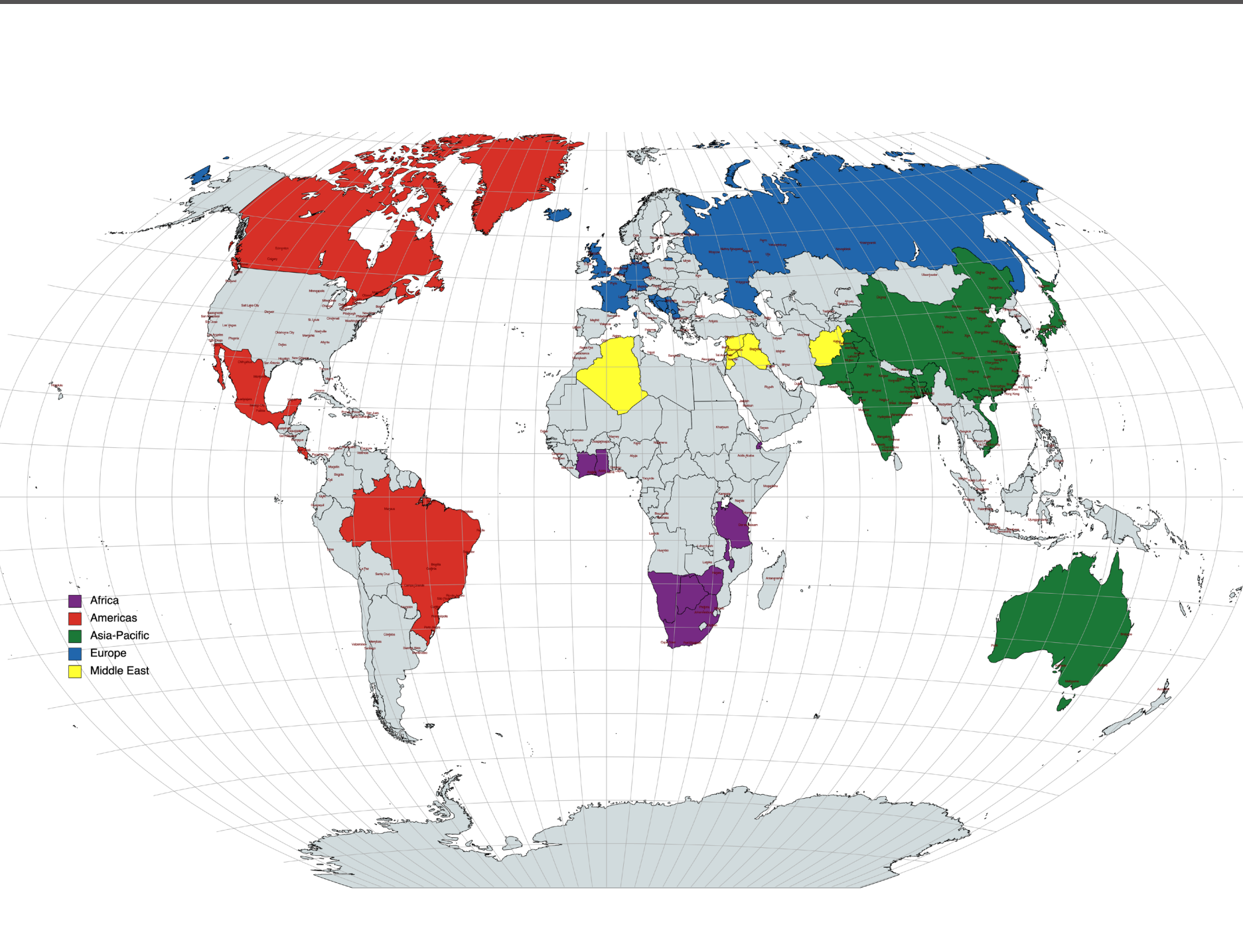
Dear Reader,

As we reach the end of 2021, we reckon with a new reality. One where there may be a light at the end of the tunnel as Covid-19 vaccine uptake increases, but also one where the world remains on fire. As a global society, we reckon with climate change. As this issue is published, the COP26 summit has ended with notable improvements that fall short of what is needed, according to climate experts. Justin Ballard writes on Slovenia's use of nuclear energy to limit its carbon footprint, but alone, it is not enough. The fight against climate change is a collective one, yet not all actors on the global stage are team players. Nation-states are not the only stakeholders in the climate crisis, however. Ayla Kaufman notes that without the protection of indigenous rights, there is no solution. These communities in Brazil, in particular, are essential to conserving the Amazon rainforest, yet their territories remain under attack by President Bolsonaro's administration. To reckon with a new reality is to reckon with the realities of climate change and a future with climate refugees, unwarranted fatalities, and destroyed forests.

It is also to reckon with our past. We must reckon with colonialist histories. It is no secret that the United States and European powers colonized the Indo-Pacific and the African continent. It also is no secret that by doing so, they destroyed indigenous social fabrics, created sectarian divisions, and exploited and stole from their colonies. And then they left. Their influence can still be felt today. Michael Deeter notes that the use of colonizer languages in African education systems decreases comprehension and school enrollment rates—and subsequently results in lesser economic outcomes. Colonialism alone does not encompass the extent of Western presence in the East, however. Military intervention and soft power do the same. Anna Tuohey writes on the U.S. withdrawal from Afghanistan in a call to action to protect women's rights.

Without reckoning with our past, we cannot do the same with the present. As a global society, we are at an apex with high rates of polarization and generational divides. Joey Do writes on manifestations of these divides in art, specifically in indie film culture in Vietnam. She notes that the country's youth demonstrate a "thirst" for defiant art. And this attitude is not confined to the art form. Our present is not solely a collection of divisions; it is also a politically motivated young population trying to answer two questions: Who are we, and who do we want to become? This very publication is MJIA's attempt to answer these questions.

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AFRICA.



It's time for a trade deal for Africa

Zack Blumberg

In June 2000, the European Union (EU) and the 89-member African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States (ACP) signed off on the Cotonou Agreement, a broad-ranging 20-year treaty aimed at strengthening the EU's ties to the non-Western world while helping the ACP countries develop and integrate into the global economy. The treaty has defined the EU's relations with much of the world for the past two decades, so it was hardly surprising that earlier this year, the EU and ACP agreed¹ on a subsequent deal: the creatively named "Post-Cotonou Agreement." The Post-Cotonou Agreement has a decidedly modern² flavor; while it encourages development, it strikes a more socially conscious tone than the original treaty, emphasizing the importance of fighting climate change and promoting democracy and human rights. However, the deal's lofty ambitions obscure its underlying issue. On a fundamental level, the old EU-ACP treaty framework is outdated and a poor mechanism for advancing African interests. Going forward, the EU must negotiate with Africa, not as a part of the ACP, but as a standalone partner. This bilateral model would promote EU-Africa cooperation

and continent-wide economic development, legitimize Africa's supranational political and economic institutions, and grant Africa the global recognition and status it truly deserves.

The Post-Cotonou Agreement conflicts with Africa's own intra-continental integration initiatives, hindering both continental and global economic development. In 2018, the African Union (AU) oversaw the creation³ of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), a continent-wide agreement aimed at eliminating barriers to international trade within Africa. As of today, 53 of the continent's 54 countries have signed onto the agreement (Eritrea being the only holdout), and 24 have ratified⁴ the treaty domestically. Although AfCFTA is still in its infancy, it represents a major step towards continental integration and provides a great opportunity for economic development. However, the deal is poorly aligned with the Post-Cotonou Agreement, creating a confusing bureaucratic landscape which weakens both EU-Africa relations and AfCFTA's potential impact. While the Post-Cotonou Agreement provides a framework for negotiating trade between

the EU and individual African nations, the ACP bloc excludes several major African countries, including Egypt, Algeria, and Morocco—the continent's second, fourth, and fifth largest economies, respectively. Because of this, the Post-Cotonou Agreement undercuts AfCFTA, preventing African nations from simultaneously harmonizing trade relations with both the EU and other African countries, potentially creating barriers between northern and sub-Saharan Africa.

Additionally, negotiating through the ACP inhibits Africa's ability to strike a fair and mutually beneficial deal with the EU. The ACP is extremely geographically and economically diverse, with members ranging from major African powerhouses like Nigeria to tiny Pacific island nations like Niue. Because of the ACP's complex makeup, African interests are simply hard to prioritize, as they are represented through a body which has to also integrate the concerns of nations thousands of miles away. Although the Post-Cotonou Agreement acknowledges⁵ this concern through its "three-plus-one structure," which aims to account for each region's unique

conditions, this is still a far cry from a bilateral Africa-EU treaty. By negotiating directly with the African Union, the EU could mitigate these problems while simultaneously helping legitimize the AU's institutional power. First, an EU-AU agreement could overcome the obvious conflict between the AfCFTA and Post-Cotonou Agreement's respective regions of coverage. Through bilateral negotiations, the EU and AU could create an agreement similar to the Post-Cotonou Agreement but, by working outside of the existing ACP framework, would also include the northern African countries which are not part of the ACP bloc. By doing this, the EU would encourage trade harmonization between Africa and Europe as a whole, no longer forcing African countries to simultaneously worry about overlap or conflicts between AfCFTA and ACP trade policy.

Creating a bilateral EU-AU treaty could help strengthen the AU's governing legitimacy, allowing it to more effectively promote the same humanitarian goals which the Post-Cotonou Agreement emphasizes. The AU has historically struggled to mitigate violence in Africa—despite its pledge to focus on reducing

Deconstructing the Colonial Legacies in the African Education System

Michael Deeter

conflict across the continent in 1989, violence has actually increased in Africa since then, even with recent progress. This, among other things, contributes to the AU's ongoing legitimacy crisis, hampering its ability to meaningfully carry out its mission of encouraging economic and political integration. The EU, on the other hand, is seen as the standard-bearer for regional political and economic unions. By striking a deal with the AU, the EU could elevate the AU's status, lending it credibility as a political actor. This would strengthen the AU's authority within Africa, allowing it to more effectively stand up for human rights and democracy across the continent.

Similarly, one of the AU's other problems is its lack of wealth⁶ and material assets, which makes creating, implementing, and enforcing initiatives difficult. A bilateral EU-AU deal could include stipulations for European funding of AU programs, giving the AU the ability to enforce the policies it aims to

implement. By both legitimizing and financing the AU, the EU could encourage economic development across Africa while equipping the AU with the tools necessary for promoting development and democracy.

Lastly, a bilateral treaty between Africa and the EU would have important symbolic value: granting Africa recognition as something bigger than a postcolonial entity. The original Cotonou Agreement replaced the 1976 Lome Agreement, an economic treaty which was designed primarily to encourage cooperation between EU (at the time the European Economic Commission) members and their former colonies. As such, the ACP developed as an unwieldy bloc, comprised primarily of newly-independent countries united by little more than their status as former European colonies. By continuing to negotiate with African countries through the framework of the ACP, the EU is not acknowledging the progress these African countries have made since independence or their global

position as legitimate sovereign states, instead merely focusing on their identity as former colonies. This oversimplifies the African continent's relationship to Europe in a contemporary context, emphasizing precisely the colonial histories which African countries are determined to move beyond.

Since the Cotonou Agreement was signed in 2000, Africa has grown rapidly; its population has increased⁷ from 811 million to 1.3 billion, while its collective GDP has nearly quintupled,⁸ going from \$587 billion to \$2,545 billion in 2016. The Africa of today is hardly the Africa of 2000, let alone the continent of the 1970s. Beyond helping strengthen Africa's economy, promoting integration, and legitimizing the African Union's governing capacity, the EU owes it to Africa to acknowledge its postcolonial development and international standing by treating it as an equal partner.

Colonizing education systems was a key method of securing control over colonial holdings in Africa. Due to this legacy, African education continues to be a space of deep and inherited cultural dependency—a dependency students are actively harmed by.¹ A key aspect of Africa's colonial-inspired education systems is to teach pupils first in their native language and then to transition instruction to the colonizer's Western language. African education systems should stop teaching in colonizing languages and instead switch to teaching secondary and tertiary education in regional dialects to improve educational outcomes and create more equalized competency in the languages of the world economy.

The vast majority of African education systems still switch from original instruction in native languages to instruction in Western languages, with this switch occurring before many students reach educational proficiency. A 25 country study conducted by UNESCO determined that it takes, on average, 6 to 8 years of language instruction before students can effectively learn in a colonizing language.² Furthermore, it was found that instruction in students' mother tongue is an essential component in gaining fluency in Western languages. The result of the flawed system is that Africans are being forced to learn colonizing languages too early in their education, causing them to comprehend less and be locked out of the international economic system. This results in inadequate learning and low achievement in the first years of education.

According to the Brookings Institute, Africa's primary school enrollment rates

increased significantly from 58 percent to 76 percent between 2000 and 2013.³ However, there is a massive drop off between primary and secondary education, with only about 28 percent of African children continuing onto secondary education. Consequently, the days spent in primary school are vital, as that is often the only education that African children will receive in their lives. The education system wastes this time by trying to force comprehension of a Western language in which they will likely not reach operational fluency, rather than focusing more on learning other essential skills such as basic math and reading comprehension. Education has always served as an important gateway to increased quality of life and opportunity, but African students are actively being shut out due to national governments' failures to decolonize their education methods.

Tanzania serves as a case study for how English instruction produces a lack of reading comprehension. In 2017, Tanzania became the first African nation to move to Swahili instruction in school, with 99 percent of Tanzanians speaking Swahili as a second language after their mother tongues. While this transition was made easier by a historical emphasis on Swahili as a national dialect due to the ujamaa, or familyhood, ideology enacted under former President Nyerere, the statistics remain relevant and illuminating. When English was the language of education in Tanzania, the level of curriculum comprehension by pupils remained constant between 2000 and 2010, neither increasing nor decreasing. This contradicts the notion that instruction in Western languages

is inherently beneficial, because no significant gains were made in a decade under English instruction in this case. Furthermore, in a country-wide survey, it was found that 69 percent of Tanzanian primary school students didn't understand the subject matter when it was taught in English and 78 percent of teachers perceived English as an educational set-back for students. These statistics illustrate that forcing education in the colonizer's tongue has resulted in decreased lesson comprehension.

The biggest argument against teaching in mother tongues is that Africans will be locked out of the international economy if they don't switch to English or another colonizing language early in education. While English is a primary language of the world economy, African students under the current system do not come close to gaining adequate fluency to participate in said market; this was apparent in attempts made by South Africa.

After examining data from South Africa's National Income Dynamics panel, researchers discovered that South Africans who self-identified as being able to read and write in English to the standard of "very well", and possessed a post-secondary degree, would go on to earn, on average, 90 percent more than those who do not possess the same qualifications.⁴ That statistic is easily molded to support the argument that English directly leads to greater economic achievement. However, when the statistic is broken down by racial group, the value of speaking English is harder to determine. Among the black African majority who make up about 80 percent of the South African population, only

35 percent can read and write in English very well. Furthermore, the lack of fluency for this racial group can be directly traced back to early education language switches. It is typical for English to be the language of instruction starting as young as first grade, and the report found that this has, "adversely affected the acquisition of both English language and African home language skills." This is punctuated further by the fact that only 58 percent of Africans report being able to read and write their native language very well compared to that of 95 percent of white South Africans. This statistical analysis reveals that premature language switches damage the comprehension of both native and colonizing languages and does not automatically result in greater economic achievement.

The case of South Africa illustrates that English alone is not the gateway to a strong economic future. But rather, only true comprehension in the classroom will generate pupils who are equipped to step into the international community. The only way to generate such pupils is to teach them in a language they understand, which is very rarely a language pushed on them by their colonizer. The education system across the continent of Africa is steeped in colonial legacies, and such legacies are actively harming the educational attainment of Africans. By switching to colonizing languages early on in the education process, students are experiencing decreased comprehension, decreased native and foreign language competencies, and overall being shut out of economic progress.

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The only way to generate such pupils is to teach them in a language they understand, which is very rarely a language pushed on them by their colonizer.

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³Watkins, K. "Too Little Access, Not Enough Learning: Africa's Twin Deficit in Education." Brookings Institute. 2013.

⁴Posel, D. "English Language Proficiency and Earnings in a Developing Country: The Case of South Africa." *Journal of Socio-Economics*. (2011).

Botswana Hasn't Beaten the Resource Curse Just Yet

Hanna Schechter



Upon gaining independence from the British in 1966, Botswana was one of the poorest countries on the planet. With merely 12 kilometers of paved roads and 22 university graduates— but an abundance of diamonds¹— Botswana's economic reality seemed daunting and eerily familiar. African nations with vast material wealth but little initial capital and political stability frequently become engulfed in a resource curse, which explains material wealth's surprising inverse relationship with economic growth. In order to maximize economic efficiency, these nations focus almost exclusively on mineral extraction. However, developing market economies can lack adequate anti-corruption measures and solidified, effective regulatory structures. As a result, entrenched political figures can gain access to these valuable resources for their own benefit through a process known as rent-seizing.² Companies operating in these areas can also take advantage of these institutional weaknesses by establishing oligopolistic models of production, discouraging competition for wage growth, and establishing corrupt relationships with governments through their outsized political power. Although Botswana may appear to have freed itself from this curse by minimizing this political corruption, a deeper analysis reveals that the country may not be such an anomaly. In order to obtain sustainable, long-term economic growth, Botswana must diversify its economy.

Those claiming Botswana's escape from the resource curse may note the country's surprising rise from its destitute condition since 1966. Botswana's government, headed by the Botswana Democratic Party, implemented a relatively

liberal platform which permitted foreign investment, lowered trade barriers, and established firm and respected property rights. While it may have followed suit with other African nations in their broad pursuit of extraction and specialization, it also enacted strong safeguards to prevent corruption. As a result, Botswana has risen quickly from abject poverty to upper-middle income status, sustaining rapid growth rates through most of recent history. Today, the nation boasts the fifth highest GDP per capita³ and human development index scores⁴ in Africa. While Botswana's government deserves praise for using national diamond wealth to promote economic development, reliance on that diamond wealth poses direct price and supply concerns that could promptly undo much of the nation's progress.

Dramatic pitfalls in diamond prices could drain the nation's public revenue. Botswana has weathered downturns in diamond sales and prices relatively well thus far, and the country has a solid track record in borrowing and repaying debt when faced with economic downturns.⁵ However, a more long-term fall in diamond prices could prove unsustainable unless the nation significantly scales back its spending on developmentally necessary social services. While Botswana's relatively liberal policies have certainly created wealth, this wealth could slowly deplete unless further action is taken to diversify and modernize the country's economy.

On the supply side, economic growth only continues so long as these diamonds remain available and extraction remains cheap. In Botswana's case, production costs have already increased as surface diamonds deplete and the need for underground exploration increases. More importantly, the nation is projected to run out of diamonds altogether given their current rate of production by 2050.⁶ This means that even in the best case scenario—where diamond demand and the marginal cost of diamond extraction remain constant—diamonds cannot continue to spur economic

growth in Botswana in the distant future. Consequently, Botswana must diversify from the mineral in a realistic and sustainable manner.

Two main diversification avenues exist for Botswana. First, the nation could increase mining of other minerals, namely gold. President Mokgweetsi Masisi urged just that after a Covid-induced diamond price fall, saying it is "more important than ever" to diversify towards other commodities.⁷ This course of action is more moderate and would likely be much easier to achieve. Although the necessary capital to transition between commodities could prove challenging, Botswana's labor force would not need a dramatic rise in training or education to make such a pivot. Taking this path would fix the supply issues with diamonds but not necessarily the price concerns, however, as nations pursuing near-exclusive commodity exportation are still at the mercy of highly volatile financial markets and thus experience certain recessions more severely than the rest of the world. For example, commodity prices took a sharp downturn in 2013, resulting in several recessions within extraction-focused economies.⁸

Secondly, Botswana could—and should—attempt to modernize its economy through branching into the service sector. It can do this by increasing international investment attractiveness, which can be a multifaceted issue. Certain African nations offer strong investment incentives and business benefits in their countries.⁹ As a result, Botswana could struggle to attain investment for non-diamond activity, as any investor examining multiple locations is likely to pick the cheapest option. However, if Botswana races to the bottom by offering the lowest taxes or most business-friendly policies of the group, companies currently operating in the region could simply stay put but pay less. To preserve current diamond tax revenue while maximizing investment in other sectors, the nation should consider creating more "specialized economic

zones," segments of the country with reduced regulatory or tax burden to stimulate investment in specified sectors. Currently, all but one of these zones are focused on agriculture or resource extraction.¹⁰ Expanding the breadth of existing zones to include incentives for the service sector, or creating new ones altogether, could prompt more economic growth.

The passage of the African Continental Free Trade Agreement only bolsters the vision for a service-centered Botswana. Trade liberalization can increase Africa's financial service sector as intracontinental investment increases due to freedom of movement and capital.¹¹ Governmental stability and higher initial wealth creates a scenario where Botswana is capable of investing in higher education more effectively than other African nations. This can lead to a more educated populace capable of building a robust financial sector to accommodate Africa's growth. Creating these specialized economic zones while increasing the productive capacity of its populace through educational programs will be crucial for Botswana's long-term growth.

While the call for diversification may seem like a call to economically start over, it is vital to consider that nations often need a baseline level of wealth in order to develop further. Botswana isn't starting over by diversifying from what once made them rich—it is merely recognizing the long-term vulnerability of its economy and adjusting accordingly. In the hands of other African governments, these diamonds would not have prompted the enormous levels of economic growth Botswana has experienced. Its government should be praised for their comparative ability to support their people. However, this institutional success alone does not imply Botswana's total immunity to the resource curse. Botswana must promptly implement diversification policies. Otherwise, it may not be such a continental anomaly in the long run.

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Power Politics on the Horn

How Sino-Djibouti Relations Are Reshaping Africa's Future

Kenny Larson

Under the political leadership of Xi Jinping, China's economic power has become firmly intertwined with the development of the African continent. In particular, this focus has chiefly centered on the Horn of Africa (HoA), which Xi's Administration has developed through anti-piracy activities, naval escort missions, and security cooperation with local partners.¹ Although most of this military projection is done to protect trade routes, China has also sought to build these relationships as a way to stymie rival powers such as the United States, who have attempted to gain a military foothold in the region, particularly in coastal countries like Djibouti.

As China's great power status continues evolving, other governments have attempted to forecast how China's engagement in the region will play out in coming years. However, the best indicator of China's future on the continent is Xi's prized military base in the geostrategically influential country of Djibouti. Often overlooked due to Djibouti's small population and land area, Sino-Djibouti relations

serve as a prime example of Chinese military ambitions. These relations showcase how Chinese bilateral engagement in the HoA weakens the influence of comparable superpowers in the region and can disrupt the long-term prosperity of HoA countries like Djibouti. These dynamics are best illustrated by the development of the People's Liberation Army Navy (PLAN) Support Base in Djibouti.

Chinese relations with Djibouti trace back to the Chinese navy's anti-piracy efforts in the bordering Gulf of Aden. Beginning in 2009, the African nation played a sizable role in providing logistical support for the PLAN through resupply and refuelling operations, establishing an initial maritime partnership between the two states.² However, their relationship was not firmly institutionalized until after Djibouti assisted PLAN operations to evacuate 800 Chinese and foreign nationals from nearby Yemen, taking them to Djibouti via frigate to fly them home. By 2017, the two countries saw a mutual benefit to Chinese presence in the HoA,

culminating with an agreement establishing a PLAN base along Djibouti's coastline.³

The base, which opened alongside the Chinese-developed Doraleh Multipurpose Port (DMP), has presented several benefits for both states. For Djibouti, Chinese interests represent a multi-billion dollar promise of economic growth through infrastructure development and access to the Red Sea. By volume, nearly 10 percent of oil exports and 20 percent of commercial goods globally pass through the narrow strait, which Djibouti has been unable to significantly influence. The DMP and PLAN base have reinforced Djibouti's strategic vision of a safe and prosperous HoA region protected by a robust foreign naval presence--an undeniably attractive future for the emerging nation seeking to tap into global commercial markets.⁴

China, on the other hand, hopes to capitalize on the same economic motivations as a tool to monopolize its control of the region and box out competing nations.⁵ By offering significant

loans and financial support to countries like Djibouti, African countries become monetarily and politically indebted to China, providing it with outsized influence over critical chokepoints of global trade. Furthermore, the PLAN base has placed pressure on American officials wary of encroaching Chinese influence, bolstering China's ability to counteract foreign adversaries on the international stage. With the ability to support large warships and several thousand soldiers, China's military presence could potentially strangle resupplies to the American Camp Lemonnier and Chabelly Airfield, two prominent counterterrorism bases in Djibouti which the United States has used for power projection purposes following September 11 attacks.⁶ The concern has become so widespread that then-National Security Advisor John Bolton publicly stated that Chinese financial and military activity were a threat to U.S. interests in the HoA.⁷

With respect to regional affairs, the Sino-Djibouti partnership provides critical lessons that

closely mirror how China has financially dominated other HoA countries. Most importantly, despite both countries' stakes in the PLAN base and DMP, this arrangement is firmly one-sided in China's interests. As a result of these investments, Djibouti has taken on a gross excess of debt to the Chinese government totaling over 70 percent of Djibouti's GDP. Although Djibouti's Foreign Affairs Minister defended the decision publicly in late 2019, the project has been viewed as a "debt trap" which leaves generations of taxpayers responsible for covering multi-billion dollar bills, lest Chinese banks take ownership of the infrastructure.⁸ This same risk is faced all over the continent: China owns over \$15.7 billion of sovereign debt among countries on the Horn, a fraction of the \$153 billion owed to it by African governments.⁹ This is compounded by economic pressures from

China, which has threatened to leverage its debt to compel African policymakers to exclude other countries' developmental projects. Unless leaders in these countries radically rethink their borrowing strategy, they will be beholden to Chinese interests and lose control over their own economies.

From a military perspective, Chinese power projection in the HoA presents a decision point for many regional and global leaders interested in establishing a position of power on the continent. Xi's foreign policy has used its base expansion into Djibouti as a proof of concept for comparable military expansion across Africa's East Coast as far south as Tanzania. These plans have seen a total \$60 billion in pledged funds to increase development, a sign that U.S. policymakers warn has turned Africa into a battleground for

Western influence. Should these powers—including American allies such as the United Kingdom and France—seek to prevent China from monopolizing control over continental affairs and Africa's strategic resources, they will need to proactively challenge foreign involvement in the HoA. This approach over the last decade emboldened China to make in-roads into Djibouti to a significant enough extent that foreign powers have cited concerns over being shut out of the country entirely. For HoA nations, this presents a dangerous future in which their very sovereignty becomes increasingly eroded by Chinese force projection and financial entrapment, blocking the benefits of foreign involvement.

Ultimately, the future of geopolitics on the African continent will be determined by two key stakeholders: African leaders looking to develop

their nations and foreign powers hoping to strengthen their global standing. Sino-Djibouti relations provide strong evidence for the types of trends that are likely to emerge as more countries begin to open themselves up to development; most notably, it presents compelling evidence of the risks to long-term engagement with Chinese military and financial institutions. For Africa, the path to prosperity and growth has the potential to be disproportionately determined by malicious outside players. Therefore, learning from other nation's successes and failures—and rejecting Chinese encroachment—will be critical to creating a sustainable trajectory for African success.

¹Yun Sun. "Xi Jinping's Africa Policy: The First Year," *The Brookings Institute*, April 14, 2014, <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/africa-in-focus/2014/04/14/xi-jinpings-africa-policy-the-first-year/#cancel>

²Neil Melvin. "The Foreign Military Presence in the Horn of Africa Region," *Stockholm International Peace Research Institute*, April 2019, <https://sipri.org/sites/default/files/2019-04/sipribp1904.pdf>

³Jean-Pierre Cabestan. "China's Djibouti naval base increasing its power," *East Asia Forum*, May 16, 2020, <https://www.eastasiaforum.org/2020/05/16/chinas-djibouti-naval-base-increasing-its-power/>

⁴Max Bearak. "In strategic Djibouti, a microcosm of China's growing foothold in Africa," *The Washington Post*, December 30, 2019, https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/africa/in-strategic-djibouti-a-microcosm-of-chinas-growing-foothold-in-africa/2019/12/29/a6e664ea-beab-11e9-a8b0-7ed8a0d5dc5d_story.html

⁵*ibid.*

⁶*The Washington Post*. "The US fears China could strangle its only permanent military base in Africa -- and a port in Djibouti could be the weapon," *South China Morning Post*, December 15, 2018, <https://www.scmp.com/news/world/united-states-canada/article/2178120/us-fears-china-could-strangle-its-only-permanent>

⁷Janet Eom. "Despite U.S. concerns, Djibouti may see gains from Chinese finance," *Axios*, January 16, 2019, <https://www.axios.com/despite-us-concerns-djibouti-may-see-gains-from-chinese-finance-16f79dda-152c-46f9-b7c6-9154d5c3ec3b.html>

⁸See Footnote Four.

⁹*Chinese Loans to Africa Database*, *Chinese Africa Research Initiative*, Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies, March 19, 2021, <https://chinaafricaloandata.bu.edu/>

Weeding Out Inequality

Cannabis Legalization Strategies in Malawi

Jeh Mory

The process of cannabis legalization has been particularly fascinating in Malawi, a tiny, landlocked country bestriding the Great Rift Valley in southeastern Africa. Malawi's economy remains highly agrarian; in the past, it was historically heavily dependent on tobacco cultivation, which farmers exported via the Indian Ocean seaports of neighboring Mozambique. While intense global anti-smoking campaigns have decreased tobacco use and boosted public health outcomes across the world, they have also bedevilled Malawi's economic development. The crop accounts for 10 percent of the country's GDP, and a staggering 60 percent of its exports, making it a major source of foreign exchange.¹ With its decreasing demand, it comes as no surprise that the country's leadership has been urging the agricultural sector to diversify to other cash crops. In fact, in February 2020, Malawi's parliament legalized cannabis for industrial and medicinal use; hemp (a class of cannabis) fibers in particular are widely used in textiles, construction materials, composite plastics, and biofuels. By legalizing the growth of hemp, Malawi's government has actively promoted an alternative cash crop in a booming industry that has been rapidly taking market share from tobacco. However, the legalization process, and resulting fees, threaten to scuttle an opportunity to uplift a substantial chunk of its population via common-sense policy.

Malawi's legalization strategy ensures that the cultivation of the "Malawi gold" strain (locally known as *chamba*) remains firmly within the purview of its unorganized economy. Problematically, this is precisely the market with the largest potential to expand rapidly within the next five to ten years. Step-by-step legalization across jurisdictions as well as relaxed social norms towards cannabis consumption could cause the global marijuana industry to expand at a compounded annual growth rate (CAGR) of 26.7 percent from 2021 to 2028.² Malawi's overt economic rationale for legalization therefore goes against the opportunity to help its farmers earn millions of dollars annually by supporting the growth of an internationally recognized agricultural product. Additionally, this would be a much more substantive step towards undercutting the bottom line of organized crime syndicates, which earn the bulk of profits from the currently underground *chamba* trade at the expense of local farmers.³

Malawi has explicitly refused to decriminalize the cultivation of recreational cannabis, including *chamba*--the country's "flagship" agricultural product. Unlike other cash crops grown in Malawi, *chamba* does not require additional farming inputs, given the country's climactic, geographic, and soil

conditions. This makes the crop relatively inexpensive to produce for local farmers, who are attracted to this crop by the high prices it commands in international markets (although this may change on a unit volume basis as production scales up in correlation with impending recreational legalization in other jurisdictions).

Oddly, instead of focusing sales on *chamba*--which was described in a 2011 World Bank report as being "the best and finest" in the world⁴--Malawi's politicians have incentivized the cultivation of cannabis strains more commonly sold in international markets. The licensing process that would permit farmers to grow cannabis in the first place is fraught with cronyism and red tape, locking the country's poor out of the business and perpetuating the country's already substantial economic inequality.

Local farmers have raised an outcry over the country's prohibitively high licensing fees, which could cost anywhere from \$1,000 to \$10,000 in a country with a GDP per capita of just \$600.⁵ These licenses, which are quoted in U.S. Dollars (posing yet another headache to local farmers primarily holding Malawian *kwacha*), have predominantly flowed to international businesses or firms owned and operated by local elites. This has cut local farmers out of a market that was ostensibly legalized to further their interests.

An additional knock-on effect of this policy is that the aforementioned businesses tend to employ disproportionately fewer Malawians, further dampening the impact of cannabis legalization on standards of living and the broader economy. This phenomenon is exacerbated by the fact that tobacco production has traditionally been dominated by small-scale farmers. Their consternation over the sharp decline in tobacco prices and government restrictions preventing them from easily pivoting to the cannabis space could portend an impending

crisis as farmers are forced to cultivate less lucrative cash crops.

In response, Malawi's Cannabis Regulatory Authority (CRA) has defended the fees, claiming that it expects local farmers to utilize cooperatives and collectives rather than apply for the necessary licenses on an individual basis.⁶ However, this neglects the reality that such organizational structures form yet another layer of red tape for small-scale farmers due to the onerous paperwork, licensing requirements, and bureaucratic inefficiencies, coupled with outright corruption, which often stymie this route to lawful cultivation. As a result, Malawians have protested the licensing fees via social media, inducing the CRA to announce that they were looking into revising the policy in April 2021. Despite this claim, not much progress has been made on that front in the ensuing months.⁷

Malawi's political leadership risks bungling a real opportunity to uplift a substantial chunk of its population by reworking its cannabis legalization policy. Having already taken the step to legalize industrial and medicinal use, it should also legalize recreational *production* (deliberately sidestepping the debate for and against recreational use) and actively promote its brand assets in the space, especially the lucrative *chamba* strain; this would boost the incomes of farmers and simultaneously push back against organized crime. Finally, the country's Cannabis Regulatory Authority should rework its licensing policy by creating a special low-cost licensing category for small-scale farmers, with the option to set upper limits on yield or hectares under cultivation. It is hardly an encouraging sign that in the year since legalization, only 35 entities have been granted licenses to cultivate hemp.⁸ However, the Malawian government can still pursue these policy recommendations before market conditions change and local producers are priced out of the global market altogether.

¹"Can weed give Africa's economies a buzz? - Fortune." June 2, 2021 <https://fortune.com/2021/06/02/african-economies-legal-weed-farming-cannabis-industry-cash-crops/>.

²"Legal Marijuana Market Size | Industry Report, 2021-2028." <https://www.grandviewresearch.com/industry-analysis/legal-marijuana-market>.

³"Malawi's Cannabis Strategy - Cannabiz Africa." <https://www.cannabiz-africa.com/malawis-cannabis-strategy/>.

⁴"Ill-gotten Money and the Economy - World Bank Documents." <https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/564471468288012918/pdf/651760PUB0EPI100money09780821388877.pdf>.

⁵"GDP per capita (current US\$) - Malawi - World Bank Data." <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.PCAP.CD?locations=MW>.

⁶"Malawi Farmers Protest Cannabis License Fees." November 26, 2020 https://www.voanews.com/a/africa_malawi-farmers-protest-cannabis-license-fees/6198855.html.

⁷"Malawi Cannabis Authority justifies US\$10000 licence fee." November 25, 2020. <https://malawi24.com/2020/11/25/malawi-cannabis-authority-justifies-10000-licence-fee/>.

⁸"Malawi issues 86 licenses for cannabis production - MMJDaily." <https://www.mmjdaily.com/article/9310889/malawi-issues-86-licenses-for-cannabis-production/>.

The Future of African Leadership is Female

Hanna Schechter



On November 4, 2021 the hashtag #HaveHerBack was launched on social media to motivate male leaders in Africa to make public commitments towards gender parity on the continent. A campaign launched by the Ellen Johnson Sirleaf Presidential Center for Women and Development (EJS Center) is the latest manifestation of the center's mission to facilitate social and political change across the continent by providing tools and resources to amplify female voices.

#HaveHerBack acknowledges that for female voices to be heard, men must play an

essential role by making space for women to actively participate in leadership positions on the continent. It encourages male leaders to share public pledges on social media detailing steps they will take to promote female leadership. Each pledge video ends with one leader nominating another to make a pledge. Notable commitments have already come from the President Alassane Dramane Ouattara of Côte d'Ivoire—who pledged to encourage the participation of women in leadership—and President Ramaphosa of South Africa—who stated his commitment to increasing the number of women in management positions in

public service.¹ Female activists are also encouraged to repost graphics made by the EJS Center and provide a space for women to recognize men who have supported them to achieve senior levels of leadership.²

But will these public pledges be enough to move Africa toward gender equity?

Former president of Liberia Ellen Johnson Sirleaf hopes to change this male dominated landscape. Sirleaf was the first democratically elected female President to address the UN General Assembly from the African continent in 2006,³ and is a recipient of the American

Presidential Medal of Freedom and Nobel Peace Prize for her work advocating for the increase in female voices on peace-building efforts in the continent.⁴

Former President Sirleaf's and The EJS Center's activism comes at a crucial time. Currently, only five percent of CEO positions in Africa are female, barely one in four parliamentary seats are held by women, and women continue to be pushed to the margins in business and political leadership.⁵ According to McKinsey and Company's 2019 "The Power of Parity: Advancing Women's Equality in Africa" report, the

continent could add up to \$316 billion in economic output by 2025 if each country makes significant strides in gender equity. However, gender parity is projected to take approximately 140 years to achieve with the current rate of progress on the continent. Although Africa has a female labor force participation rate of 25 percent, 7 percent greater than the global average, the share of this participation is unevenly bottlenecked in informal work. In 2019, women only accounted for 23 percent of senior leadership positions compared to 43 percent of entry level positions. North Africa, specifically, is struggling to promote women into leadership positions: only nine percent of middle-management roles in the region are held by women.⁶ To overcome this inaction from business and male leaders, The EJS Center as well as other organizations across the continent have stated their commitment to make the political and social landscape more welcoming to women and boost female confidence in

attaining leadership positions.

The African Women's Development Fund (AWDF) created the leadership and governance program in 2015 with an aim to coach high and middle level leaders on inclusivity and identifying structural and personal points of change. The leadership and governance program also works to promote confidence on a personal level with rising female leaders through reflective and educational exercises. A notable example was the AWDF's involvement with The Safety Nest, a Malawi based organization working to meet the mental health and poverty needs in their community. In 2017, the leadership and governance program helped the organization include underrepresented voices in decision making processes. However, as of this year AWDF's leadership and governance efforts have only reached around 60 individual women and 30 organizations.⁷

Earlier this spring, the Africa

Growth Initiative with the Center for Universal Education held a webinar with the former prime minister of Australia, Julia Gillard, and the first female⁸ and African to head the World Trade Organization, Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala.⁹ The webinar highlighted these women's personal experiences as female leaders on the global political and economic stage and the progress still to be made to promote women and girls. Okonjo-Iweala highlighted the struggle women of color face when trying to attain positions of leadership due to not only sexism but also racism in the workplace. Both of the speakers emphasized the important role men play in allyship, inviting women to decision making positions, and creating opportunities.¹⁰

The past few years have seen various social media campaigns and women attaining worldly recognized leadership positions like Okonjo-Iweala. But there is still much work to be done. Although these organizations and the #HaveHerBack

¹"Heads of State and Leaders from the Public and Private Sectors Mobilize to Advocate for Gender Equality in Africa," EJS Center, November 4, 2021

²"Have Her Back," EJS Center, accessed November 17, 2021

³EJS Center. "Former President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf Urges for Greater Women's Representation in Peacekeeping during the Inaugural Kofi Annan Geneva Peace Address." EJS Center, November 6, 2021

⁴Pavithra Rao, "The First African Women Leaders to Address the UN General Assembly | Africa Renewal," United Nations (United Nations, October 30, 2020)

⁵"Birthing Leaders Stories of Change in African Women's Organisation," African Women's Development Fund, 2021.

⁶Moodley, L., Kuyoro, M., Holt, T., Leke, A., Madgavkar, A., Krishnan, M., Akintayo, F., "The Power of Parity: Advancing women's equality in Africa," McKinsey Global Institute, November 2019

⁷See Footnote Five.

⁸Lizaveta Zhytkova, "Women and Leadership: A Conversation with Julia Gillard and Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala," Brookings. March 12, 2021.

⁹Aloysius Uche Ordu, "Inspiring the next Generation of Women Leaders," Brookings. March 8, 2021.

¹⁰See Footnote Eight.

In Africa, No Coup Is A Good Coup

Ethan Story

On September 5, 2021, Guinea's military staged a violent coup—an illegal seizure of power that overthrew President Alpha Condé and dissolved the civilian government. Led by special forces commander Mamadou Doumbouya, the mutineers blamed Condé for his own downfall, pointing to the President's decision to modify the constitution to allow himself a chance at a third term as well as the government's increasingly authoritarian crackdown on dissent.¹ While the international community by-and-large condemned the coup, many in Guinea cheered. Condé was unpopular and authoritarian: why would the masses not be satisfied that he was deposed? However, regardless of the circumstances that led to the fall of the Condé government, the coup is an undeniably negative outcome for both Guinea and democracy in the region. No coup is a good coup, a lesson taught throughout African history, yet is repeatedly forgotten. In this vein, it is prudent to reexamine the overthrow of former Zimbabwean President Robert Mugabe in 2017—a coup that was almost universally celebrated both in Zimbabwe and abroad, yet to date has placed the country in an even worse position than Mugabe left it when he was thrown out of office.

In November 2017, longtime Zimbabwean autocrat Robert Mugabe was overthrown by both the Zimbabwe Defense Forces (ZDF) and his own party, Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF). The coup was immediately preceded by the firing and expulsion of Emmerson Mnangagwa as Vice President and member of ZANU-PF. By firing Mnangagwa, Mugabe was seen as paving the way for his wife, Grace Mugabe, to succeed him as president—a move that drew the ire of a military apparatus fiercely loyal

to Mnangagwa and a ZANU-PF party ready to move beyond the Mugabe family.² However, much like Condé, Mugabe had sowed the seeds of discontent long before the military took action. Mugabe, ZANU-PF, and the state security apparatus ruled Zimbabwe with an iron fist, suppressing political dissent and stealing from the country's coffers.³ Zimbabweans largely celebrated Mugabe's overthrow: tens of thousands took to the streets in Harare to voice their pleasure with the coup. Some demonstrators even took selfies with the military personnel who were responsible for the government overthrow.⁴ The international community reacted similarly, with both the U.S. and U.K. congratulating Zimbabweans on the departure of Mugabe. The coup was seen as a sign of change in the beleaguered nation; for the first time since Mugabe came to power, citizens and activists were hopeful about achieving democracy and development.

The high hopes for good governance in Zimbabwe have so far failed to materialize. New president Emmerson Mnangagwa—sworn in after emerging victorious in a power struggle against the Mugabe family within ZANU-PF and the military—has followed Mugabe's autocratic legacy, failing to deliver on nearly all his promises of political reform. The government continues to violently suppress any dissent,⁵ the media is still largely a propaganda forum for the ZANU-PF,⁶ and the military continues to play a crucial role in government. Human rights violations have soared under the Mnangagwa government, with more than 70 opposition leaders and activists reporting being abducted and tortured by security forces throughout 2020.⁷ When anti-corruption protests erupted in July 2020, 16 protesters were injured in a harsh government

crackdown while a further 60 were arrested, including award-winning novelist Tsitsi Dangarembga and opposition party leaders. On the economic front, rapid inflation has stifled any attempted economic reform: in 2020, inflation averaged 622.8 percent, peaking at 838 percent in July.⁸ This runaway inflation has had broad negative impacts on the entire Zimbabwean economy. Overall, GDP contracted by six percent in 2019, with citizens facing fuel, food, and electricity shortages all across the country.⁹ Half of the country is food insecure, and 90 percent are either unemployed or work in the informal sector.¹⁰ On all fronts, Zimbabwe seems to be largely worse off post-coup, in spite of the lofty promises made by the Mnangagwa government and the euphoria following Mugabe's removal.

Let Zimbabwe be a lesson: even the most well-intentioned coups can turn sour. Even beyond the outcomes of promised economic and political reforms by mutineers, coups increase instability and throw away the rule of law. Since 1950, there have been 466 coup attempts in 95 countries—just under five coups per country.¹¹ This is evidence that countries rarely experience just a single coup; in other words, coups beget more coups. In fact, Zimbabwe may just be on the lucky side: it is one of only 19 countries that experienced just a single coup. The fact that Zimbabwe avoided much of the instability that coups bring yet still experienced economic collapse and continued political suppression speaks to just how disastrous coups can be. Any discussion of positive outcomes of coups on the African continent or elsewhere should be held with these facts in mind.

Is there such a thing as a good coup? The answer is an

unambiguous no. While one can understand the jubilation resulting from the removal of an autocrat from power, the results are almost always just as bad, if not worse. Guinea is no different. It is highly unlikely that Mamadou Doumbouya's government will reinstate democracy, nor is it likely that his government will end the cycle of political repression, human rights violations, and corruption. Instead, it is likely that the Guinean military will further integrate itself into the domestic political system; indeed, Doumbouya was sworn in as interim President, a clear indication that he and his forces are reluctant to cede government control to democracy.¹²

The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the African Union (AU), the United Nations (UN), and the greater international community should exercise great caution in supporting the coup-induced government in Guinea, as well as others in the region. Any aid or economic assistance to Guinea is likely to only fall into the hands of high-ranking military officials, not the citizens most in need. Furthermore, any continued Guinean participation in international institutions implicitly condones the overturn of constitutionality in the country. Regional institutions should work to isolate the new Guinea regime, sending a clear signal that military overthrow is not the answer to political and economic dissatisfaction. Likewise, ECOWAS, the AU, and the UN should have played a larger role in countering Alpha Condé's slide to autocracy; had those institutions not ignored his bid to remain in power, it is possible that they could have exerted enough pressure to peacefully force the autocrat from office. All three would be wise to keep this lesson in mind with other authoritarians on the continent.

¹Abdourahmane Diallo, Ruth Maclean, and Mady Camara, "Special Forces Colonel Says He Has 'Seized' Guinea's President," *The New York Times*, last modified September 10, 2021, <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/09/05/world/africa/guinea-coup.html>.

²Kimiko de Freytas-Tamura, "A Strongman Nicknamed 'Crocodile' Is Poised to Replace Mugabe," *The New York Times*, last modified November 16, 2017, <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/11/16/world/africa/emmerson-mnangagwa-zimbabwe.html>.

³Jennifer G. Cooke, "Critical Questions: Zimbabwe Coup," *Center for Strategic & International Studies*, last modified November 15, 2017, <https://www.csis.org/analysis/zimbabwe-coup>.

⁴Eliza Mackintosh, "Zimbabwe's military takeover was the world's strangest coup," *CNN*, last modified November 21, 2017, <https://www.cnn.com/2017/11/20/africa/zimbabwe-military-takeover-strangest-coup/index.html>.

⁵Alexander H. Noyes, "A New Zimbabwe? Assessing Continuity and Change After Mugabe", 2020, https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RR4367.html.

⁶Columbus Mavhunga, "Critics Decry Zimbabwe's Press Freedom Failures," *VOA News*, last modified November 26, 2020, <https://www.voanews.com/a/press-freedom-critics-decry-zimbabwes-press-freedom-failures/6198806.html>.

⁷"Botswana Must Diversify to Reduce Dependence on Diamonds -President." *Reuters*. Thomson Reuters, February 3, 2021. <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-mining-indaba-botswana/botswana-must-diversify-to-reduce-dependence-on-diamonds-preside>

⁸"Zimbabwe Economic Outlook," *African Development Bank Group*, <https://www.afdb.org/en/countries/southern-africa/zimbabwe/zimbabwe-economic-outlook>.

⁹Noyes, A New Zimbabwe?.

¹⁰Chris Muronzi, "3 years after Mugabe overthrow, many Zimbabweans say life's worse," *Al Jazeera*, last modified November 14, 2020, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2020/11/14/three-years-since-mugabe-overthrow-zimbabweans-say-life-is-worse>.

¹¹Clayton Besaw, "Mali celebrates after president's ouster – but there are few 'good coups,'" *The Conversation*, last modified August 28, 2020, <https://theconversation.com/mali-celebrates-after-presidents-ouster-but-there-are-few-good-coups-144846>.

¹²Saliou Samb, "Guinea swears in coup leader as interim president," *Reuters*, last modified October 1, 2021, <https://www.reuters.com/world/africa/guinea-swears-coup-leader-interim-president-2021-10-01/>.

Glennie Webster

Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana have long struggled to benefit from producing 60 percent of the world's cocoa, characterized by a conflict between the so-called Big Chocolate industry and the average cocoa farmer.¹ Despite their majority control of the market,² cocoa exports from Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana only account for three percent of the global chocolate industry revenue, despite their majority control of the market. With cocoa farmers earning less than \$1 per day, both the Ivorian and Ghanaian governments are motivated to regulate the industry to address this great economic inequity.³

And, recently, they have.

In October 2020, Ghana and Côte d'Ivoire implemented a Living Income Differential (LID) for multinational chocolate companies. The LID included a \$400 per tonne premium scheme applied to all cocoa exports, designed to give cocoa farmers a living wage. This premium, however, gives the Big Chocolate industry, including the Hershey Company, Mondelez International, and others, a reason to move to other cocoa-exporting countries like Brazil, Indonesia, and several other West African countries. This concern is not too far-fetched, as many companies refused to pay the LID upon implementation: "[t]hey want to make money today and not think about tomorrow" said the head of the Ivorian Cocoa and Coffee Council (CCC). This "tomorrow" is the financial stability and overall livelihood of cocoa farmers, something that should not be compromised, but is often not on the radar of these companies.

Both governments of Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana have recognized this issue, and actively are attempting to reverse the control of Big Chocolate in their local economies. To do this, they have attempted to nationalize cocoa production to have complete control over their cocoa industry and lessen reliance on multinational corporations. Namely, in February 2020, Ghana's President Nana Akufo-Addo banned the trade of cocoa with Switzerland, which is home to Nestle and Lindt. President Akufo-Addo wanted to make Ghanaians "beneficiaries" rather than "victims or pawns of international economic order."⁴ This ban is just the beginning of the President's ongoing policy efforts that promote the cocoa production nationalization: in 2019, construction began on a \$100 million chocolate factory with the help of a partnership deal between the Ghanaian and Chinese government.⁵ The inherent incompatibility of the country's climate with cocoa production and transportation, however, has not been addressed, leaving the future success of this economic move up in the air. With logistical questions unanswered, there is much doubt in the future success and sustainability of a nationalized cocoa production industry in both Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana.

This movement was mirrored in April 2021 with the Ivorian President Alassane Ouattara's decision to enforce a law that requires local Ivorian firms to handle 20 percent of the total cocoa output from the country.⁶ Enforcement, however, is negatively affecting the multinational companies that President Ouattara also hoped would pay the premium

to support cocoa farmers. Therefore, while both Presidents want to turn to nationalizing this cash crop, attempting to regulate this economy to this extent may be a step too far, incentivizing Big Chocolate to move elsewhere to other markets, reducing imports from both countries all together.

Both governments are having difficulty playing hardball with multinational companies. A CCC official threatened major chocolate industry leaders by stating that they would "stop all the sustainability and certification programs of Mondelez that are ongoing with Cargill, and all the other exporters" if they did not pay the LID earlier this year.⁷ These sustainability certification programs are necessary to import cocoa into the EU market, which is the biggest consumer of chocolate in the world. Nevertheless, several companies still refuse to pay the LID. Therefore, Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana are caught in a paradoxical situation of using their cash crop to subvert their position in the international economic order, while using the economic reliance on the crop to stabilize their national economies.

The decision to internalize the cocoa industry with a united front represents a larger movement that has been gaining momentum in recent years. Recognizing the historical domination of the African nations' economies has led to intracontinental collaborations to change the world order. Since the signing of the landmark African Continental Free Trade Area Agreement in 2018, intra-African trade has proliferated, slowly decreasing the general dependency on Western powers

as trade partners.⁸ However, this Agreement has yet to yield any significant change in the world order, and the biggest consumer market for cocoa remains to be Europe and the United States.

This new chapter of the chocolate industry could be described as bittersweet—higher product prices for consumers, higher overall supply, and more incentivized indirect sourcing. With the greater inclusion of Ghanaian and Ivorian local economies for chocolate production, excluded multinational companies will find other markets to fulfill their needs. The motivation to go elsewhere to cover the demands of European and American consumers remains, leaving both countries a steep hill of negotiation to climb. Paradoxically, while these two nations want economic autonomy, they need the support and capitulation of multinational companies to get there. This unlikely feat casts doubt on the possibility of these countries' efforts to autotomize their economies, however bold their requests may be.

As with any open, unregulated market full of cheap cash crops, Big Chocolate could go elsewhere in the region, namely Nigeria and Cameroon, to satisfy their cocoa needs. However, if this trend of nationalizing the cocoa industry spreads past Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana to all of West Africa, and even to Brazil and Indonesia, this policy could work. Successfully playing hardball and changing the international economic order requires both governments of Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana to join up with its West African counterparts and all major markets abroad.

A Bittersweet Deal

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AMERICAS.



A Moment of Economic Reckoning for Greenland

Chris Coffey

Greenland has often been dismissed as a remote, sparsely inhabited land best known for its frozen fjords and inhospitable tundra. The island, however, has recently come into focus as a promising source of rare earth minerals and renewable energy.¹ Rising global demand for green technology to address climate change and access to rare earth minerals, which could combat China's monopoly on said materials, has drawn the attention of foreign nations and mining companies. Greenland—which is not an independent nation, but an administrative region of Denmark—has gained increased autonomy in recent years, and now enjoys the right to decide independently whether, to what extent, and under what conditions it will allow foreign states and companies greater access to its natural resources.² Although increased mining might negatively impact Greenland's environment and disrupt traditional industries such as fishing or whaling, if done correctly, these consequences may be offset by increased revenue, technological innovation, a more evolved and diversified economy, and the exportation of

materials necessary to produce cleaner energy.

At present, Greenland's economy is highly dependent on the exportation of fish as well as significant financial infusions from the Danish government. Fish alone accounts for 90 percent of the country's exports, while Danish subsidies make up 25 percent of GDP.³ Following a 2008 referendum on home rule, Greenland was granted increased autonomy by the 2009 Act on Greenland Self-Government.⁴ The act codified Greenland's ability to exercise greater control over its economic resources, including choosing if and when foreign nations and mining companies can mine on the island.

By choosing to allow foreign access to its abundant raw materials that can be used to produce electric cars, wind turbines, and more, Greenland can grow and diversify its economy while contributing to the global fight against climate change. Besides materials necessary to produce clean energy, Greenland is estimated to contain over a quarter of the world's rare earth

minerals. These minerals, including cerium, neodymium, lanthanum, and more are used in the production of cell phones, medical equipment, military hardware, and countless other technologies.⁵ They are also used to create alternative energy sources.

New mines would also increase revenue and create much needed jobs. Even after Denmark took its share of any mining revenue,⁶ there would still be sufficient income for Greenland to improve transportation, boost education, and reduce dependency on fishing. Greenland currently has no rail system, very few roads or airports, and only one university.⁷ Improvements to infrastructure would improve the everyday lives of Greenlanders, despite the island's small population. By allowing foreign companies and countries to develop its natural resources, Greenland could improve its people's standard of living, provide sustainable energy abroad, and become more prominent in global affairs.

Despite these benefits, many Greenlanders are understandably wary of permitting access to

their natural resources. Foreign powers are eager to exploit the island, in part because they view Greenland as a way to combat China's growing influence. Currently, China holds a near-monopoly over rare earth elements and maintains at least 85 percent⁸ of global capacity to process such materials.⁹ As much as 95 percent of global demand for rare earths is currently met by China.¹⁰ Western nations view Greenland as a solution to China's dominance in the industry. In 2019, former U.S. President Donald Trump even went as far as to float the (unrealistic) idea of the United States purchasing Greenland.¹¹ Individual mining companies, such as California's Kobold Metals and Great Britain's Bluejay Mining, have begun sifting through data searching for mineral deposits. Many Greenlanders argue that in their haste to rival China, these interest groups ignore the negative environmental consequences that their actions might have on Greenland. For instance, they argue that some mines would harm the environment by depositing residue in nearby lakes. One proposed mine near Narsaq,

a town in southern Greenland, would mine radioactive uranium whose tailings--residue left behind from the extraction process--might harm the environment.

Apart from concerns about the effects mining could have on the environment, many Greenlanders are resistant to permitting new mines because of their perceived threats to traditional lifestyles. Sheep farmers, fishermen, and whalers are often content living in the same small, Greenlandic-speaking towns as their ancestors. They see economic evolution as unnecessary, and are disinterested in the goals of jostling global powers and multinational conglomerates, however economically beneficial. Activists like Mariane Paviasen, a member of the Inatsisartut, the Parliament of Greenland, are doing everything in their

power to preserve Greenland's indigeneous traditions.¹² By banning the extraction of uranium, dissuading the government from allowing more mining, and placing tighter regulations on the mining industry, they hope to ensure that Greenlanders may continue their traditional ways of life.

Mining companies, and increasingly the government of Greenland, are doing all they can to placate Greenlanders' concerns. Mining activities in Greenland are highly regulated, and companies must demonstrate various environmental precautions and be granted permits before any mineral extraction can begin. There are currently very few active foreign mining projects in Greenland. Greenland Minerals and Energy Limited (GME), an Australian mining company backed by Chinese

investors, for example, was recently in the process of submitting an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) to the Environmental Protection Agency.¹³ Convinced that mining would help Greenland prosper and contribute to combating global warming, government officials have begun supporting mining projects. The environmental authorities of Greenland have tentatively backed GME's proposed mining projects. Jørn Skov, GME's Executive Managing Director, remarked, "I think it is a fantastic story. Greenland can deliver 15 to 20 percent of what is needed to drive the green transition. This is the world's greatest challenge, and imagine that Greenland can help solve this."

Greenland has the opportunity to become an unlikely leader in global energy. Many politicians

and citizens of Greenland fear the changes that this role would bring, but with tight regulations surrounding the mining industry in Greenland, its negative environmental effects would be minimized. Trepidation over the loss of Greenland's traditions is understandable, but those traditions would not disappear completely. Fishing and whaling would remain essential aspects of Greenland's economy and culture, just as they have been for generations, but would be supplemented by other economic gains. Greenland should continue taking advantage of its greater autonomy by authorizing further mining projects in order to both guarantee its own prosperity and serve as a source of cleaner energy for the world.

The Deadliest Year

Threats to Environmental Activists in Latin America

Kayleigh Crabb

The monarch butterfly is well-known throughout North America, captivating the hearts and minds of many. In Mexico, monarch butterflies are often regarded as the souls of those who have passed, as their annual arrival in the country coincides with Día de los Muertos. Unfortunately, the butterflies' spiritual significance is not enough to discourage cartels in Central Mexico from engaging in illegal logging that threatens the butterflies' wintering grounds. In early 2020, two monarch butterfly activists were found dead after their efforts to protect land for the butterflies. The government dismissed the deaths of both Homero Gómez and a second guide at the butterfly reserve as accidents, despite unexplained blunt trauma to Gómez's head and minimal investigation.¹

The monarch activists' case is only one example of the danger posed to environmental defenders in Latin America and globally. 2020 was the most dangerous year for environmental activists, with at least 227 environmental activists murdered, according to Global Witness. Latin America is the most dangerous region for environmental activists, representing over 70 percent

of all environmental activist murders. Colombia, Mexico, Brazil, Honduras, Guatemala, Nicaragua, and Peru all rank in the top ten countries for most fatalities.² Latin American countries, corporations, and organizations must commit to enforcement of environmental protections alongside protection for environmental activists in order to prevent more deaths in the future.

Latin America's environment is critically important to both local communities and the globe for the carbon sequestration abilities and other ecosystem services it provides. However, its natural resources can also yield incredibly profitable results if exploited. The majority of environmental defender killings are linked to corporate or for-profit interests that are limited by defenders' activities. This includes activities such as logging, mining, and hydroelectric dam construction that threaten the livelihoods of local communities. Almost 75 percent of attacks in Peru and Brazil occurred in the Amazon region, likely due in large part to its natural resources and lack of protection for indigenous communities.

Environmental defenders are not alone in their struggle--other activists are also killed at disproportionately high rates in Latin America. Colombia holds both the record for the largest number of environmental activists and the largest number of human rights activists killed in 2020. Many environmental and human rights activists targeted and killed are of indigenous and/or African descent, groups that continue to face threats of persecution on the basis of their identity.³ By failing to protect activists and stop killings, and failing to hold murderers responsible, Latin American governments are at the very minimum abdicating their responsibilities to some of their most at-risk populations.

While many Latin American countries have limited resources to protect environmental activists, in many cases few to no attempts have been made. In fact, some countries' leaders have blatantly encouraged attacks on environmental activists. The Articulation of Indigenous Peoples of Brazil has filed a communication with the International Criminal Court to assess if Jair Bolsonaro, the President of Brazil, has committed genocide and

crimes against humanity for his policies that are aimed at forcing indigenous people from their traditional land so that it can be used for agricultural and resource extraction purposes.⁴ He has not been discreet about his intentions, stating in 2015, "there is no indigenous territory where there aren't minerals. Gold, tin and magnesium are in these lands, especially in the Amazon, the richest area in the world. I'm not getting into this nonsense of defending land for Indians" (translated from Portuguese).⁵ This type of rhetoric, in addition to harmful policies and lack of punishment for lawbreakers, shows how deliberate efforts to undermine indigenous environmental activists have led to deaths. It is not possible to dismiss Latin America's failure to address environmental killings as simply the product of low state capacity. In some cases, such as Brazil, the government is refusing to protect and even encouraging attacks on environmental activists in order to profit.

Change needs to occur in Latin America and around the world in order to protect the lives of environmental defenders.⁶ While governments may struggle

¹Jackie Northam, "Greenland Is Not for Sale. but It Has Rare Earth Minerals America Wants," NPR November 24, 2019. <https://www.npr.org/2019/11/24/781598549/greenland-is-not-for-sale-but-it-has-the-rare-earth-minerals-america-wants>.

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³JCIA Factbook Greenland <https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/greenland/#economy>

⁴"Act on Greenland Self-Government Endelig - Naalakkersuisut." <https://naalakkersuisut.gl/~media/Nanoq/Files/Attached%20Files/Engelske-tekster/Act%20on%20Greenland.pdf>.

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⁸"China's Monopoly on Rare Earth Elements-and Why We Should Care," Foreign Policy Research Institute, November 24, 2020. <https://www.fpri.org/article/2020/10/chinas-monopoly-on-rare-earth-elements-and-why-we-should-care/>.

⁹"U.S. Dependence on China's Rare Earth: Trade War Vulnerability," Reuters. June 27, 2019. <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-trade-china-rareearth-explainer/u-s-dependence-on-chinas-rare-earth-trade-war-vulnerability-i>

¹⁰"Greenland Rare Earths: What's The Hold up?," Mining Technology, <https://www.mining-technology.com/comment/commentgreenland-rare-earths-whats-the-hold-up-4943390/>.

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¹²Peter Boyle, "Greenland Set to Restore Uranium Mining Ban," Green Left. October 24, 2021., <https://www.greenleft.org.au/content/greenland-set-restore-uranium-mining-ban>.

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to enforce laws protecting environmental activists, it is evident that reform is needed to eliminate harmful and discriminatory laws and practices, as well as prevent corruption. Potential solutions can also come from beyond the government. Increased corporate responsibility and assistance from nonprofit organizations can also play a role in ending the murder of environmental activists. For example, environmental activists are often motivated to protect their land or the environment from threatening business interests, as the Global Witness report highlights. Corporations must act ethically

and take into account the concerns of local communities and environmental activists. Furthermore, corporations have a responsibility to increase supply chain monitoring to ensure that their interests and actions do not cause harm to environmental activists or their communities. If businesses operate ethically, much of the loss of life can be avoided.

Nonprofit organizations can also play a role in protecting environmental activists. Nonprofits such as Global Witness can and should monitor threats to environmental activists, generate reports, and highlight the struggles of

activists to support national government and international action for change. Other organizations work directly with activists and can provide protection on the ground, such as Front Line Defenders. Funding organizations committed to protecting activists could save lives.

Environmental activists play a key role in protecting their families, communities, and global climate. Despite their importance, 2020 was the deadliest year for environmental activists, with Latin American activists disproportionately affected. There is a critical need for governmental reform,

an increase in ethical business, and increased involvement and funding for nonprofit organizations that protect environmental defenders. These key actors must take action immediately to protect activists and ensure their voices are heard. Without quick and concrete change, the situation is unlikely to improve.

In the TMX pipeline expansion, Trudeau exposes his climate hypocrisy

Alberto Della Torre

In the run-up to the Canadian snap election in September 2021, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau attended a debate with fellow leaders of other parties. Each attempted to present themselves as the best candidate to lead the Canadian government. A large portion of the debate revolved around the issues of climate change and the environment. Trudeau attempted to present himself as the best candidate to lead Canada in the fight against climate change and highlighted the country as an exemplary sustainable nation.¹ He emphasized his potential climate policies in flowery terms and disparaged his opponents for their lack of urgency and comparatively nondescript plans for combating climate change. Yet the controversial expansion of the Trans Mountain pipeline (TMX) forced the PM to equivocate. If Trudeau wants to maintain his legitimacy as a leader on climate change, environmental sustainability,

and carbon neutrality, he should stop defending the Trans Mountain pipeline and instead move to cancel its expansion.

The Trans Mountain pipeline is an oil pipeline that stretches from the Athabasca tar sands in Alberta, the center of Canada's oil production, to Burnaby, British Columbia, an economic and commercial hub in the Vancouver metropolitan area. Built in the 1950s, the pipeline has been constantly upgraded throughout its history. In its current iteration, the TMX transports 300,000 barrels of oil every day for domestic use and international export.² In 2019, the Canadian government approved a new expansion for the TMX to increase its capacity to 890,000 barrels per day. As climate change becomes increasingly severe, Canada's oil production is facing stricter scrutiny. The main culprit of the country's oil addiction are

the Athabasca tar sands. As one of the largest reservoirs of oil in the world, Canada's economic incentive to continue the extraction are difficult to ignore, as the oil can provide for Canada's petroleum needs and as a valuable export. The tar sands are also a politically important region for the Prime Minister. The economic opportunities that the oil fields provide are essential to the Alberta economy and they are one of Canada's largest employers.³ Without a proper plan to replace the economic vitality of the Athabasca tar sands, reducing its production would be political suicide for Trudeau and his Liberal government. However, in order to stay below the two degree threshold of global temperature warming, the world must reduce fossil fuel consumption and production.⁴ Developed countries have to lead the way in reducing emissions and transitioning

to renewable energy sources.⁴ The first step in this process for Canada is limiting the Athabasca tar sands to only necessary production, such as petrochemical products, and replacing its energy production with green alternatives.

The TMX has been controversial in the past, as its original path was built through dozens of First Nations' territories, most of whom did not give consent for the operation. The pipeline has continually damaged these First Nations. For example, the Sumas First Nation has experienced four oil spills in the last 16 years, most recently in 2020, when 190,000 liters were spilled on an aquifer that supplies the First Nation's drinking water.⁵

To address some of these environmental concerns, Trudeau's Liberal government has passed a slew of environmental policies during



An aerial view of the Athabasca tar sands - the largest oil reserve in the world.

Source: Howl Arts Collective

¹J "Mexico Violence: Why Were Two Butterfly Activists Found Dead?" BBC News. BBC, February 14, 2020. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-latin-america-51488262>.

²"Last Line of Defence," Global Witness, September 2021, <https://www.globalwitness.org/en/campaigns/environmental-activists/last-line-defence/>.

³GLOBAL ANALYSIS 2020," Front Line Defenders, n.d., https://www.frontlinedefenders.org/sites/default/files/fld_global_analysis_2020.pdf.

⁴Surma, Katie "Are Bolsonaro's Attacks on the Amazon and Indigenous Tribes International Crimes? A Third Court Plea Says They Are," Inside Climate News, August 11, 2021, <https://insideclimatenews.org/news/11082021/amazon-indigenous-tribes-jair-bolsonaro-international-criminal-court>.

⁵"What Brazil's President, Jair Bolsonaro, Has Said about Brazil's Indigenous Peoples," Survival International, <https://www.survivalinternational.org/articles/3540-Bolsonaro>.

⁶Root, Rebecca, "What Can Stop Environmental Activism from Being so Deadly?," Devex, October 13, 2021, <https://www.devex.com/news/what-can-stop-environmental-activism-from-being-so-deadly-101705>.

his six year tenure. In 2018, a national carbon tax was implemented on provinces that had not previously issued their own version. The government also established a Low Carbon Economy Fund of \$2 billion to invest in clean energy projects in Canada.⁶

Nevertheless, the TMX pipeline has become the focal point of criticism of Trudeau's environmental policies due to his disregard for the issue. The culmination of this tension occurred in 2018, when, on the day after a National Climate Emergency was issued by the Canadian Government and the two-year anniversary of Canada's G7 commitment to eliminate unnecessary fossil fuel subsidies; the Canadian Government bought the TMX for \$4.5 Billion CAD.⁷ The

expansion of the TMX is also incentivizing the proliferation of oil drilling infrastructure in the Tar Sands. The expansion has led to projects such as the Teck Resources Frontier Mine, which would produce four megatons of emissions every year, a non-negligible percent of Canada's allotted carbon emissions for the future. These developments show that Trudeau is not serious about reducing Canada's oil industry and meeting subsequent climate goals.

Despite the constant pro-environmental messaging and Canada's global image as a leader in the fight against climate change, Prime Minister Trudeau cannot truly claim his environmental pedigree without direct action on the Athabasca tar sands and the TMX pipeline. The Athabasca tar sands are an

expensive, polluting industry area that is holding Canada back on the environmental front. Prime Minister Trudeau and his Liberal government must take immediate action to reduce the oil sands operations in order for Canada to adhere to its Paris Accords promise of reducing their carbon emissions by 30 percent below 2005 levels by 2030.⁸

¹ Austen, Ian and Flavelle, Christopher, "Trudeau Was a Global Climate Hero. Now Canada Risks Falling Behind." *New York Times*. April 21, 2021. <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/04/21/world/canada/trudeau-climate-oil-sands.html>

² Alini, Erica. "Trans Mountain pipeline: Some of the main arguments for and against it." *Global News*. April 25, 2018. <https://globalnews.ca/news/4149689/trans-mountain-pipeline-arguments-pro-against/>

³ Government of Canada. *Oil Sands: Economic contributions. Natural Resources Canada*. May 2016. <https://www.nrcan.gc.ca/energy/publications/18756>

⁴ Dan Welsby, James Price, Steve Pye and Paul Ekins. "Unextractable fossil fuels in a 1.5 °C world." *Nature*. September 09, 2021. <https://www.nature.com/articles/s41586-021-03821-8>

⁵ Bellrichard, Chantelle. "Trans Mountain oil spill bolsters Sumas First Nation opposition to twinned pipeline." *Canadian Broadcasting Corporation News*. June 16, 2020. <https://www.cbc.ca/news/indigenous/sumas-first-nation-trans-mountain-spill-1.5613596>

⁶ Government of Canada. "What is the Low Carbon Economy Fund?" *Natural Resources Canada*. May 21, 2021. <https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/services/climate-change/low-carbon-economy-fund/what-is-lcef.html>

⁷ Cox, Sarah. "The great Canadian bailout: Canada's pipeline purchase clashes with vow to end fossil fuel subsidies." *The Narwhal*. May 29, 2018. <https://thenarwhal.ca/the-great-canadian-bailout-canadas-pipeline-purchase-clashes-with-vow-to-end-fossil-fuel-subsidies/>

⁸ Government of Canada. "Progress towards Canada's greenhouse gas emissions reduction target." *Government of Canada*. March 2021. <https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/services/environmental-indicators/progress-towards-canada-greenhouse-gas-emissions-reduction-target.html>



A Tale of Two Currencies

The Push for Cryptocurrency in Latin America

Jordan Halpern

On September 9, 2021—a day since decreed as "Bitcoin Day"—El Salvador made history by becoming the first country to legalize cryptocurrency as legal tender. The national, government-issued bitcoin wallet, Chivo (El Salvadoran slang for "cool"), offered \$30 sign-up bonuses for those opening an account. Within two months, President Nayib Bukele, a fervent supporter of the cryptocurrency, took to Twitter to proclaim the success of his new policy: "There is one country on Earth, where there are more people using #Bitcoin wallets than bank accounts. Prolly nothing."¹ Outside of El Salvador, and across Latin America, crypto-exchange and blockchain companies tout bitcoin as a nearly miraculous cure to economic struggle. As the CSO of Blockstream, a global leader in Bitcoin and blockchain technology, Samson Mow, even goes as far to suggest "[y]ou don't need the World Bank, you don't need the IMF. Bitcoin

will save the day."² While the adoption of cryptocurrencies has had some benefits, Bitcoin's volatility, flawed rollout, and role in increased threats of crime in El Salvador emphasize the need for tighter financial regulation. The success of individual economies relies on striking a healthy balance between recognizing cryptocurrency and maintaining high financial standards, implementing consumer protections, and protecting the environment.

Immediately after Bukele established cryptocurrency as a national currency, El Salvador saw some immediate, short-term benefits. Cryptocurrency is independent of central banking systems and provides anonymity to conduct long-distance transactions. This allows individuals and countries to evade sanctions and government regulations—meaning cross-border transfers can be made faster and cheaper

and foreign investment would be easier. For Latin American nations entrenched in sanctions, crypto-transfers are a faster mechanism to send and receive remittances from outside the country.

Of many criticisms opponents mount against cryptocurrency, perhaps the most obvious is its volatility. At the same time President Bukele doubled down on his pro-cryptocurrency stance, hosting a '#FeelTheBit' event to celebrate the end of 'Bitcoin Week'—a week of Bukele-hosted series of events to celebrate the adoption of Bitcoin—the coin took a major dive. By the end of Bitcoin Week, Bitcoin sat at 16 percent below its all-time high from earlier in the month. The day El Salvador adopted Bitcoin as national currency, the price fell 11.1 percent.³ This high level of volatility was a driving force behind the wave of anti-cryptocurrency protests seen in September 2021, as

people feared for the country's economic stability in the face of fluctuating prices.

Volatility aside, several significant dangers emerge: for one, monetary policy loses its legitimacy. It would become nearly impossible to set interest rates on foreign currencies, risking the destabilization of domestic prices. Experts assert that "crypto assets are unlikely to catch on in countries with stable inflation and exchange rates, and credible institutions. Their value is just too volatile and unrelated to the real economy."⁴ It also puts developing, less stable economies, including El Salvador, at increased risk. Especially in countries with weaker regulations regarding money laundering and counter-terrorism financing, the ubiquitous spread of cryptocurrency brings significant threats to security.

Various financial institutions—

including the World Bank to the IMF—have sounded the alarm when it comes to broader economic ramifications of implementing cryptocurrency as national currency. The IMF described making cryptocurrency a national currency as an “inadvisable shortcut.” A World Bank spokesperson, explains El Salvador’s move “is not something the World Bank can support given the environmental and transparency shortcomings.”⁵

On a smaller scale, the unregulated nature of cryptocurrency opens citizens to cybercrime and online scams on a large scale. Limited internet access and lack of financial literacy have left many vulnerable. A major problem that has emerged since Chivo’s launch has been identity fraud—many El Salvadorans have reported accounts being opened in their name, despite not signing up themselves. To put those claims in perspective, President Bukele has claimed that over three million people

have opened a Chivo wallet.⁶ This amounts to about 46 percent of the population—a number that raises eyebrows, especially considering only a little over 30 percent of El Salvadorans have internet access, according to recent estimates.⁷ As Bitcoin has no legal issuer, legal recourse for crimes committed via Bitcoin is nearly impossible.

At the same time, ignoring the emergence of Bitcoin is not an option. Although in El Salvador cryptocurrency was widely implemented at the governmental level, in other areas, increased interest in cryptocurrency has forced governments to recognize it. For example, when facing an array of tight sanctions, Cubans increasingly used cryptocurrency to skirt around U.S. sanctions, since the U.S. restricts the number of remittances allowed from Cuba. Due to cryptocurrency’s resulting popularity, Cuba was forced to respond; it passed Resolution 215, which states: “The Central

Bank of Cuba, for reasons of socioeconomic interest, may authorize the use of certain virtual assets in commercial transactions, and license virtual asset service providers for operations related to financial, exchange and collection or payment activities.”⁸ The Resolution specifies that this does not apply to illegal activities. Cryptocurrency is often likened to the ‘Wild West’—leaving it unchecked is risky. Legal recognition and government-level regulations are key in taking steps towards accountability.

As it stands now, El Salvador is failing in its implementation of crypto. There are a few key lessons about implementation that can be taken from El Salvador’s launch. First, introducing cryptocurrency at a national level requires significant resources—both monetary and environmental—to sustain widespread use of cryptocurrency. On the monetary side, Chivo’s launch in El Salvador was marred by significant

bugs and glitches. Investing in the online infrastructure for successful rollout is key. On the environmental side, mining Bitcoin has immense environmental impacts. Bukele plans to build a computer farm, drawing volcanic power from El Salvador’s 23 volcanoes. While this is cleaner than burning fossil fuels, it has the significant risk of contaminating aquifers, and in turn, further endangering the water supply in a region already struggling with access.⁹ Additionally, responsibility for regulation must be clearly delegated to either the private or public sector to protect consumers. It’s increasingly important to consider the role cryptocurrency plays in the global context, and the different ways cryptocurrency is emerging in the global economy. While complete circumvention of the IMF and World Bank via cryptocurrency is extreme, to ensure safe investing moving forward, it’s key that countries reckon with cryptocurrency in their financial policies.

The Indigenous Fight for Culture and Climate Change Survival in the Amazon

Ayla Kaufman

Glasgow, Scotland hosted 20,000 people this November for COP26, a United Nations climate change conference that gathers environmental advocates to catalyze international cooperation on climate mitigation.¹ Among those gathered were 40 representatives of Brazilian indigenous groups, the largest international delegation of Brazil’s indigenous people to attend such a conference. The indigenous envoys proudly proclaimed that “if there is no protection of indigenous territories and rights, there will also be no solution to the climate crisis.”² Environmental experts widely agree that indigenous communities in Brazil are essential to conserving the Amazon rainforest, whose preservation represents a key

bulwark against climate change. However, indigenous territories are under attack by President Jair Bolsonaro’s administration, risking rainforest destruction and the disappearance of indigenous cultures.

Although the destruction of the Amazon has been a longstanding issue in Brazil, the Bolsonaro administration has encouraged intrusion into indigenous territories through development initiatives and deforestation. Since assuming office, the Missionary Council for Indigenous Peoples has reported 256 cases of property damage, illegal occupation, and exploitation of indigenous territories, marking a 43 percent increase in land destruction under Bolsonaro’s presidency.³ These spikes in land clearing follow Bolsonaro’s campaign

promises to develop Amazon land for commercial mining, oil and gas extraction, large-scale agriculture initiatives, logging businesses, and cattle ranching.⁴ Business hopefuls, emboldened by the prospect of development, have illegally trespassed onto indigenous territories and converted natural forests into business sites. A Yanomami peoples spokesperson, for instance, claimed that 20,000 illegal miners have invaded indigenous territories, contributing to runoff that contaminates Amazon River waters.⁵ Beyond land destruction and water pollution, land seizures under Bolsonaro’s administration have skyrocketed deforestation rates. The National Institute for Space Research calculated that over 4,000 square miles of Amazon forest were cleared between 2019 and 2020 alone, representing a 70 percent increase in annual deforestation compared to the decade prior to Bolsonaro’s presidency.⁶ Land destruction of the Amazon under Bolsonaro stands in stark contrast to forest conservation in protected indigenous territories, which report significantly lower deforestation rates according to the UN’s Food and Agriculture Organization.

Alongside land loss, indigenous communities in the Amazon have witnessed increased threats to their territorial rights as the Bolsonaro administration undermines key governmental agencies. Although Brazil’s constitution affords indigenous groups the right to have their lands demarcated, or protected as sovereign territories, this process was halted by Bolsonaro. By attempting to transfer responsibility for land demarcation from the National Indian Foundation to the Ministry of Agriculture, Bolsonaro tried to place indigenous rights into the hands of an organization tasked with prioritizing land for agriculture. Despite the Supreme Court blocking the transfer, demarcation requests have been fixed ever since, undercutting indigenous groups’ abilities to protect their lands, and thereby the Amazon, from excavation.

Moreover, Bolsonaro’s

administration enacted sharp funding cuts to agencies that support indigenous rights protections. In 2020, for example, earmarking for indigenous rights programs experienced a 40 percent cut.⁷ Legislative enforcement of environmental protections has similarly gone overlooked; 57 pieces of legislation have been introduced or enacted that would weaken environmental preservations, enforcement of existing laws has been incapacitated, and fines for environmental destruction have declined by 72 percent under Bolsonaro’s reign. Together, demarcation freezes, budget slashes, and weak legal administration advance Amazon rainforest decimation and illustrate the systematic dismantling of institutionalized protections for indigenous lands.

The replacement of Amazon rainforest and indigenous lands with development projects presents an alarming environmental threat.⁸ Water pollution from industries contaminates drinking water, spreads disease, undermines sanitation, limits water-intensive agriculture, and compromises hydroelectric power. Land clearing risks habitat fragmentation, soil degradation, and erosion, which together threaten biodiversity by diminishing the food supplies, nutrient cycles, and homes for plants and wildlife. Deforestation also risks disrupting climate regulation in Brazil, whose effects currently are producing Brazil’s worst drought in 91 years.⁹ As trees capture and take carbon out of the atmosphere, their removal will increase global warming by depleting a natural mechanism to remove carbon dioxide from the atmosphere.¹⁰ In fact, the Amazon could release 5 or 6 years of global greenhouse gases if 60 percent of the rainforest is compromised. Given the detrimental effects of Amazon deforestation, environmental advocates have strongly opposed pushing indigenous people off their land.

In addition to the environmental ramifications of Amazon

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deforestation, land destruction poses an existential threat to Brazilian indigenous groups' ways of life. Absent safe, unpolluted access to land, indigenous communities lose their ability to remain self-sufficient, healthy, and connected with nature. A healthy forest is necessary for indigenous groups' self-sufficiency through fishing and hunting. Likewise, pollution jeopardizes the health of indigenous people who become exposed to toxins. Losing shelter and the land indigenous groups have survived on for generations imperils their ability to connect with rituals, spirituality, religion, and tradition rooted in environmental connection.

In response to the attacks Brazilian indigenous groups have faced on their land,

environment, culture, and legal recognition, the Association of Indigenous Peoples of Brazil (APIB) filed an Article 15 Communication (A15C) to the International Criminal Court (ICC) requesting prosecution of Bolsonaro and other government officials for "ecocide" and crimes against humanity.¹¹ An A15C is an informative legal document that justifies a request of the ICC to investigate the documented abuses. Specifically, APIB's lawyers reported the ecological harm, murder of indigenous activists, forced displacement and land excavation, and persecution of indigenous people under the Bolsonaro administration. In justifying that the crimes committed under Bolsonaro's administration qualify as a crime against humanity, prosecutors were asked to recognize that the

"survival of Indigenous groups are directly linked to the natural environment." Thus, Bolsonaro's harmful policies amount to an attack on these groups.

By linking environmental destruction to a crime against humanity, the APIB request asks the ICC to set a new precedent that they can investigate environmental crimes. Currently, the ICC's jurisdiction is limited to genocide, war crimes, crimes against humanity, and the crime of aggression. Should the ICC accept the A15C, they would then set precedent that severe, widespread, and long-term environmental harm, otherwise termed as ecocide, is a crime.

ICC prosecution driven by the A15C hence serves as the best path forward to protect Brazilian indigenous groups'

land and the Amazon rainforest from environmentally ruinous excavation.

Successful prosecution would incriminate Bolsonaro and establish that trading indigenous sovereignty for business projects violates international norms, instead recognizing governments' obligations to actively protect the environment. Even if prosecution fails, merely accepting the request would enable other petitions on ecocide around the world, elevating the importance of environmental conservation. Defending indigenous lands and preventing catastrophic climate change requires Brazil to meet its COP26 pledge to end deforestation by 2030, which ICC prosecution can uniquely support.¹²

Double-dealing

Argentina's Green Facade vs. Fossil Fuel Dependency

Samantha Klos

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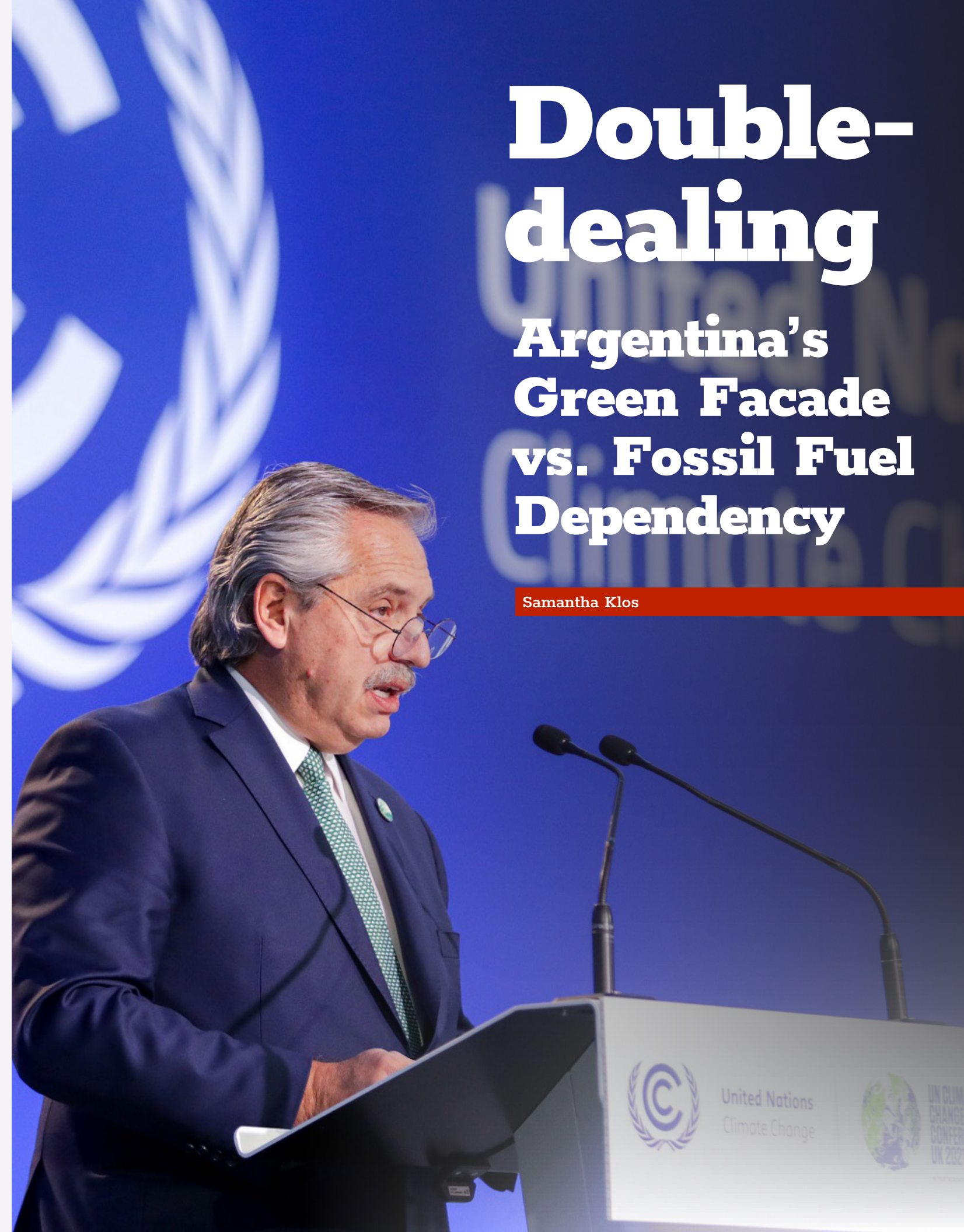
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“ The key to sustainable economic salvation for Argentina is in reach, but Fernández won’t grab it. ”

Since its economic crisis in 2018, Argentina has desperately sought an opportunity to get back on its feet. The nation has struggled to repay its 2018 IMF loan of \$57 billion—the greatest in IMF history.¹ Coupled with the impacts of Covid-19, these debts cause the economic outlook to remain uncertain. To President Alberto Fernández, the solution is to tap into the Vaca Muerta shale deposit and increase fossil fuel production. Though this may combat Argentina’s economic crisis, it would exacerbate the climate emergency. The plan directly contradicts his pledge for a green Argentina that could champion environmental protection, unlike other sovereign debt restructuring options, such as ‘debt for climate’ action swaps. If Fernández truly wants to be a leader in climate justice, he needs to recognize this hypocrisy and develop a sustainable way out of the economic crisis.

This September, Argentina hosted the Latin American Climate Change Summit. In doing so, Fernández seemed to signal his goals for both Argentina and Latin America as a whole. He convened 10 nations from the region and called for “environmental multilateralism,” urging them to decrease greenhouse gas emissions and develop new funding avenues for green projects.² He clearly recognized the urgency of the issue for Latin America specifically, which is disproportionately impacted by climate change compared to other regions. The region has experienced significant drought, agricultural loss, water shortages, tropical storms, and wildfires, leading to mass displacement which is only expected to increase.³ Fernández’s declarations at the summit were ambitious, but

have not amounted to anything beyond international praise.

One week after the summit, the Argentine President, Minister of Economy, and Secretary of Energy sent to congress a bill that contradicts Fernández’s climate goals. They introduced a plan to attract investments on top of previously announced subsidies for oil and natural gas production, chiefly in Vaca Muerta. Located in the Patagonia region, Vaca Muerta is the second-largest shale deposit in the world. While only 4 percent of the site is in the development phase so far, it contains over 30 trillion cubic feet of natural gas and 16 billion barrels of oil.⁴ The bill promotes a 20-year regime that incentivizes this oil and natural gas production primarily through increased export authorizations, favorable tax rates, and eased foreign exchange controls.⁵ The aim is to allow Argentina to be self-sufficient and export the surplus while the world is still dependent on fossil fuels, in hopes to bring in profit, repay the national debt, and strengthen the economy.

Fernández has failed to address how this proposal squares with his public position on climate justice and reducing emissions, which he directly affirmed in both the Latin American Climate Change Summit in September and the 26th United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP26) in November, as well as through Argentina’s commitment to the 2016 Paris Agreement. In each of these, the government of Argentina has not only agreed to substantially reduce greenhouse gas emissions, but Fernández has also considered protections such as criminalizing illegal deforestation and diversifying the energy portfolio with renewables. Adversely, the proposed oil and natural gas extraction in Vaca Muerta

requires hydraulic fracturing (fracking), a procedure that significantly contributes to greenhouse gas emissions, pollutes air and water, and poses many health risks. Expanding the fossil fuel sector will gravely hinder the climate goals that Argentina seeks, and eliminate any economic incentive that Fernández might see in a sustainable development plan.

Before Fernández took office, Argentina had taken the steps to become a pioneer in renewables in order to address the changing climate and increasing emissions. The nation has impeccable conditions for renewable energy production: specifically, wind power in the Patagonia region, solar power in the rural northwest, and rivers for hydropower. The previous administration capitalized on these advantages in order to diversify the energy matrix and attract investors.⁶ Developments for wind farms, solar farms, and hydropower stations were introduced and began to make up more of the energy portfolio at a remarkable rate, but when Fernández entered office, these developments halted. There have been no submissions for renewable projects since, which now receive less than one percent of the energy budget.⁷ The optimal conditions and infrastructure foundations for a boom in renewables are present, but Argentina’s potential will go to waste if Fernández does not relaunch the sector.

The key to sustainable economic salvation for Argentina is in reach, but Fernández won’t grab it. Though the President understands the risks of his fossil fuel plan and puts in the effort to create a green face for Argentina, he fails to see it through. Yet in the long-term, particularly in Argentina, where infrastructural foundations are

already laid, renewables will prove to be both more profitable and sustainable. In recent years, investors in renewables across the globe have seen a 367 percent higher return on investment than those in fossil fuels.⁸ Further, they are cheaper to operate than fossil fuel production and highly labor-intensive, generating many jobs for a struggling economy. But even so, Fernández wants a more immediate ticket out of debt— and the solution to this may be to complement renewable investments with ‘debt for climate’ action swaps.

Debt for climate action swaps are agreements between a nation and its creditors that outline new terms for loan repayment in the form of climate change mitigation. Essentially, the debtor country pays for agreed upon green projects and policies in local currency in lieu of external payments to the creditor. The IMF has also expressed support for this method of sustainable financing, as it accelerates both debt payback and climate action, even if only small percentages of the debt are restructured at a time.⁹ For Argentina, these swaps could give the added incentive of timely relief to relaunch the renewables sector. Fernández has glanced over debt for climate action swaps in the past, but has lacked in the implementation of these measures. It will take great coordination and encouragement from creditors and the international community to make sure this is not another empty promise. However, if executed, this creative combination could swiftly place Argentina back into the forefront of climate action and serve as a model for other debt ridden nations in similar dilemmas.

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The Unlikely Triumph of the Inter-American Human Rights System

Emmanuel Orozco Castellanos

The human rights situation in Nicaragua offers a grim outlook. On July 9, Nicaragua failed to implement protective measures in favor of presidential pre-candidates issued by Inter-American Court of Human Rights (IA Court).¹ During a disputed election,² Daniel Ortega secured his for a fourth term in power after having arbitrarily detained over 120 political opponents. Many have interpreted the crisis in Nicaragua as a failure of the Inter-American Human Rights System to hold Ortega accountable. But this blame is misplaced. The Inter-American System has an impressive record of achievement, despite lacking funding and meaningful political support. The reality is that members of the Organization of American States (OAS) have continuously attempted to undermine this human rights body. If anything, the failure of the OAS members to address the human rights crisis in Nicaragua proves that the Inter-American System is more important than ever.

The Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR), along with the IA Court, constitute the Inter-American system. Founded in 1959, the IACHR was entrusted with monitoring human rights in the Western hemisphere; it refers states that commit human rights violations to the IA Court. The main strength of this human rights system is its remarkable level of autonomy. Both of these bodies operate separately from the OAS; they are staffed by independent members who serve in a personal capacity and do not represent their home countries.³ In fact, this unique makeup allows its members to scrutinize any country in the region. It is precisely this universality that has earned the system such a remarkable reputation of impartiality among NGOs and the academic sector.⁴

The Commission played a critical role in documenting human

rights abuses in Nicaragua in 2018.⁵ When the IACHR visited the country, the Nicaraguan government felt threatened and expelled the Commission's delegates. However, President Ortega was unable to prevent the release of the IACHR's findings detailing the repression that Ortega employed against political opponents. Eventually, the Commission referred Nicaragua to the IA Court, which ultimately charged Ortega with crimes against humanity,⁶ issued precautionary measures, and demanded the release of political prisoners.⁷ Unsurprisingly, President Ortega failed to comply with the Court's ruling, which prompted many critics and skeptics to decry this as yet another failure of the Inter-American system. However, this assessment overlooks the system's stunning history of achievement.

The case of Nicaragua stands in stark contrast with the progress that the Inter-American Human Rights System has made since its inception. During the 80s, the findings of the IAHR were instrumental in the Argentina, Chile,⁸ El Salvador, Guatemala, and Peru's transitional justice processes.⁹ Furthermore, the Commission allows individual citizens to file claims, making it an extraordinarily accessible body. In 2020, a third of the petitions received by the IACHR were submitted by individuals who could not afford legal representation.¹⁰ Lastly, a handful of states have accepted the primacy of the Court's jurisdiction over national law. These examples challenge the popular perception that states rarely comply with Inter-American human rights bodies. In fact, it is estimated that states abide by the Inter-American System's rulings in 60 to 70 percent of cases,¹¹ a number that has been steadily increasing.¹²

All of this has been

accomplished despite limited resources and political support. The Inter-American Human Rights System is underfunded; it only receives about 6 percent of the entire budget of the OAS¹³ and it overwhelmingly relies on outside donations. The system also lacks the diplomatic support of critical states such as the United States and Canada, neither of which has ratified the American Convention on Human Rights. Additionally, although the rulings of the IA Court are considered binding, this judicial body has no enforcement mechanism. So what accounts for high levels of compliance with its decisions? The answer is that the legitimacy of the IA Court does not stem from states but from civil society organizations. NGOs have played a critical role in pressuring governments to act on the Court's rulings. The result is a human rights body that operates from the bottom up, ensuring compliance through public pressure, not the imposition of sanctions.

Paradoxically, the astounding success of the Inter-American Human Rights System has prompted members of the OAS, who were responsible for creating it, to undermine it. The IACHR has recently countered several efforts by the OAS to weaken its autonomy. In 2013, Peru and Brazil, irritated by the decisions of the Commission, joined forces with neighboring countries to push a reform initiative. This coalition established a "Working Group" that issued 53 recommendations for the Commission, including eliminating country reports and limiting funding for on-site visits. A few state members even threatened to pull out of the OAS if the Commission failed to take action. In 2020, for example, the OAS Secretary General, Luis Almagro, refused to confirm the candidate appointed by the Commission. Despite these setbacks, the system has managed to overcome these

threats due to the widespread support that it enjoyed from civil society organizations and key diplomats who fiercely defended these human rights bodies. It was the system's unique bottom-up structure, and the legitimacy it receives from NGOs, not states, that guaranteed its unlikely survival. If anything, the fact that the Inter-American System surpassed the efforts of states to undermine it highlights its extraordinary resilience.

In the case of Nicaragua, the Commission has fulfilled its duty; it documented human rights abuses and issued precautionary measures. Ortega did not comply in part because critical governments such as Mexico and Argentina refused to call on Nicaragua by invoking non-intervention.¹⁴ The U.S. has also been slow to impose economic and political sanctions, and the OAS has not even considered an Inter-American dialogue with the regime. Nevertheless, skeptics have pointed their fingers to the supposed "inaction" of the Inter-American System, recklessly demeriting its astounding legacy. The Commission's successes show that states tend to comply with human rights norms only when they allow civil society organizations to develop. Therefore, for Nicaragua to comply with the IA Court, the country needs to allow NGOs to flourish, but this is inconceivable in an authoritarian regime. The human rights situation will only improve if democratic institutions are restored, but this is beyond the scope of the mandate of the Inter-American System. Instead, the members of the OAS, who are responsible for safeguarding democracy, have been hesitant to take action against Ortega. In the meantime, they have turned the Inter-American Human Rights System into a scapegoat for their erratic response to Nicaragua's political crisis.

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Ecotourism: A Sustainable Strategy For Economic Recovery

Noelle Seward

Costa Rica has long been celebrated as a leader in global environmental activism and as protector of its natural beauty and resources.¹ After undergoing some of the highest deforestation rates in the 70s and 80s, it has regrown a significant portion of its tropical rainforests.² The country and its leaders have played a significant role in global climate policy by increasing signatories to the Paris Accord and spearheading the High Ambition Coalition for Nature and People.

Costa Rica's economy is also heavily based on ecotourism—a form of tourism that focuses on conservation and preservation, attracting travelers who are increasingly aware of their carbon footprint.³ As tourism in Costa Rica fell by nearly 70 percent due to the Covid-19 pandemic,⁴ its economy has struggled, forcing it to negotiate with the IMF. Costa Rica's leaders feared they would have to compromise their national priorities of environmentalism and climate action in order to receive aid from the IMF, which historically has prioritized human development above all else. However, they received an unexpected push from the IMF to continue ecotourism in the form of a \$1.7 billion deal to help Costa Rica recover from the pandemic and address any resulting economic damages. The IMF and similar organizations claim that ecotourism might be the key to economic recovery and human development post-pandemic for countries that already rely heavily on tourism, like Costa Rica.

Costa Rica is not the only country whose economic reliance on tourism made them especially vulnerable to the pandemic's wrath.⁵ Marine and coastal tourism are some of the fastest growing industries,⁶ and play an important role for many countries in the Asia-Pacific and Western Hemisphere.⁷ If reductions in tourism and travel extend on or reoccur in the future, a transition from tourism to ecotourism could be a promising solution for these

countries. Costa Rica already has a blooming ecotourism sector, and the IMF's funding will help them to further support this model.

Ecotourism is responsible travel that promotes conservation and the sustainable use of resources, local job creation, and biodiversity; sustains the well-being of the local people and economy; and involves interpretation and education. Ecotourism allows countries and communities to build their economies without harming the environment, which means that local wildlife can thrive and visitors can enjoy relatively untouched destinations.

Uncontrolled conventional tourism is gradually destroying the environmental resources on which it depends. This occurs when the "level of visitor use is greater than the environment's ability to cope with this use within acceptable limits of change." These negative impacts can be combated by instituting policies that ensure tourism protects and preserves the natural environment. These would include regulatory measures in order to control the numbers and actions of tourists in protected areas. Increased environmental management of tourism facilities is also necessary. With the right regulatory measures in place, tourism can help raise awareness about environmental issues and be a helpful tool in implementing measures for environmental conservation, showcasing how closely the protection of natural areas is tied to future economic opportunity.

When done properly, ecotourism also provides direct financial benefits for conservation and sustainability.⁸ Protection efforts can be funded by sources such as revenue from park entrance fees and to the management of environmentally sensitive areas. Preservation policies ensure the natural resources that attract tourists and bring in revenue exist and continue to be profitable into the future.

Early planning for tourism development can minimize

the environmental impact of operating tourism facilities and be supplemented by anti-pollution measures and waste minimization. An example of sustainable planning is green building,"using energy-efficient and non-polluting construction materials, sewage systems and energy sources."

Grupo Punta Cana, a high-end resort in the Dominican Republic, offers an example of how luxury tourism development and conservation can be combined. The resort's developers set aside 24,700 acres of land as a nature reserve, "protecting an environment for unusual wildlife to flourish in its natural state" while allowing guests to explore on a designated nature path. The resort has also enacted environmentally protective policies, including "programs to

protect the offshore barrier reefs and the recycling of wastewater for use in irrigating the grounds."⁹ This resort generates economic activity, provides locals with opportunities for employment, and promotes local business, while respecting the environment. The Dominican Republic hosts more than 6 million visitors each year, making it a top five tourist destination in the Americas.¹⁰ Like Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic is finding success with an ecotourism model.

To prepare for future dips in tourism, ecotourism can also be used to foster and fund economic diversification. It will be necessary to use ecotourism to fund and expand other areas of the economy and promote local business, so that in the long run, the country's

economy will be less reliant on tourism and, therefore, less sensitive to tourism volatility. This starts with strengthening the "links between [eco] tourism and locally produced agriculture, manufacturing, and entertainment." Global interaction and integration among people, companies, and governments is going to continue. As such, Covid-19 is unlikely to be the last public health crisis we see in our lifetimes. Investment in "pandemic conscious" technologies may be the way forward in terms of a sustainable future for tourism-dependent countries—health protocols, touchless service delivery systems, and more. A shift toward ecotourism and a push for economic diversification is necessary for countries reliant on tourism.

Costa Rica is already a global leader in ecotourism, and uses "ecotourism as a vehicle for its conservation efforts."¹¹ Costa Rica has proven that ecotourism can be both environmentally friendly and highly profitable. The next steps for countries reliant on tourism coming out of the pandemic are to invest in technology that makes the industry more "pandemic-proof," and then use ecotourism to bolster and diversify the rest of the economy to further sustainable development. This is a comprehensive and effective model that other countries who similarly rely on tourism can use as a path toward something better and more sustainable. Ecotourism could be the answer to develop and diversify other environmentally friendly industries in many countries.

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A Latin American Bloc, Teachings from the OAS

Brendan Tilds

On September 18, 2021, heads of state from across Latin America convened at the fourth Summit of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC), an intergovernmental organization meant to promote dialog between nations in the region. The summit hosted 27 representatives from the organization and featured Chinese President Xi Jinping as a guest speaker. Topics ranged from Covid-19 vaccination efforts to post-pandemic economy rebuilding. Notably, the summit demonstrated a growing effort to transition from United States-centric policies to more broadly pro-development and non-interventionist policies. Mexico and fellow states led the charge, calling CELAC to transition towards being an “EU style bloc” that could effectively implement these efforts. If CELAC wants to develop into this proposed bloc, the organization needs to learn from where the OAS failed in order to ensure that it does not develop into a similarly Western pro-democratic body.

While CELAC aims to further develop economic ties within the region, many of the nations are also members of the Organization of American States (OAS), which includes the United States and Canada. OAS is a regional organization of 35 member states within the Western hemisphere. In line with “the Organization’s four main pillars—democracy, human rights, security, and development,”¹ it has been used in recent years as a democracy monitoring body to ensure fair elections in the region. Founded in 1948, the OAS has historically served as a pro-democracy force within Latin America. In recent years, the organization has

received increasing criticism for merely mirroring United States policy goals in other countries of the region. This is exemplified through the Inter American Democratic Charter, “the affirmation that democracy is and should be the common form of government for all countries of the Americas.”² Utilizing this charter, the OAS continued to reflect the pro-democracy policies that the United States historically promoted throughout the Western Hemisphere.

While speaking at the fourth CELAC summit, Obrador attacked the environment of condemnation created by the United States, claiming that sanctions had become a major tool for democratization. The exclusion of Cuba from the OAS in 1962 exemplifies the organization’s historically pro-democracy politics at the cost of productive dialogue. In December 1961, Cuban leader Fidel Castro gave a televised address stating, “I am a Marxist-Leninist and shall be one until the end of my life.”³ The Kennedy administration saw this as a direct threat to democracy and urged OAS leaders to take action. The United States quickly imposed sanctions in February 1962, while OAS followed suit two years later mandating, “the breaking of diplomatic ties with that nation from 1964 to 1975.”⁴ Although the Castro administration received widespread support from other international bodies, the United States was quick to condemn it after Castro revealed his Marxist-Leninist ideology in a bid to restrain further Communist influence; it feared that this rhetoric would stifle the U.S.’ own pro-democratic ideology. As a result, for 47

years, the nation of Cuba was barred from participating in OAS activities. The OAS sought to cease dialogue with the nation rather than effectively search for a “solution” to their lack of democracy, hindering Cuba’s economic and political growth. As a result of these harsh measures, the Inter American Commission on Human Rights acknowledged that, “the economic and trade embargo imposed against Cuba in 1961 is still in effect. The IACHR’s position is still that economic sanctions have an impact on the Cuban people’s human rights.”⁵ The IACHR acknowledges the detrimental impact that these sanctions inflicted on Cuba; because OAS policies blindly mirrored those of the United States, the Cuban government was limited in its ability to improve conditions for the Cuban public. These sanctions were a means to call out the Cuban government, making it harder for it to effectively change its economic standing.

While the OAS continues to promote pro-democratic ideals throughout the Americas, it fails to target issues as severe as crimes against humanity in self-proclaimed democracies like Brazil. Brazilian president Jair Bolsonaro is currently facing multiple charges in front of the International Criminal Court (ICC), including for crimes against humanity.⁶ Despite this, he still holds power and has received little backlash from the OAS. Additionally, Bolsonaro has received significant public criticism for the manner in which he handled the Covid-19 pandemic, yet the OAS has once again remained silent while thousands lost their lives. This demonstrates the hypocritical nature of the OAS; while it

claims to be pro-democracy, it overlooks the very undemocratic actions of leaders like Bolsonaro. Bolsonaro’s claims that he is “democratic” should only further the OAS’ scrutiny of his actions—instead they stay hypocritically silent. This failure on the OAS’ part reinforces why CELAC must treat all of its members equally. In the newly proposed development of CELAC, the organization needs to provide measures to hold each other accountable regardless of each country’s government structure, especially since calling oneself a “democracy” does not automatically make it so.

Transitioning CELAC into a bloc-style organization will help increase productive dialogue between Latin American nations; it is a necessary measure compared to continuing with the pro-democracy and American-influenced tendencies of the OAS. Based on the speech given by Mexican President Obrador, it’s clear that there is a widely supported movement within CELAC to begin a transition to a “EU style bloc.” As the summit closed, one of the main goals echoed: “international cooperation, multilaterals, and solidarity in the global response to the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic.”⁷ A main pillar of CELAC will be to reaffirm the importance of regional unity rather than divisive politics, and to move away from pandemic politics and towards strengthening the cooperation necessary in rebuilding Latin America. CELAC’s transition into a pro-development organization, as opposed to a pro-democratic one, works to counter the faults of the OAS while providing a unique opportunity for Latin America.



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ASIA- PACIFIC.

Censorship of Indie Movies in Vietnam An emergence of young movie makers challenging the status-quo

Joey Do

After winning the prestigious Special Jury Award at the Berlinale for his evocative rendition of *Taste* (2021), director Le Bao received a rather bitter welcome from his homeland, Vietnam.¹

In *Taste* (*Vj* in Vietnamese), Le Bao created a dream-like, ideal, and opaque utopia in 97 minutes by using infrequent speech and an unstructured plot. Bassley, a Nigerian footballer, cohabitates with four middle-aged Vietnamese women in the slums of Saigon. In the stilted slum, the characters create a utopia of their own, occasionally make food, watch television, sing karaoke, and even have sex.² In its homeland, the movie was banned entirely for its prolonged

nudity and “degraded morals.” It was also fined 40 million dong (approximately 2,000 U.S. dollars) for competing in an international competition without obtaining a permit. A component of cinematic law in Vietnam that prompted this action requires all movies to obtain permission from the Vietnam Cinema Department before their competition. This can be difficult at times due to the nature of indie movies and the current rigid laws.³

Ash Mayfair’s debut film *The Third Wife* (2018) faced the same fate. Inspired by her grandmother’s past as a third wife to a wealthy rural man, Mayfair’s film captured the essence of 19th-century

Vietnam. Through the grim yet sensuously beautiful footage, the movie captures May’s journey of discovering her womanhood and sexuality as the third wife of a much older man, through encounters with the second wife, Xuan.⁴ In Vietnam, *The Third Wife* was banned from consumption for its sensual content and nudity, despite winning the Asian Film Festival earlier that year.⁵

Recently, the censorship of these movies has stirred public opinion in Vietnam, involving both youth and older audiences in the conversation. Beyond the censorship bylaws, the opposition to these movies reflects a larger ongoing generational conflict in Vietnam

and seeks the answer to the question of what constitutes art.

Although built on a variety of social fabrics, these indie movies share many commonalities. First of all, they were all made by a new generation of independent Vietnamese movie makers who were raised by and exposed to western culture. Ash Mayfair graduated from New York University Tisch School of the Arts, and Pham Gia Nhat Linh in “Rom” was the first Vietnamese ever to attend the University of Southern California Film school. Also, most of these movies were independently funded with very limited budgets, for their artistic values weighed much more than their commercial value. Finally,



all of these indie films received minimal domestic recognition, despite “silently” winning major awards abroad. In a sense, the existence of these movie makers and their art signifies a wave of change in the cinema industry in Vietnam after the embargo lifted in 1994. Before U.S. President Clinton’s historical visit that lifted the 19-year embargo, domestic art was confined with little influence from the outside world. These movie makers are young, bold, and they are not shying away from provocative and raw stories. Through the seventh art, these artists hope to craft a vibrant and multidimensional Vietnam beyond the common portrayal of Southeast Asian countries that emphasize poverty and gender inequality.

The opposition to and censorship of contemporary Indie movies does not solely come from the government. It also echoes an ongoing generational conflict in Vietnam. Younger audiences tend to see the censorship of these movies as a violation of free speech and roadblock to progressive movements in the country. On the other hand, older audiences tend to perceive the censorship of these movies as necessary and a needed mechanism to protect traditional Vietnamese values. For instance, many older audiences fear the prolonged nudity in *Taste* would give an impression to foreigners that being naked during meal time is culturally appropriate. Similarly, in *The Third Wife*,

older audiences worry that the scene regarding the lesbian kiss between May and Xuan would induce “inappropriate behavior” in the youth.

At a superficial level, it seems that the generational conflict on social issues is the “meat” of this dispute. In reality, it is more complex than that. The “meat” of this issue is rather the difference in the answer of what “art” is for each group of audience. Here, the younger generation believes that art can just be art. They regard art as a form of self-expression and a platform for creativity. The older generation, however, has an alternate perspective on what constitutes art. According to Le Hong Lam, a prominent journalist in art critique in Vietnam, many older audiences are heavily influenced by the state-controlled art (movies, music, fine arts, etc.) produced in the 70s and 80s. During this era, art was repetitive and had to follow a certain framework, uphold moral values, and generally produce a clear message. According to these guidelines, contemporary indie movies would hardly even pass as art. For this reason, it became impossible for older audiences to sit through 97 minutes of infrequent speech, unstructured plot, and prolonged nudity in *Taste* just for its artistic values.

Despite the censorship, the youth’s support for indie movies demonstrates a thirst for a defiant art that truly reflects

a burgeoning and complex Vietnam of the 21st century. Now, Vietnamese youth are more demanding and are no longer satisfied with the conventional art that their predecessors once valued. Recently, a movement named “Luong Xanh” pioneered by female award-winning movie maker Nguyen Hoang Diep has gained momentum in the public. With other movie makers, Diep hopes to make amendments to the current rigid cinematic laws in Vietnam, so that Indie movies such as “*Taste*” could enter international festivals “legally.” Hopefully, younger and older audiences will soon find common grounds to agree on what constitutes art and on the complexity of other social issues.

Prevention Over Punishment

The Need for Drug Policy Reform in Australia

Anna Heiss

Of the countries in the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), an international group of wealthy, post-industrial countries, Australia has one of the highest rates of illicit drug use. Its 2019 National Drug Strategy Household Survey found that 43 percent of Australians reported using an illegal substance at some point in their lives.¹ This number is even greater among incarcerated populations and music festival attendees, with rates of 65 percent and 73 percent respectively in 2018 to 2019.² With some of the most famous music festivals taking place in Australia and such an elevated level of illicit drug use, such as Splendour in the Grass and This That Festival, considering the individuals that attend the events is critical. Current drug policies in Australia are ineffective and misaligned with the priorities of the general Australian population. Law enforcement is still the primary method of addressing drug use, and although a shift away from this is supported by the majority of the public, it has not been brought to fruition. Drug policy reform is necessary to expand harm reduction measures, education, and treatment options.

According to Drug Policy Australia, of the \$1.7 billion spent annually on drug policy, over 70 percent of federal funding is allocated towards law enforcement efforts to curb and punish drug use. The lacking remainder is spent on treatment methods, drug use prevention, and harm reduction programs.³ The overreliance on arrests and incarceration⁴ as avenues to address illicit drug use is a temporary fix that comes at the expense of both the offender and the Australian public. Rehabilitation options are lacking in the prison system,

with fewer than 13 percent of ex-prisoners having received treatment for past drug use during their incarceration. This leads to a higher risk of resuming drug use following an individual’s release from prison. In fact, the continuation of injection drug use was reported by 41 percent of Australian ex-prisoners within about three months of release.⁵ Research has indicated a strong correlation between treatment for substance abuse during an individual’s prison sentence and reduction in the likelihood of continuing drug use after release.⁶ Not only does treatment reduce recidivism, but it is far less expensive than incarceration, reducing the cost to taxpayers. The average cost of rehabilitation in Australia is around \$3,100, while it costs an average of \$79,919 to incarcerate an inmate for a year.⁷ From a practical, fiscal, and even ethical standpoint, rehabilitation needs to be the approach for those whose primary offense is drug-related.

In a study, when hypothetically given \$100 for distribution, Australian people allocated \$59 to education and treatment, and just \$34 to law enforcement. This demonstrates that the public prefers most funds to be spent on preventative measures. There are various methods of harm reduction in drug use.⁸ Nearly 60 percent of Australians support opening drug testing facilities, and 47 percent support facilities where people can safely consume drugs. These locations would help prevent deaths as a result of using substances incorrectly and drugs being laced with more harmful substances. Trends in public opinion have led to a reduction in individuals’ disdain for the usage of certain substances and those who use them. When surveyed, most Australians indicated that

the ideal course of action for addressing cannabis users is caution or no penalty, and treatment or education options for ecstasy, heroin, (meth) amphetamine, and hallucinogen users. Nearly 80 percent of Australians responded that marijuana use should not be a criminal offense. Although people may be reluctant to legalize an illicit substance and potentially increase access to it, only 3 percent of respondents said their marijuana use would increase if it were legalized, with 87 percent indicating that their usage, or lack thereof, would remain the same. The legalization of marijuana would do little to affect current levels of its use, but would reduce the number of drug-related arrests.

Given the elevated level of illicit drug use at music festivals, which are especially popular in Australia, the implementation of additional harm reduction measures at those sites is imperative. The Drug Policing Survey found that among festival attendees, police presence generally doesn’t dissuade drug use. Instead, it could encourage users to purchase drugs at festivals, which are more likely to be untested, instead of bringing their own through security. Pill testing and safe injection facilities would greatly reduce harm among the general public, but would have a particularly significant impact at festivals due to the heightened use of illicit substances. 87 percent of respondents that use substances said they would be highly or somewhat likely to utilize drug testing services, and over half said they would not use the drug if it was found to contain methamphetamine, ketamine, or para-methoxyamphetamine. Emphasizing harm reduction over policing at festivals would decrease the risk associated with illicit drug use, as

increasing law enforcement at these events does little to discourage the practice.

Most countries in the Asia-Pacific region have strict drug laws in place that are unlikely to change in the near future. However, many European countries have similar characteristics to Australia and have successfully reformed their substance laws. Portugal made the bold decision to completely renovate its drug policy in 2001 through a combination of programs coined harm minimization.⁹ The most significant advancement of policy was the decriminalization of the personal possession of all drugs. Rather than being tried by criminal courts, Portuguese administrative panels consider drug users’ cases and impose civil penalties, such as fines and community service. Treatment is also administered if necessary. Decriminalization was not found to drastically increase the number of new drug users; conversely, numbers have declined since the policy was implemented. Due to similarities between Australia and European countries that have reformed their drug policy in population characteristics, government structure, and healthcare systems, a related system in Australia is likely to succeed as well.

With strong public support and evidence of its merits, Australia should transition to a treatment- and education-oriented drug policy with a decreased role for law enforcement in cases that are solely drug-related. This approach would reduce recidivism in drug cases, provide more options for effective rehabilitation, make addressing drug-related offenses more cost effective, and reduce the risk of harm for those who choose to take drugs.

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²Kiang, Jessica “‘Taste’ Review: An Opaque, Evocative, Imposing Slow-Cinema Work of Art,” Variety. March 9, 2021, <https://variety.com/2021/film/reviews/taste-review-vi-1234917242/>.

³“Luồng Xanh’ Cho Phim Việt Ra Thế Giới: Để Người Làm Phim Không Phạm Luật,” kinhtedothi.vn (kinhtedothi), <https://kinhtedothi.vn/luong-xanh-cho-phim-viet-ra-the-gioi-de-nguoi-lam-phim-khong-pham-luat-436823.html>.

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“From a practical, fiscal, and even ethical standpoint, rehabilitation needs to be the approach for those whose primary offense is drug-related.”



Japan's worrisome 2023 nuclear wastewater disposal plan: who will stop it?

Juhui Oh

¹Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, "National Drug Strategy Household Survey 2019," Australian Government, 16 July 2020. <https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/illicit-use-of-drugs/national-drug-strategy-household-survey-2019/contents/summary>.

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⁴Alcohol and Drug Foundation, "Prison, alcohol, and drug use," Alcohol and Drug Foundation, 9 Sept 2019. <https://adf.org.au/insights/prison-aod-use/>.

⁵Winter, Young, Stoové, Agius, Hellard, Kinner, "Resumption of injecting drug use following release from prison in Australia," National Center for Biotechnology Information, 8 Sept 2016. <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/27635997/>.

⁶de Andrade, Ritchie, Rowlands, Mann, Hides, "Substance Use and Recidivism Outcomes for Prison-Based Drug and Alcohol Interventions," *Epidemiologic Reviews* 40, no.1, 03 May 2018. <https://academic.oup.com/epirev/article/40/1/121/4992689>.

⁷Bushnell, "Australia's Criminal Justice Costs: An International Comparison," Institute of Public Affairs, 2017. <https://ipa.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/IPA-Report-Australian-Criminal-Justice-Costs-An-International-Comparison.pdf>. ; WSIPP, "The Costs and Benefits of Programs to Reduce Crime," Washington State Institute for Public Policy, May 2012. https://www.bop.gov/resources/pdfs/wsipp_cost-benefit_summary.pdf.

⁸Hughes, Moxam-Hall, Ritter, Weatherburn, MacCoun, "The deterrent effects of Australian street-level drug law enforcement on illicit drug offending at outdoor music festivals," *Int J Drug Policy* 41, March 2017. <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/28131615/>.

⁹Transform Drug Policy Foundation, "Drug decriminalisation in Portugal: setting the record straight," Transform Drug Policy Foundation, 13 May 2021. <https://transformdrugs.org/blog/drug-decriminalisation-in-portugal-setting-the-record-straight>.

This year, a decade after the world's second-most severe nuclear disaster took place in Fukushima, the Japanese government announced its plan to dispose of wastewater created during the accident. The plan states that starting in 2023, Tokyo Electric Power Company (TEPCO) will dump more than one million tonnes of potentially contaminated radioactive water from the destroyed Fukushima power plant into the sea until 2053. The Japanese government and Prime Minister Suga argue there is no alternative, considering the decay of the crippled power plants and limited storage capacity.¹ Strong opposition from other Asian countries and local organizations in Japan seem to have had minimal impact on Japan's decisive attitude. The active role of international organizations is imperative to protect the Pacific Ocean.

The Fukushima Daiichi nuclear disaster is the most notorious

nuclear accident since the Chernobyl accident in 1986. In 2011, a 9.0 magnitude earthquake in the Oshika Peninsula of the Pacific Ocean not only caused more than 19,000 casualties, but also triggered a tsunami that hit the Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Plant. Consequently, three reactors of the power plant melted down, and three hydrogen explosions followed. This led to three consecutive days of radioactive reactant leakage. The earthquake and tsunami also significantly damaged the cooling systems in the power plants, which significantly increased the risk of creating molten fuel debris and overheating. To prevent this, since 2011, the Japanese government has poured about 1.25 million tonnes of seawater into the damaged unit. Since the seawater is likely to be contaminated with radioactive substances from nearby facilities, all wastewater has

been stored in separate storage facilities.²

While this strategy has been effective for more than a decade, scientists maintain that storage capacity for the wastewater will reach its limit by 2022. Some researchers agree that Japan's decision to dispose of wastewater into the sea is the correct decision to make, as storing wastewater forever is not feasible. The most recent policy brief released by Japan's Ministry of Economy, Trade, and Industry highlights that wastewater will be filtered through an advanced liquid processing system, with the intent to remove all contaminants from the water. However, it was proven that the processing system could not detect tritium, the least radioactive chemical in the wastewater. Environmental experts criticize that the indifferent disposal of radioactive water in the Pacific

Ocean may cause the extinction of local marine animals and the deterioration of the fishing industry and local economy near Fukushima, as well as those of coastal cities in the Korean peninsula and China.

There are significant concerns regarding the negative consequences nuclear water disposal may bring, as the effects of the leakage of nuclear substances during the Fukushima accident lingered for more than a decade. The aftermath of the accident was catastrophic. The land was so contaminated that it became untillable for decades and nuclear substance leakage is still reported in some water pipelines. It also caused many post-traumatic stress disorder cases among clean-up workers, nurses, and civilians nearby.

With these consequences in mind, countries nearby showed fierce opposition as soon

Governments need to address the devastating acid attacks against women

Victoria Tan

**CONTENT WARNING:
This article describes
gruesome events that
some readers might find
disturbing.**

When I saw my face, I screamed," says Neela Aminu Khatun, a Bangladeshi woman, reflecting on how her husband attacked her when she was 14 years-old.¹ Her husband was angry that her family couldn't afford to pay her dowry so he threw acid at her face. She spent the next six months in the hospital, unable to move because her whole body was covered in bandages.

Acid attacks against women have been a long standing issue in South Asian and Southeast Asian countries such as Bangladesh, Pakistan, India and Cambodia. Between 2014 and 2018, nearly 1,500 acid attacks were reported in India, for instance.² These attacks are characterized as crimes of passion because the goal of the perpetrators is to maim, not kill, these victims out of revenge or jealousy--often due to marital or family-related disputes.

Almost all of those affected by acid attacks are teenage girls or young women in their 20s, and the perpetrators are almost always men.³ Mohammad Jawad, a plastic surgeon who works with acid attack survivors argues that the attacks "[take] place in parts of the world where women are not empowered. It's an extreme form of domestic violence."⁴ Yet, these attacks continue to happen because governments fail to take action in not only adequately punishing perpetrators, but also taking the sale of these dangerous acids

off the market altogether. Until this issue is taken seriously, the societal, mental, and physical consequences of these attacks will continue to ruin these womens' lives.

Victims of acid attacks suffer physical injuries such as severe disfigurement due to melted skin tissue and dissolved bones.⁵ Additionally, damage to ear cartilage can result in deafness and malformed eyelids can result in blindness. The nose may become shrivelled and the mouth may become withered or lose the ability to move altogether, making it difficult to speak and eat. Self-confidence and self-worth is often shattered and many of these women experience suicidal thoughts as a result. Their scarred physical appearance can make it difficult to find a spouse, which is devastating for women in societies with wider gender pay gaps where men are relied on for financial support.

More than the physical pain, however, is the psychological effect of having to live with an almost unrecognizable face. In these honor-based societies, the scars bring dishonor onto the family and become a mark of shame. As such, there is a negative stigma that follows women who have been attacked. Therefore, it is likely that the estimated number of attacks generated from filed police reports is a huge underestimate of how many women have actually been impacted. These women are often unable to find employment because of their scars, leaving their parents with the burden of supporting them as well as paying costly medical bills. Some women, like

Khatun, undergo major surgery in attempts to reconstruct their faces, but aren't always successful. Neela's left ear is still completely destroyed. Other women cannot afford these costly surgeries at all or go into debt trying to reconstruct their faces. One woman from India, Reshma Qureshi, estimated spending close to ₹5 lakhs (around \$7,500 in 2014) on surgeries and anticipates spending ₹10-12 lakhs (\$15,000-18,000 in 2014) more for future medical expenses.

South Asian NGOs, such as the Acid Survivors Foundation and Stop Acid Attacks, work to provide emotional support to victims as well as help them re-establish themselves in society by helping them find employment. Although this work is commendable, these attacks must be stopped from the root which can only begin through government action. There are several steps the government can take to address this issue. The first and most direct solution is to take these hydrochloric, sulfuric, and nitric acids off the market entirely or enact laws that only allow licensed businesses to purchase them. With the Acid Control Act, Bangladesh has proved this to be effective at curbing these attacks as reported cases went from 494 in 2002 to 8 in 2019, according to the Acid Survivors Foundation.⁶ That being said, acid continues to be commonly used as a cleaning agent in India, and battery acid to produce electricity in Cambodia.⁷ The fact that acid is readily available and as cheap as 1,000 riels in Cambodia per liter (25¢), for example,

contributes to the prevalence of these attacks.⁸

Additionally, legal aid must be provided to survivors in order to prosecute attackers. A main reason why acid attacks occur so frequently in these countries is that perpetrators often walk free from both jail time and fines. From 2016 to 2018 in India, out of the hundreds of cases that went to trial, conviction rates each year were less than five percent.⁹ The inefficient way with which these cases are handled also means that time sensitive evidence such as eye-witness testimonies are eroded or lost completely. Ultimately, this results in victims left uncompensated and without justice as cases are left pending. Policies put in place that ensure the police investigate cases in a timely manner and punishments for perpetrators must be harsher, warning potential attackers that their crimes will not go unpunished. United Nations Women and Acid Survivors Trust International have taken on these responsibilities, but it is up to the individual governments to address the nature of these attacks that are specific to their country.

Acid attacks an extremely gendered problem, and eradicating them will not get rid of the patriarchies that are deeply ingrained in these communities. However, it is a necessary step in the direction towards addressing gender inequality. Until governments step up to the plate to enact laws that protect these women, they will continue to live in fear.

as Japan announced its plan on nuclear waste disposal. This April, China's Foreign Ministry labeled the Japanese government as "extremely irresponsible." The Moon administration in South Korea also expressed their "strong regret" in Japan's failure to consult with South Korea, its closest neighbor, about the nuclear water disposal issue. In September, a representative from South Korea demanded that Japan reconsider the plan during the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) General Conference in Vienna.³

There is also strong backlash in Fukushima from local fishing industries and environmental NGOs. Hiroshi Kishi, the head of the national federation of fisheries cooperatives, criticized the government's decision as "totally unacceptable," as nuclear water disposal would threaten many fishermen's livelihoods.⁴ Greenpeace Japan also has been campaigning against nuclear water disposal since 2012.⁵ The organization criticized Prime Minister Suga's plan, accusing him of violating human rights and international maritime law.

Interestingly, the United States turned a blind eye and supported Japan's decision, despite knowing the potential environmental risks. The U.S. government remarked that Japan's plan is aligned with the IAEA international standard on nuclear wastewater disposal as Japan is disposing the wastewater under the supervision of the IAEA. Secretary of State Antony Blinken tweeted, "We thank Japan for its transparent efforts in its decision to dispose of the treated water from the Fukushima Daiichi site."⁶ Some U.S. political experts criticized the government for applying a double standard based on its allyship with Japan. International environmental experts also warned that the U.S government is being short-sighted, as radioactive water would eventually flow even to the North American continent. Support from a single country may not seem important. However, considering the power the U.S. holds in international relations, Japan's unbothered attitude shows how Japan believes that being a U.S. ally could be sufficient to exonerate itself from being the culprit of ecological devastation.

Consequently, international organizations' pressure on the Japanese government is essential to prevent Japan's indifferent nuclear wastewater dumping.

Several international organizations have already warned Japan to ensure transparency of the wastewater disposal process. The United Nations Human Rights Office of High Commissioners warned the Japanese government in 2020 to consult international organizations about a detailed plan of wastewater disposal. The United Nations Scientific Committee on the Effects of Atomic Radiation (UNSCEAR) reported that the impact of wastewater on the marine ecological environment requires continued monitoring.⁷ In response to these warnings, Japan announced its future collaboration with the IAEA to ensure transparency of the disposal process.⁸

While Japan's promise of transparency is a significant step, the action of disposal itself should be reconsidered. There are multiple decisive steps international organizations could take to put pressure on the

Japanese government. The first is to pursue economic sanctions or incentivize countries nearby that are more environmentally conscious to pressure Japan. Another way is a classic naming and shaming strategy, which state governments often use to denounce a country's wrongdoings publicly. This strategy could be a powerful reminder that the international community is concerned about the negative environmental consequences nuclear water dumping would bring to a large region.

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Pakistan's Motivation in Strengthening Ties with the Taliban

Maheem Syed

On August 15, 2021 Taliban fighters entered Kabul, Afghanistan and effectively took control of its government.¹ As a geographic neighbor and strategic former ally, Pakistan has become a potential mediator between the new Afghan government and larger geopolitical powers like the United States and China. This position is reminiscent of Pakistan's past relationship with the Afghan Taliban; it was one of only three countries to officially recognize the Taliban in the 1990s and the last to end its relationship with it in 2001.² There is an assumption that these historical ties allow Pakistan special privilege in interacting with, and influencing, Taliban leadership. However, now that the Taliban has fully gained autonomy over Afghanistan, Pakistan is beginning to see its hold slip. In order to counter the increasing presence of terrorist groups within its own borders, and to bolster its geopolitical influence in the region, Pakistan should renew its relationship with the Taliban.

For the group, Pakistan has largely been considered a safe haven. In the 1980s, the Pakistani government often backed the Taliban in an effort to weaken the Afghan communist state and its Soviet allies; this helped the Taliban take control of territories surrounding the Durand Line of the Pakistan-Afghanistan border.³ Over time, the Taliban came to rely on Pakistan for weaponry and international aid, allowing Pakistan to maintain a semblance of control over the region as the Taliban gained more supporters. It was mutually beneficial. However, now that the Taliban has full control over Afghanistan's resources—and has access

to weaponry abandoned by the United States—its dependence on Pakistan is weakening. Surrounding powers like China and Russia have jumped at the chance to gain access to Afghanistan's strategic location and trading ports under the guise of allianceship, leaving Pakistan in geopolitical purgatory.

The Taliban's growing self-governance is concerning for Pakistan's internal stability. Ironically, in their bid to support the Taliban and maintain power over Afghanistan, Pakistan opened its borders for Taliban fighters fleeing Afghanistan during the 2003 U.S. invasion. These fighters appealed to their ethnic commonality with Pashtuns living near the Durand Line, creating a strong network of followers in the Tribal Areas of Pakistan.⁴ This region was scarcely monitored by the Pakistani government, allowing the Taliban's roots to grow with relatively few political restrictions. Eventually, this group came together in 2007 to declare itself the Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TPP), or the Pakistani branch of the Taliban. The TPP became a major threat to the Pakistani people due to its frequent and extreme acts of violence. Though it was fractured in 2014, it has re-emerged following the Taliban's takeover of Afghanistan and has carried out 32 attacks in August alone. On September 5, it planned an attack that killed three Pakistani paramilitary forces.⁵ The Pakistani government has been unable to counter these domestic terrorist threats, leaving Pakistan vulnerable to internal violence and instability between warring terrorist groups.

Despite Pakistan's historical

support for the Afghan Taliban, the TPP continues to target both the Pakistani government and its people. Pakistan is relying on the Taliban and its working relationship with the TPP to curb the increased presence of terrorist blocs. Though the Taliban claims it will mediate peace talks between both parties,⁶ it is currently refusing to take accountability of the TPP's actions, stating "[Pakistan must decide] whether or not the TTP's war is legitimate and to formulate a strategy in response."⁷ With its decreased reliance on the Pakistani government, the Taliban is less willing to confront its other factions, largely because it has nothing to gain as the in-between party. It seems counterintuitive that that Pakistan must strengthen its relationship with one sect of the Taliban in order to gain an upper-hand against another sect, but in Pakistan's view, the Afghan Taliban holds the most bargaining power over the TTP.

The Taliban has piqued international interest as it attempts to re-establish itself as a legitimate government. While no country, including Pakistan, has officially recognized its leadership, the international community is already seeing the rippling effects of the Taliban's swift takeover and its resulting economic and political instability within Afghanistan. The West continues to hesitate in opening negotiations with the Taliban, while China intends to do the opposite and make Afghanistan a pivotal player in its China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) business arrangement. As Afghanistan's currency falters and its economy edges on the brink of collapse, Pakistan is in the optimal position to act as a political and economic guide for the Taliban as it seeks international support.

As Pakistan's National Security Advisor Moeed Yusuf notes, the world will ultimately have to engage with the Taliban, at least in the capacity of supporting the Afghan people who are bearing the burden of this instability. Pakistan itself already houses four million Afghan refugees,

and the number of migrants at the Durand Line continues to grow as families flee tumultuous conditions. This burgeoning refugee crisis showcases how closely Pakistan's well-being is tied to Afghanistan's stability, emphasizing Pakistan's motivation for facilitating conversations between the Taliban and the rest of the world. It is difficult to navigate Pakistan's goal to strengthen its relationship with the Taliban, particularly considering the atrocities the Taliban is responsible for. Yet Pakistan has framed this relationship as a means to protect both the Afghan and Pakistani public from further volatility.

Though the relationship between the Taliban and Pakistan is weak, the Taliban still maintains more trust in Pakistan than neighboring countries. Pakistan will need to build on this trust by publicly recognizing the Taliban as a permanent fixture in the region; in the Taliban's eye, this acknowledgement will validate their control of Afghanistan in front of an international audience, and prompt their acceptance of foreign support. By taking ownership of its position as mediator, Pakistan can control the narrative of the region and block the influence of neighboring political rivals like India.⁸

Pakistan's goal in strengthening its relationship with the Taliban is as selfish as it is necessary to promote some semblance of stability in the region. Some world leaders claim that Pakistan will be tying itself to a failing state in Afghanistan, but this state remains a critical neighbor; as Afghanistan struggles to stay afloat, immediate support from Pakistan will be imperative for it to maintain authority over the region and to help the Afghan people. Even as the world continues to debate the Taliban's longevity and legitimacy in a governing role, Pakistan recognizes its own vulnerabilities and should choose to take a side that solidifies its importance on a shifting international stage. Or risk being left behind.

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⁹Kumar, Vidhik. "Acid Attacks in India: A Socio-Legal Report," Dignity 6 no. 1 (2021): 7, <https://digitalcommons.uri.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1239&context=dignity>.

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Surrounding powers like China and Russia have jumped at the chance to gain access to Afghanistan's strategic location and trading ports under the guise of allianceship, leaving Pakistan in geopolitical purgatory.

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Challenging the Threat of Chinese Intellectual Property Theft in the Global Defense Industry

Ethan Wilmot



¹Miller, Manjari Chatterjee. "Pakistan's Support for the Taliban: What to Know." *Council on Foreign Relations*. Aug. 25, 2021. <https://www.cfr.org/article/pakistans-support-taliban-what-know>

²Yusuf, Moeed. "How Pakistan Sees Afghanistan: Peace Is Possible Only If the World Engages With the Taliban." *Foreign Affairs*. Oct. 7, 2021. <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/afghanistan/2021-10-07/how-pakistan-sees-afghanistan>

³Riedel, Bruce. "Pakistan's problematic victory in Afghanistan." *Brookings Institute*. Aug. 24, 2021. <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/order-from-chaos/2021/08/24/pakistans-problematic-victory-in-afghanista>

⁴Lieven, Anatol. "What Pakistan Stands to Gain From the Taliban Takeover of Afghanistan." *TIME*. Aug. 18, 2021. <https://time.com/6091251/afghanistan-taliban-takeover-pakistan/>

⁵Kugelman, Michael. "Pakistan's Friendship With the Taliban Is Changing." *Foreign Policy*. Sept. 13, 2021. <https://foreignpolicy.com/2021/09/13/pakistan-taliban-ties-afghanistan/>

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⁷Landale, James. "Afghanistan: What rise of Taliban means for Pakistan." *BBC News*. Sept. 3, 2021. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-58443839>

⁸Jensen, Stefan V. "The height of Cambodia's acid attack epidemic," *Southeast Asia Globe*, July 2019, <https://southeastasiaglobe.com/scarred-for-life/>.

Every ten hours, the FBI counterintelligence division opens a new case on Chinese espionage. This trend is prophetic of the increasing threat of Chinese espionage to its regional opponents in recent years. The Chinese government has expanded its capability and willingness to use spies and computer hackers to gain access to military and commercial technologies in order to power its own defense industry and economy. This has threatened the security and sovereignty of regional opponents, including South Korea, Taiwan, and Japan.

A study found that 160 individual security breakthroughs have been committed by Chinese actors since 2000 in the United States. The same study notes that cases have increased in recent years, with 84 of the 160 taking place since Xi Jinping took power in 2013.¹ This escalation in the scale of

intellectual property theft in the U.S. indicates the growing threat to China's geopolitical opponents in the region.

China's regional opponents are attempting to combat the growing security threat, but are coming across many obstacles. The quantity of information breaches is so great that counterintelligence agencies are overwhelmed and unable to identify threats before they happen. Another obstacle in tackling the issue of intellectual property theft is the lack of information sharing and communication between intelligence agencies, governments, and private companies. Private defense industries have had firsthand experience dealing with and understanding these threats, but are unable to respond in the capacity required to subdue the hackers because of their lack of legal authority. Greater

cooperation between public and private entities is needed in order to combat this issue, especially between the U.S. and its East Asian allies.

The U.S. has a minimal geographic presence in the Pacific outside of military bases, but its military obligations and sale of weapons to allies in the region affirms its political and military role there. South Korea, Taiwan and Japan purchase weapons, vehicles, and other military technologies from the United States. These technologies give these countries a technological advantage over their regional rival, China. The theft of these defense secrets allows China to close the technological gap with the U.S. and pose a larger threat to the region. Therefore, any threat to the security of American defense industries is also a threat to East Asian countries that rely on those

companies.

With the theft of intellectual property, the Chinese government gains an advantage in its geopolitical objectives and specifically in great power competition. Stolen schematics and other sensitive materials allows the Chinese military to develop weapons, vehicles, and other technologies that give them an edge in deterrence and potential conflicts. One example of this is the 2017 hack of several South Korean government and civilian organizations that leaked classified information about a crucial air defense system. The Terminal High-Altitude Area Defense (THAAD) is an American-developed missile defense system that uses long-range radar to detect incoming projectiles in an attempt to prevent their detonation on South Korean soil.² The information gained in the hack could allow China

to discover weaknesses in the system. With the stolen information, China could build missiles that are undetectable by radar, preventing South Korea from receiving any early warning against an attack.

An additional instance of intellectual theft occurred in 2007, when hackers linked to the Chinese military breached cyber security measures at the aerospace company Lockheed Martin. This hack was revealed by Edward Snowden as part of the Wikileaks data breach. The leaked files detail how Chinese hackers were able to penetrate the computer systems and gain access to information of high strategic value. Significantly, design plans and schematics related to the F-35 program were stolen.³ The F-35 is the U.S.' premier fifth generation fighter jet and contains many new technology features, including advanced stealth technology. After this data breach, China began developing their own fifth generation fighter: the J-20 or "Mighty Dragon." This stealth fighter includes many similar

designs to the F-35 that military experts believe are directly stolen from the F-35 program.⁴ Using the stolen designs and technologies, China is able to utilize stealth in their warplanes, providing a huge advantage on the battlefield.

This technological advantage provides China with major geopolitical leverage and practical uses. The Chinese government is well aware of its advantage and has been expanding its influence. China has been increasing its advance into Taiwanese airspace in an attempt to project power and conduct military drills for a future invasion. Recently, 56 Chinese fighters encroached into the Taiwanese Air Defense Identification Zone (ADIZ) in the largest of such violations.⁵ The stolen stealth technology on the J-20 provided the Chinese military the ability to enter Taiwanese airspace undetected and conduct a first strike in the event of an invasion, crippling Taiwanese defense systems. This first strike would leave the island in a total state of

disarray, leading to an inevitable successful invasion of the island. The Taiwanese Armed Forces have recognized this threat and have responded by deploying radar installations on the island of Penghu, an island between the two countries.⁶ The goal of these radar installations is to detect such threats from the Chinese military as a part of Taiwan's enduring fight for sovereignty. This strategy is a reactive measure, and proactive solutions exist and should be developed.

A solution to the increasing severity and frequency of intellectual property theft by China is to develop an information sharing alliance between the U.S. South Korea, and Japan that would allow the allied states to share threat analysis information on counterintelligence and cybersecurity threats. In an article written by the Council on Foreign Relations, the authors explain how an information sharing network between public and private organizations would operate, and more importantly

why they would be effective. They describe how any plan to counter information breaches should contain both reactive and proactive measures.⁷ The same principles in this article could and should be expanded to include other states in need of cybersecurity and counterintelligence protection, like South Korea and Japan. A threat analysis and counterintelligence sharing alliance between the United States, South Korea, and Japan would help prevent the further loss of technological secrets to the Chinese and help deter future aggression. This alliance would shape the way great power competition is staged in East Asia and prevent the rising power of China, protecting the sovereignty and interests of countries in the region.

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A (New) Clear Path Forward

Slovenia's Proposed Nuclear Reactor

Justin Ballard

On July 19, 2021, Slovenia's Ministry of Infrastructure issued an energy permit to GEN Energija, a Slovenian state-owned power company, for a second nuclear reactor. Known as the JEK2 project, this reactor would be constructed next to the Krško Nuclear Power Plant, Slovenia's sole nuclear power station. However, this permit only allows licensing procedures to begin, so a final decision on whether to construct JEK2 has yet to be made.¹

At first glance, Slovenia's consideration of a new reactor may strike one as strange. In a country impacted by the nuclear fallout of the Chernobyl disaster and a neighbor to the strongly anti-nuclear and influential Germany, Slovenia's plan seems out of place. Yet, a closer look reveals that JEK2 is clearly Slovenia's cleanest, most feasible, and most reliable energy option. While Slovenia should pair this decision with a concrete nuclear waste disposal plan and other renewable energy sources, JEK2 would empower it to chart a new path forward towards a greener future.

First, nuclear energy is a clean energy source—especially in comparison to oil, coal, and natural gas. Around 60.5 percent of Slovenia's overall energy supply today is derived from these fossil fuels, while only 22 percent comes from nuclear energy. However, unlike the burning of fossil fuels, nuclear fission does not release carbon emissions and other harmful byproducts that drive global warming.² As a result, nuclear energy is a key asset in decarbonization efforts to combat climate change, a fact the Slovenian government acknowledges. Not only does JEK2 enjoy cross-partisan support,³ but Slovenia's *Climate Strategy Until 2050*, the

government's transition plan to achieve net-zero emissions by 2050, also identifies nuclear power as a long-term energy option.

Moreover, JEK2 enjoys both international and domestic support because of its potential to decarbonize Slovenia's energy consumption. In terms of the former, in September, the U.S. relaunched its Partnership for Transatlantic Energy and Climate Cooperation (P-TECC), a U.S.-funded program to deploy clean technologies in central and eastern Europe. With increasing nuclear energy being a key initiative under this program, U.S. Energy Secretary Jennifer Granholm asserted that P-TECC helps countries like Slovenia access a "23 trillion-dollar [clean energy] market" that will attract new foreign investment and jobs.⁴ P-TECC's support for nuclear energy thus not only emphasizes the green nature of JEK2, but it also highlights the economic returns the new reactor will bring—funds that could go toward supporting other green initiatives in Slovenia.

At the same time, JEK2 enjoys broad public acceptance from Slovenes, an environmentally-conscious population. In recent surveys sponsored by the European Commission, 75 percent of Slovenes said they have taken personal action to combat climate change and 92 percent thought it was important for their national government to set ambitious renewable energy plans.⁵ Given the high importance Slovenes place on solving the climate crisis and protecting the environment, the fact they support JEK2 further underlines the project's clean nature. Moreover, a favorable public opinion also points to JEK2's feasibility, as the construction of new nuclear power plants are unthinkable in anti-nuclear

countries like Germany.

In addition to being a clean and politically viable project, JEK2 is Slovenia's best energy option because of its reliability. Unlike wind and solar, nuclear energy is not an intermittent energy source—nuclear energy does not need the wind to blow or the sun to shine to function. While the ability to store wind and solar energy for less-windy and overcast days exists, this technology is not advanced enough to guarantee a 24/7 energy supply.⁶ From a general standpoint then, JEK2 makes sense because it ensures a steady stream of power.

Nuclear power is reliable in another sense: it is a more dependable tool to achieve Slovenia's goal of achieving net-zero emissions. At the moment, many hydro and wind projects clash with both the EU's and the Slovenian public's environmental interests because of their environmental ramifications. Numerous unrealized and planned hydro and wind projects are located in Natura 2000 sites—natural areas protected by the EU—and Slovenia has the largest share of Natura 2000 sites in the EU (37 percent of all land territory).⁷ Moreover, strong local public opposition in general has formed against these projects because of their environmental impact.

That is, while it is no secret that dams disrupt ecosystems,⁸ the issue with wind projects rests with their large land footprint. A typical 1,000-megawatt nuclear facility needs about 1 square mile to operate, while wind farms require 360 times more land area to produce the same amount of electricity. Given the number of protected Natura 2000 sites in Slovenia and the degree to which Slovenes value their natural areas, the ability to make room for wind farms is

significantly restricted. In this view, JEK2 is again presented as a reliable energy source that is well on its way to reducing Slovenia's carbon emissions, as it has thus far avoided the legal and public roadblocks that afflict the reactor's alternatives.

Lastly, two brief points must be observed in moving forward with JEK2. First, it is critical that Slovenia pairs this project with permanent storage for spent nuclear fuel (SNF). SNF has long been the Achilles' heel of nuclear energy, as it remains dangerously radioactive for thousands of years.⁹ Thus, Slovenia must re-amp its efforts to finish its permanent repository in Vrbinja if it hopes to responsibly move forward with a new nuclear reactor.^{10,11} Second, it is worth noting that nuclear energy and renewable energy options are not mutually exclusive: Slovenia can still invest in solar and wind and have a new reactor. While JEK2 makes the most sense at the moment, other options may become more attractive in the future as technology improves and their costs go down.

Ultimately, JEK2 remains Slovenia's best hope for reducing its carbon footprint. Not only is nuclear energy an effective and reliable way to reduce carbon emissions, but the domestic and international support JEK2 enjoys points to the project's overall feasibility, especially in the face of alternatives. At the end of the day, JEK2 presents a new and clear path forward towards a greener future for Slovenia.



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Local or global?

Foreign Influence on European Soccer

Tanmay Arora

In April 2021, an announcement by 12 of the biggest clubs in European soccer sent shockwaves across the soccer world with their plans for a “Super League.” These clubs were from the most dominant domestic leagues in European soccer, including England, Italy and Spain. The concept of the Super League was to combine a small, select number of teams from many existing domestic leagues into one continental league, providing heavy cash benefits for the participating teams. This would effectively replace the popular “UEFA Champions League,” a qualification-based league with the same approach of allowing the best teams in the continent to compete against each other.¹ A big driver behind this seems to be the growing popularity of European soccer among non-European countries, particularly China;² some owners, including Chinese retailer Suning.com and owner of Super League club Inter Milan, are looking at the potential to draw in large audiences nearly every week from the Super League’s potential matchups.³ This raises a question: should there exist this much influence from external factors in sports, whether those are international owners or corporations? While cross-cultural connection from sports should always be encouraged, the Super League is elitist and shows the influence of foreign owners, who believe that sports fans will eventually follow what is most convenient for the owners.

Immediate backlash followed the Super League proposal due to the lack of consideration for fans of these clubs, both domestic and abroad, who strongly objected to the lack of incentives, including

no promotion and relegation, along with the exclusion of less wealthy, but still successful clubs. Many of these were started by working class individuals over a hundred years ago, and still have consideration of the fans’ opinions today. These clubs across Europe thrive from the incentive that numerous competitions provide, including promotion and relegation, prize money, and the ability to play in prestigious European competitions. This is why the Super League, with little incentive for a very small number of teams, was seen as an insult to a majority of those who follow European football, with the plan consequently falling apart after days of protests from supporters and even criticisms from public officials such as British Prime Minister Boris Johnson.⁴

Given the financial benefits of the shift to the Super League, certain parties—particularly broadcasters and owners who had signed contracts with the proposed league—were unsurprisingly angered by this decision. The Super League efforts are clearly an attempt to profit off fans across the world, including in China, knowing that they will eventually be drawn into the high ranking matchups that would occur at a more frequent rate. For context, China has the most valuable television deal to broadcast the English Premier League to its over 300 million fans that follow it.⁵ For comparison, viewership was 1.9 million in the U.K., although their population is significantly smaller.⁶ These numbers show how important a market China is for European soccer, with the potential to draw in large

amounts of money due to the size of this audience. However, it also shows how owners are attempting to profit off the advantage that this provides, by delivering them, along with fans all over the world, a league with less incentive for competition.

Taking the significant size of European soccer’s consumer base in China into account, it would make sense from the perspective of club owners to start a “Super League.” In the domestic leagues, or even the current Champions League, where fans follow their teams, many matchups may feature a less well-known opponent which in turn lowers the number of viewers. The Super League proposal would have the most popular teams playing each other at a much more frequent rate to incentivize viewership across the world, as they probably see foreign supporters as more likely to view higher ranked matchups. This could be seen as providing incentives for fan bases who stay awake to watch games at extremely odd hours, including 3 a.m. in China for many games considering the time difference.⁷ These factors show how owners are attempting to take advantage of foreign supporters to generate profits, knowing that they would follow along with their plans at some point. In doing so, these owners are more than happy to forsake their local fans, whose loyalty they take for granted, in order to attempt to spread their image across the globe.

Sports can be a powerful source of unity around the world, and the cross-cultural connections that develop as a result of soccer are certainly a benefit.

The fan bases that develop and the company sponsorships that occur as a result connect international fans and show the upside of these cross-cultural connections. In European soccer, sponsorships bring the biggest clubs to play in countries from around the world, including China and the United States, showing the positive side of foreign influence and sponsorship in European soccer. However, the large influence that has been exerted on the clubs by owners and foreign influences is questionable. The way that those behind the Super League have approached this situation raises the question: should any country or company have so much influence that the opinions of supporters, especially domestic ones, are completely ignored?

A solution proposed in the United Kingdom is that supporters develop an ownership group to own a majority of the stake in their clubs, giving owners from abroad minority shares.⁸ While foreign ownership and involvement should not be discouraged, the supporters connected to the club should be in charge of decisions. When considering foreign supporters and their influence in the game, supporter ownership groups should include a certain percentage of foreign ownership so that their opinions are also taken into account when considering the interests of the club. This allows foreign involvement and the dedication of international fans to thrive, while still keeping the best interests of Europe’s soccer clubs at heart.

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Sports can be a powerful source of unity around the world, and the cross-cultural connections that develop as a result of soccer are certainly a benefit.

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When Nationalism Goes Too Far Right: France's Identity Crisis

Kerri Kenney

The January 6, 2021 riot at the U.S. Capitol shocked the world, demonstrating just how extreme the far-right in America had become. Americans and worldwide onlookers were less aware, however, that thousands of miles away from the U.S. Capitol, similar far-right movements were gaining traction amongst French citizens, both in person and on social media. Unlike America's far-right movements, their French counterparts produced enough concerning, xenophobic disruption—ranging from divisive efforts like civilian-led military strikes to the storming of religious buildings—to cause the French government and its high court to ban one of these movements, Generation Identity, from operating in the country.

Generation Identity is a political coalition of young French people aiming to prevent “the great replacement”; that is, the

xenophobic fear of white French citizens becoming outnumbered by non-white immigrants. After almost ten years of terrorizing immigrants—particularly French Muslims and non-white immigrants—through both physical actions and harsh rhetoric, the French government, led by President Emanuel Macron, finally admitted that enough was enough. It ordered the dissolution of the movement in early 2021. France's Interior Minister Gérald Darmanin cited the movement's “incitement to discrimination, hatred, and violence” as the main reasons behind the ban, according to *France 24*.¹

Generation Identity was founded around 2012 in France and has spread exponentially across Western Europe since then, mainly enlisting young adults anywhere from 18 to 35 years old to join the group's crusade

against multiculturalism. It gained national attention when it released its first propaganda video, which portrayed white, young-looking French citizens declaring a war on the “great replacement” occurring in Europe. After the video's publishing, Generation Identity began frequent political demonstrations against the French government, as well as violent protests against migrants and Muslims—all with the end goal of “remigration, [or] the removal of non-European immigrants to their countries of origin or those of their ancestors,” as described by Al Jazeera.² Throughout the 2010s, Generation Identity made the news for storming mosques and burning Muslim symbols, or for creating viral videos featuring them confronting leftist citizens who they described as antifascists, socialists, and communists. A

well-known trio from the group's leadership was even arrested by French authorities for searching for migrants in the French Alps using helicopters, planes, and patrol vehicles in 2019.³ After an almost ten-year escapade of anti-migrant actions, one similar event in early 2021 finally led the French government to ban Generation Identity: almost 50 members congregated at the French and Spanish border, putting up physical barricades and causing violent skirmishes to prevent migrants from reaching France—all actions the group defined as “defending Europe.”⁴

Though banning Generation Identity and its language is a positive start to limiting the influence of far-right trends of racism and anti-immigrant sentiment in France, Macron and the French government made this decision much too late. The rhetoric of Generation Identity

and similar discriminatory groups had already gained enough traction in France to influence the public. The French National and Consultative Commission of Human Rights found that xenophobic sentiments have only gotten more relevant in French society: in 2015 alone, reports of “racist acts and threats increased by 17.5 percent while those for anti-Muslim acts and threats jumped 223 percent.”⁵ These general sentiments are noticeable when studying the key players and issues in the upcoming French presidential election.

However, the shared French feelings of xenophobia, Islamophobia, and racism are not only because of these far-right movements. The French Government plays a role in the public's opinion on issues depending on the rhetoric they use and laws they make regarding said issues. The French government must do more than ban this singular xenophobic movement from the public sphere and hope that of xenophobia goes away. Macron and his administration must change the rhetoric they use regarding immigrants and non-white people, both internally and externally; this rhetoric inspires these extremist movements and sentiments and allows them to flourish without consequences.

One wonders why they were allowed to exist in France, especially having committed so many violent assaults

within the span of a decade; but in examining the French government's actions regarding Muslims and immigrants, it becomes less surprising why Generation Identity thrived for so long. For one, France has always been implicitly discriminatory against Muslims, especially through the law. France is known for its unique law of *laïcité*, or constitutional secularism; this law enforces the separation of religion from public and political life, and encourages the absence of religious symbolism, such as Muslim face and hair coverings, the Jewish Star of David, or the Christian cross, in public. This has widely been regarded as an indirect target at Muslims, especially as the wearing of full-face coverings, like the Muslim burka or niqab, in public was officially banned in the early 2010s (coinciding with the formation of Generation Identity). In April 2011, France was the first European country to impose a ban on full-face coverings in public, punishable for hundreds of Euros, though these coverings are integral parts of the practicing of Islam for many Muslim women.

Although Macron had presented himself as a self-declared progressive and tolerant leader, his term has been characterized by many hypocritically tight immigration laws. About halfway through his term, Macron began using tougher rhetoric on immigrants: citizens were surprised to see Macron advocate for less healthcare-

related aid to migrants in 2019, and explicitly voice his lack of support for Afghan migrants emigrating from the Taliban's rule to France in 2021. He has also stood behind the concept of *laïcité* in public, and enforced the French practice of avoiding the racial categorization of its citizens in favor of a singular “French” identity.

Though Generation Identity's operations have been forcibly ceased, famous figures with extremely large platforms also continue to perpetuate the same far-right ideas to the French public, normalized by these groups and existent without consequences. As the French presidential election approaches, Éric Zemmour, an anti-immigrant political television pundit and presidential candidate, has been taking the French polls by storm. Some French citizens may have known him for being a frequent columnist to *Le Figaro*, a French conservative publication—their website still prominently features his articles, titled “Why ‘Political Correctness’ Criminalizes Freedom of Thought” and “Individualism is the Enemy”—but Zemmour is also a consistent contributor on CNEWS, often referred to as “France's Fox News.”⁶ Now, however, Zemmour is rising in the polls, passing even Marine Le Pen, France's go-to far-right; his election could emphasize France's spiral into a xenophobic nation, allowing the country's targeted and discriminatory

legislation to cover all aspects Generation Identity, and similar movements and sentiments, were not simply created, unprovoked, in a vacuum. They are instead a manifestation of what the current French societal attitude against outsiders is, an attitude which is influenced by the government. It is easy for the French government to ban one group's hateful ideas, while remaining silent about an entire discriminatory system they are complicit in. The French government must continue to condemn this discriminatory rhetoric of both its citizens, and itself; relaxing laws that implicitly target Muslims and migrants, like those that ban religious symbols or limit migrants' access to social programs, can be a first step to commit to a more multicultural society, instead of a homogenous one. Through the lens of the upcoming election, this is an urgent issue that needs to be mended before France irreversibly travels down a far-right path that disregards its growing non-white population.



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A Step Closer to Protecting Victims

Modern Day Rape Legislation In France

Noor Fares

“
France’s adaptation of the coercion-based system is outdated and perpetuates victim-blaming.
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CONTENT WARNING: Mentions of rape and sexual assault.

This past February, the case of a girl groomed and raped by twenty firefighters over the duration of two years sparked protests across France after only three firefighters were charged with “sexual violation” and the other seventeen were let free.¹ France’s law, to this day, states that a rape charge would necessitate force or violence. The girl, 13 to 15 years of age during the repeated assaults, was coerced and triggered into a freeze response (going tense, still, and silent, a common reaction to sexual violence), resulting in the assaults not being considered rape.

France is one of relatively few countries whose definition of rape only goes by violence, meaning France maintains a coercion-based system. In a coercion-based system, coerced sex is not classified as rape, whereas a consent-based system classifies coerced sex as rape. Many European countries’ legislation aligns with the consent-based system, such as Germany, Belgium, the U.K., and Greece. Countries with legislation under a coercion-based system have a different definition from country to country, instead of the otherwise-universal standard that only yes means yes. Adopting a definition that aligns with international standards protects individuals by creating a legal deterrent to rape. France should switch to a consent-based system, where the system defines rape as sex without consent, instead of maintaining its current coercion-based system.

Correctionalism is the lessening of a sentence from its original charge in order to protect the defendant in a legal case; this common phenomenon is observed across rape cases brought to courts within France. Currently, France does not have ‘rape is sex without consent’ as their legislative definition. Since France refuses to clarify what it identifies as sex, French judges are able to consistently reduce rape sentences to much lower

than what they would ordinarily be in a country that maintains an ‘only yes means yes’ standard. Such ignorance on behalf of French legislation fails to deter rapists. For example, correctionalism is when an act of sexual penetration is prosecuted as sexual assault and therefore considered a misdemeanor. The lessening of rape as a crime is not only permitted but encouraged under French law through the coercion-based system; a consent-based system would make correctionalism illegal and ensure victims are served justice under the law.

France’s history of protecting sexual assault victims is disturbingly weak in comparison with other European Union countries. Throughout history, France has gained a reputation for excusing rapists from full penalties through the use of rape apologist laws. Only in response to public outrage did France’s government set 15 years old as the age of consent in March 2021; previously, there was no age of consent. Nonetheless, this change does not protect 15 year and older victims from coercion and freeze responses; it seems as though these changes are being made to quell outrage, not to protect victims. France, it is the twenty-first century; rape is not always violent.

Historically, the firefighter case was not the only driver of France’s decision to raise the age of consent. Several feminist public demonstrations ensued, emphasizing the nature of the girl’s gang rapes and two years of accumulated trauma, yet French courts still dropped the case. France has dismissed feminist protests for several years. In fact, France dismissed the 2018 protests under the terms that a change in law would result in ‘an assumption of guilt.’ Earlier this year, the #MeTooIncest movement spread across online French platforms and sparked protests three years after the original #MeToo movement spread across the globe. This reignition was sparked by several accusations arising against a prominent French politician, Olivier Duhamel,² who had sexually abused his 14

year-old stepson. Unfortunately, according to French law at the time, Olivier would not have been charged with rape (a full 20 year sentence) and would have been charged with ‘sex with a child’ (only a 7 year sentence). While France dropped the rape investigation of Olivier Duhamel under the claim that the victim ran out of time to file a sexual abuse complaint, this new law, which is soon to be in force, stands to protect many future children under the age of fifteen.³ The #MeTooIncest movement seemed to have been the tipping point for French legislators, since an age of consent was soon after established.

With this new legislation in mind, France must transition to a consent-based system. Yet, as obvious a solution this may seem, the systematic lack of protection for victims within France creates a gridlock for relevant legislation. Less prosecution occurs against actions that reinforce society’s oversight of victims due to the legal system; the laws allow and diminish sexual violence. The victim from the firefighter case suffers from anxiety-induced seizures as a result of her attacks and takes anti-anxiety medication; the effects and trauma of rape must be taken more seriously by French legislation. Through victim-protection legislation, rape will be culturally viewed as a more traumatizing experience than it currently is.

France did not implement an Anti-Catcalling Law (*Loi Schiappa*)⁴ until 2019. Beforehand, civil and criminal law in France did not have any notion of sexism;

this includes non-consensual sexualization (of all victims). In comparison, Belgium has had an anti-catcalling law since 2016 and catcalling has been illegal in Portugal since 2015. While catcalling is a vastly different crime from rape, such lack of victim protection laws creates a legislative culture that is built to benefit attackers instead of protecting survivors from more on-the-ground, common occurrences like cat-calling (all the way up to rape). Clearly, France is significantly behind in comparison to other European Union countries; the modern-day coercion-based system is only a microcosm of France’s systematic lack of protection for victims. Changing legislation is a step in the right direction; as bare minimum as it may seem, even Spain’s ‘only yes means yes’ law is impressive next to France’s ‘only violence is rape’ law.

The concept of rape through coercion is not a nuanced ‘political ideology’, nor are freeze responses to rape uncommon. Defining rape as only sex through violence is severely discounting thousands of rape victims whose stories are traumatic and deserve justice. France’s adaptation of the coercion-based system is outdated and perpetuates victim-blaming. Correctionalism is dangerous to past rape victims, future victims, and it will not effectively deter rapists with the threat of the law. If France wanted to deter rapists, their law would not still reflect a system that allowed 20 firefighters to escape a rape charge after regularly raping a girl for two years.

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Hydrogen: A Future in the Making

Julian Florez



A stroll along the promenade of Iceland's capital Reykjavík belies the seismic changes occurring underfoot. A nation physically aloof yet sustainability extolled, Iceland is a part of a growing consortium of eager decarbonisers and financiers peaking over the wall on a global renewable hydrogen economy. Currently confined to conceptual net-zero pledges, the energy source is hailed to hold the potential of a silver buckshot for decarbonizing hard to abate polluting sectors such as steel production, transportation fuels, and renewable storage. Ultimately, hydrogen will only emerge as a key driver of decarbonization if international collaboration combines with private initiative across a diverse set of industries.

First, what is hydrogen? Though hydrogen is one of the simplest and most abundant

elements on Earth; it is not naturally chemically isolated. Therefore, hydrogen must be produced through a multitude of techniques that range from low cost and polluting to financially prohibitive and sustainable. Currently, hydrogen can be produced through natural gas utilization due to its historical lower costs. As the main energy source utilizes fossil fuels, the end product is referred to as grey hydrogen. An alternative method, electrolysis, converts renewable energy and water into green hydrogen, which seeks to displace grey hydrogen in the near term future.

Second, why is hydrogen important? Unbeknownst to many, hydrogen production is already a critical component of modern society. In fact, almost 90 million metric tons were produced in 2020, churning an estimated \$130 billion global

market.¹ Proffered mainly as an industrial feedstock for the production of fertilizers and petroleum refining, one would be remiss to think that hydrogen does not already have a substantial market size. As hydrogen is also a fundamental building block of nature, there exists a host of other possible technology avenues ranging from building heating (replacing natural gas), industry applications (replacing coal in steel making), transportation (aviation, trucking, maritime fuels), and power generation (serving as a backup power source to renewables). Due to this blossoming potential, Iceland and many others see it as a fulcrum of decarbonization.

So how does Iceland, a country devoid of arable land and petroleum refining, seek to drive forward a future built around hydrogen? Hint: one of

the biggest costs in hydrogen production is the energy used to make it. Therefore, the plan holistically is quite simple. Landsvirkjun, the National Power Company of Iceland and the Port of Rotterdam, seek to deliver low-cost green hydrogen powered by geothermal and hydro power to mainland Europe in a bid to appease an ever growing list of consumers.²

Once the fuel reaches Europe, the focus now shifts to the private and public sectors seeking to lower transportation and utilization costs in daily operations. For example, take the recent announcement of the world's first green steel produced in Sweden. With a working relationship forged in the blast furnaces and green hydrogen replacing fossil fuel, private steel maker SSAB joined arms with government owned mining and energy companies to

deliver the first carbon neutral steel to the Volvo group.³

The collaboration is a critical step to reduce the global steel industry's seven percent of annual global greenhouse gas emissions⁴ to zero, while signifying that cross-industry and country connections catalyze green hydrogen development. Aspiring hydrogen hubs will do well to emulate the public initiative Sweden has shown through funding industry research while cementing private relationships such as in this case of Volvo paying a premium for the world's first green steel. The question emerges then: how would imported green fuel move through an interlocked hydrogen economy once unloaded?

Due to the molecular size of hydrogen, physical infrastructure straddling international boundaries must be implemented in order to geographically flatten financial disparities. SNAM, the world's largest natural gas infrastructure operator, headquartered in Italy yet cross-national, seeks to chisel their role into a decarbonized future through providing hydrogen mobility. By 2050, SNAM expects to transport entirely decarbonised

gas,⁵ including both hydrogen and biomethane, across Europe. This would provide partners like Iceland immense financial benefits by lowering transport costs to the end consumer ultimately boosting demand and production. At this stage, climate hawks rightfully admonish the news of maintaining the largest natural gas operator in a decarbonized future. This precarious paradox of requiring some of the largest current polluters to be active in the shift towards a sustainable future echoes throughout the discussion on blue hydrogen, a possible competitor to green fuel.

Blue hydrogen serves as the middle ground between grey and green, where fossil fuels are used in the production of hydrogen with carbon capture utilization and sequestration (CCUS) to produce a compromise between current day production and moonshot efforts. Equinor, the flagship producer of oil and gas in Norway, seeks to launch a multi-billion dollar blue hydrogen push with proven technologies. This ardent support has led to a joint effort in the North of England which sets out to convert 3.7 million homes and 40,000 businesses

to emission-free hydrogen (which could be produced locally or imported) by 2034.⁶ This is a massive undertaking to financially remain an integral part of society, while stimulating possible green hydrogen imports from Iceland and abroad.

The implementation of green hydrogen at the prior mentioned scales are quickly being accepted at the highest levels with minimal daily life changes. Due to the fuel being a molecule and the world's already strong dependence on hydrocarbons, hydrogen is being envisioned as a replacement and not necessarily a fundamental change. Therefore, citizens of countries will still be able to drive private cars, take international trips, and heat their homes, yet the climate impact will be significantly reduced. In fact, an integrated European green hydrogen economy has the potential to generate 5.4 million new jobs across the value chain by 2050,⁷ while utilizing previous fossil fuel workers to uphold the just transition. However, due to hydrogen following a similar supply chain to hydrocarbons, socio-political weaknesses such as foreign fuel dependence are still prevalent and necessitate steadfast international

collaboration.

The quickening metamorphosis of at first glance disparate projects in Europe provides only a tantalizing appetizer of the future; yet, they all touch on critical aspects in the pursuit of an ingrained hydrogen future. Mainly, country collaboration must be rigorously upheld across private partnerships to accelerate the movement and consumption of hydrogen, as evident in the world's first green steel. Simultaneously, a critical debate must occur on the role that fossil fuel producers play in the transition period for hydrogen. It is detrimental to humanity and the world to not acknowledge the social and environmental justice issues surrounding current fossil fuel production and therefore possible continued aggravations. There is no doubt that the burgeoning fuel can ignite systematic sustainable change. However, a future of technological brilliance bubbling in the fumaroles of Iceland can only shine through a backdrop of political, private, and social certainty.

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An Interesting Intersection of Art and the Memory of Violence in Post-Yugoslavia

Zeynep Koseoglu



The Yugoslav Wars were of great shock to the world, particularly Europe, which had not observed the kind of suffering and turmoil it saw in the West Balkans since the Second World War. The nations that once made up Yugoslavia are presently regions with wavering degrees of stability. Amidst brewing protests in Montenegro,¹ calls for separation in Bosnia and Herzegovina,² and continuing tensions between Serbia and Kosovo,³ it is not difficult to imagine a finale to the theater of war that was played out just a few decades ago. Nonetheless, utilizing art as a tool to assert the speakability of war-time violence and its consequences is a method through which reconciliation between ethnic groups can weaken tensions arising from different grievances.

Yugoslavia was kept in relative control by the Communist revolutionary Josip Broz Tito until the breakup of the Soviet Union in 1989. Following this split, it quickly descended into a state of chaos, as different ethnic and religious communities claimed overlapping rights to multicultural territories. The resulting clash between old and new, or mixed and unmixed, gave rise to great geopolitical instability and widespread ethnicization, facilitating a political and cultural increase in the perception that ethnic identities are naturally irreconcilable and disparate. This has resulted in the creation of politics around remembrance, with an intricate legacy of denial and forgetting stretching to today. Under these circumstances, peace efforts in post-Yugoslavia—especially in regions with a greater expectation of potential trauma—have had to come to terms with the elusiveness of reconciliation between different sects of perpetrators and witnesses as a concept and in practice.

Through such difficulties, however, projects such as *Mirëdita, Dober Ban*, a Kosovo-based film festival that screens work dealing with the aftermath of the war, have emerged.⁴ Indeed

art, as a personal and often open-ended element, could be a way for insiders to take control of and accountability for the many different versions of history that exist in the post-Yugoslavian discourse. It is not that the mere existence of art as a cultural production promotes inter-ethnic peace, but rather that art—both in the form of written and visual narrative—is capable of interacting with individual experiences of suffering that matters. In the case of post-Yugoslavia it is art which carries supra-ethnic qualities—meaning it doesn't attempt to speak for any one group—that helps make sense of the violence which has been witnessed, inflicted, and endured in these regions. An example of this is an exhibition called 'Why aren't you here?' that was envisioned by the artist Aida Šehovic, who was inspired by Bosnian coffee tradition when creating an interactive artwork where passers-by in a busy public square are able pour coffee into cups which represent in number a person killed in the Srebrenica genocide.⁵

However, the role of art in the exploration of collective memory is connected to the outrage it invokes from various nationalist groups; no matter how universalistic it attempts to be. It is controversial because it insists on the speakability of violence, especially when people prefer not to hear. Genocides are often marked by silence but the capability of art to provide narratives which break silence makes it threatening to a denialist or self-righteous political agenda. Indeed, *Mirëdita, Dober Ban* has never existed without a counter-protest from right-wing Serbian extremists and their calls for the 'kill' and 'slaughter' of other ethnic groups—threats so real that the participants of this festival arriving from Kosovo do so under police escort.⁶

It is shocking to consider that the discussion of such violence can take place so publicly, and unashamedly, in a post-genocide society. However, denialism is nowhere out of the post-Yugoslavian political

discourse. On October 19, 2021 the National Assembly of the Republic of Serbia, the most important ruling body in the country, voted against the debate of three proposals which emphasized accountability for and acknowledgement of wartime suffering. Specifically, these suggested proposals entailed a ban on the denial of the Srebrenica Genocide, an investigation on the deaths inflicted by NATO intervention in the dissolution period, as well as the inclusion of those who served in the rebel army of Serbia-Krajina—where Krajina-Serbs were ethnically cleansed by Croatian forces—in benefits given to war veterans.⁷ Meanwhile, on October 13, the president of the Republic of Srpska—a Serb-majority regional district in Bosnia-Herzegovina—declared that the region would not comply with the former High Representative for Bosnia and Herzegovina by refusing to enforce a ban on the denial of genocide in

Srebrenica, if such denial incited hatred or violence.

Artwork, such as that of the Serbian artist Vladimir Miladovic, can work against this burial of knowledge. Indeed, Miladovic's ink-wash interpretations of official archives on the exhumation of mass graves in a Belgrade suburb can be considered a special kind of resistance against the official policies of denial.⁸ Together with his rendition of the diary of Ratko Mladic,⁹ the so-called 'Butcher of Bosnia, his art can act as a testimony that strikes without pointing fingers to whole ethnic groups.

Works which speak on the experiences of suffering are necessary because in substantial parts of post-Yugoslavian territories, Ratko Mladic, who oversaw the murder of 8,000 Bosniak men and children, is still a celebrated public figure. The

Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights has welcomed Mladic's conviction of numerous war crimes, by stating that while nothing could erase the horrors of the past and the suffering of the victims, their struggle for justice had been honored.¹⁰ One can not help but ask if justice has been truly served when at Mladic's name and bodies improperly buried and dispersed around territories that were never home.¹¹ There can be no reconciliation without accountability, and while it can be a powerful tool, art isn't a replacement for legal and legislative justice. However, through works such as "Matheme" which is a Phytogorean lecture on the production of knowledge about the genocide; including victim identification from remains and the ethics of international influence on it, the existence and

importance of lived experiences can be asserted against the idolitization of war criminals.¹²

In the case of *Mirëdita, Dober Ban*, a documentary on the experience of sexual violence based on survivor testimonies; or an interpretative film about a truck driver transporting a NATO bomb, is able to open critical conversations between different groups and create personal connections that can be separated from group identity. It is tempting to forget what happened in Yugoslavia amidst the political and cultural stakes of acceptance. However, tensions are unlikely to end until inhabitants are able to make sense of the imprinted legacy of suffering and art is a powerful way through which self-determined conversations can and are beginning to take place.

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The Netherlands: Too Many People and Too Few Places

Grace Manella

Have you ever had to stay with a group of people you weren't friends with? It's an experience many would describe as uncomfortable or stressful. Yet, some Europeans have been forced to embrace this notion because of expensive, limited housing options. This new way of living is called co-housing, and no other country is taking advantage of it more than the Netherlands. Due to the Netherlands' housing crisis and unique social culture, it may appear to be a practical solution. However, beneath the surface, co-housing is not a long-term fix; the Dutch government needs to change its laws surrounding real estate development in order to accommodate its increasing population.

Co-housing has gained a lot of attention in the last few years, despite the unfortunate fact that it makes people sacrifice their privacy. It's a community of people or households, where each household has its own house or apartment with the usual rooms and facilities. However, there is always at least one shared community resource, such as the living area, kitchen, and laundry. The Netherlands has around 400 co-housing communities, housing over 80,000 of its 17 million people.¹ Other countries, including Italy, Belgium, and Denmark, are also following suit. Denmark in particular, has similarly embraced co-housing, with over 50,000 Danes utilizing this public way of living.

So why does the Netherlands need co-housing more than other countries? Simply put, its housing crisis has been steadily growing for years with little political intervention. The biggest issue is the availability of land: the country is only about

twice the size of New Jersey with a continuously growing population. The Netherlands could possibly house everyone, but they would have to remove land used for agriculture to accommodate them. It's the EU's biggest meat exporter and has over 100 million cattle, chicken, and pigs. All of this contributes to the fact that 53 percent of its land is for agriculture and 11 percent for forestry.² Therefore, only about one-third of the Netherlands' area is meant for human living, which results in lower and middle class Dutch struggling to afford local real estate. Dutch politicians in recent elections pledged to build at least one million properties over ten years, but the progress has been slow due to fear of hurting the country's economy.³

It's easy to wonder why other countries haven't invested more in co-housing as a real estate solution. For it to be successful on a large scale, it takes a specific population. Luckily, the Dutch already had a frequently used word in their vocabulary that described co-housing: *samenliving*, translating to *community and living together*. They have a reputation for being tolerant, organized, and not fearful of strangers. If you're living in the Netherlands, you're expected to have an official agenda and plan your social outings at least two weeks in advance.⁴ When organization is ingrained in your culture, it's easier to trust that you're living with someone who will be a respectful roommate. Moreover, the Dutch are known to be liberal and more trusting than other nationalities. Tourists have remarked that if you ask a local a question on the street, they will strike up a conversation with you and want

to know what made you visit the Netherlands. One American who spent two months in Amsterdam recalled that it was normal for kids to come into his apartment if he left the door open and demand sweets. This is a unique anecdote, but it represents how trusting the Dutch community is.

Of course, co-housing would not need to be an option if it weren't for soaring real estate prices. These are not going to deflate any time soon, which is why this solution can only help the lower-middle class. The average price of a home in the Netherlands is 395,000 euros, which has forced the Netherlands' homeless population to grow by over 70 percent in the past decade.⁵ To put it in perspective, this average is about 15 to 20 percent higher than surrounding neighbors. Dutch between the ages of 20 to 30 make up the majority of this population because they simply cannot afford housing as a single income resident. In April 2021, there was a housing shortage of about 300,000 homes, and waiting lists for affordable housing can be up to 15 years. There are 200,000 citizens who cannot afford to rent or buy homes, but make too much money to qualify for affordable housing. Therefore, if the demand of co-housing continues to increase, then soon the Netherlands will find itself even deeper in crisis.

There's an alternative solution that politicians are hesitant to resort to: reduction of agricultural land. The Netherlands has a strict nitrogen emission quota, due to the fact that its high amount of cattle release nitrogen that harms the environment. Similarly, the equipment used to build homes releases the same harmful gas

during construction. Recently, politicians chose to reduce the amount of Dutch homes being built by 60 percent instead of giving up its agricultural land. Instead of finding ways to increase housing, the Netherlands implemented strong taxes on landlords and environmental restrictions on all construction. Building near cities already comes with additional costs and procedures because the soil needs to be altered.⁶ These tactics aimed to make it increasingly difficult to build apartment complexes and homes. Politicians state that it's for the good of the environment, but the reality is that it ignores the housing crisis. Meanwhile, the Economic Institute for Construction determined that about 500,000 houses could be built on rural farmland, but farmers are also unwilling to sell parts of their land due to its high value. The government is also wary of this because if more homes are built in rural areas, then the country will need to invest in the proper public transportation to help citizens commute into cities. At the gradual rate that homes are being built, 845,000 would still need to be constructed by 2030 to anticipate its expanding population.⁷

If the Netherlands is serious about reducing its homeless population, it can't rely on its citizens being willing to share properties. While it's admirable that the Dutch have a found way to reside together, the government needs to find a balance between maintaining its exports and providing reasonable housing for its citizens.



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Pushed by his coalition, Germany's new Chancellor Scholz Must Be A Bulwark Against Putin

Ben Miller

The SPD's Olaf Scholz—a former Hamburg employment lawyer, socialist activist, and mayor—recently assumed Germany's chancellorship, taking over Europe's most powerful economy from a matriarch of global leadership, Angela Merkel. Merkel, who is stepping down as chancellor after 17 years, has undoubtedly been one of the most consequential leaders in European history, assisting Germany in securing its place as a powerhouse on the world stage. Merkel has also overseen the Putinisation of Russia and its increasingly belligerent foreign policy. During her tenure, and especially in recent years as Russia has become more aggressive, Merkel has been hesitant to stand up to Putin, while the German-Russian relationship has grown more distant under her tenure. While the annexation of Crimea, for example, sparked near universal outrage amongst Germany's closest allies, Berlin's response was muted. Recently, however, the primary issue in the German-Russian relationship has been Nord Stream 2—a gas pipeline from Russia to European nations owned by Russian energy company Gazprom.

Russian policy hawks and experts have rightly noted that Nord Stream 2 is a blatant effort by Moscow to increase European reliance on Russian gas. However, Merkel has been an ardent proponent of the project, which indientally flows through her home state of Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania. In fact, the Kremlin characterized Germany's position as "steadfast loyalty." *Russlandversteher*, or "Russia sympathizers," in Germany have insisted the critiques and concerns of the project are overblown. Scholz has not gone as far as to say that the

project should be called off, but he has threatened that the project could be cancelled "just like that" should Russia not abide by geopolitical guarantees.¹ Nevertheless, Scholz does not go far enough, failing to recognize the need to distance European gas markets (and the economy as a whole) from Russian influence; this only serves to bankroll Putin and ensure his grip on power tightens. As Germany's new chancellor, Scholz must be more forceful in his position on Russia, using Germany's pivotal role as a leader in Europe to promote a bloc-wide consensus and curb Russian involvement in European affairs. In order for this to be reality, domestic forces—including, most critically, the parties in Germany's new governing coalition—must exert their influence on the incoming chancellor.

Throughout her chancellorship, Merkel has served as the sole communications link between European powers and Moscow. Merkel believed that maintaining communication was a key cornerstone of stability, going so far as engaging with Putin even as German-Russian relationships were at their worst. The overlap between these two leaders spans many years but recently, Nord Stream 2 has been a major linchpin in the relationship. Nord Stream 2 follows the first Nord Stream pipeline completed in 2011 under the Baltic Sea. Between the two pipelines, over 110 billion cubic meters of gas will be transported annually to Germany, a country badly in need of energy sources. Critics have noted that this pipeline conveniently avoids passing through Ukraine, which currently has a pipeline of its own in disrepair. Ultimately, however,

many German leaders view their support of Nord Stream as simply a pragmatic view to ensure steady gas supply rather than one with vast geopolitical implications. In describing the state of Germany's energy source transition, Merkel has said, "We cannot—as some have demanded—get out of nuclear power and coal and then withdraw from natural gas as fast as possible. That's not going to be possible."² Scholz has also echoed these comments by pronouncing, "Electricity has to become cheaper in Germany so our companies can compete internationally." Ultimately, Germany will have to decide whether its strategic interests supersede its position as a moral authority in Europe and around the world.

The most recent German federal election resulted in a coalitional partnership between the Social Democrats, Free Democratic Party, and the Green Party. This election result was extremely close and was an indicator of the polarization in the German electorate. However, with the Greens securing about 15 percent of the vote, this new coalition would bring a Green Party into the fold that is notably more skeptical of Nord Stream 2 and Russia generally. Annalena Baerbock, leader of the Greens, has struck a different tone than Merkel and Scholz, exclaiming, "we can't allow ourselves to be blackmailed" by Russia.³ This statement was in response to Russian efforts to withhold gas supplies to Europe to put pressure on German regulators to approve the pipeline, sending energy prices soaring. The Greens have expressed deep concern about the German government being too close to Moscow and Beijing, which has also driven a wedge between

Germany and the U.S. As a member of the ruling coalition, the Greens will have significant power to influence the tone and national conversation, or at least as much as their relatively small share of seats allows them. Regardless, they represent an important voice in government and can help guide the new coalition's direction on Russia.

On November 16, 2021, Germany suspended approval of Nord Stream 2 due to a paperwork issue, potentially setting the project back months. Oliver Krischner, a member of the Greens, said, "This will mean a considerable delay to the pipeline coming online, so that it most likely will not play a role this winter."⁴ Although this suspension has set back the timeline of the project, the debate will rage on. The Greens, and others in Germany who oppose the pipeline, must use this delay as a time to apply even more pressure on pro-pipeline German officials to withdraw support. Olaf Sholz, in particular, must heed the warnings of those in the West and in his own country about the dangers of further alignment with Russia. If the current energy crisis has proven anything, it is that giving Putin more leverage in energy markets and increasing reliance on Russian gas is a dangerous bet. With a new leader in Germany, there must be a change of stance toward Russia, as well—one that is more in line with America and the morals and values that undergird modern German society.

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Russia Sets the Board for a Strategic Game of Chess in Africa

Elizabeth Sieger

If there's one thing that Russia is good at, it's power plays. A growing superpower itching to control the world stage, Russia has no qualms about who or what must be stepped on to get to the top. While it has always been involved in its fair share of controversies, a 184 page UN report released in June 2021 describes an entirely different level of corruption.¹ The report condemns Russia for sanctions violations in the Central African Republic (CAR), and substantiates these claims with eyewitness reports of civilian abuse by Russian actors. It seems Russia has been caught red-handed orchestrating political violence. But is this really the setback to Russia's grab for power that it appears to be? Or, more likely, is it just another opportunity for the nation to manipulate the global community?

The Central African Republic has been plagued by violent intercommunal fighting since 2013, when a rebel group seized control of the government and ousted then-President Francois Bozize.² In response to this crisis, the U.N. instituted an arms embargo banning all arms from the country except to pre-approved CAR security forces.³ In theory, the embargo is temporary, but has been extended every year since 2013 and is firmly in place until July

2022. Desperate for assistance, the CAR invited Russian and Rwandan advisors to the country in 2020 to help put down continuous internal uprisings. In December 2020, Russia reported to the UN Security Council sanctions committee that they would be sending 500 unarmed former military officers into the country to provide security ahead of the country's upcoming election. This group would also be responsible for training local police to strengthen law and order in the country.

Though this originally seemed to be another avenue for Russia's expanding influence, the June 2021 UN report showcased a much darker reality. It accused the Russian military instructors of engaging in armed combat in the region, committing atrocities against civilians, and stealing civilian food and supplies. The report had statements from the UN, independent journalists, and even the CAR government itself detailing brutal acts of sexual violence, torture, and armed robbery against unarmed civilians. In addition to these accusations, it was noted that there were possibly over 2,000 Russian instructors sent into the country—not the agreed-upon 500. Ivan Khoroshev, Russia's representative on the Security Council's sanctions committee, vehemently denied these

claims, calling the entire report "baseless propaganda by agents of an armed rebellion seeking to overthrow the government". Western powers hypothesize Russia is lying about everything that happened in the CAR—including who was actually sent in. It is believed that the Russian "military instructors" that were sent into the country were actually mercenaries from a private Russian military contractor called the Wagner Group. The name of the putative owner, Yevgeniy Prigozhin, might ring a bell: he was implicated by the Mueller investigation for his suspected role in influencing the 2016 U.S. presidential election.⁴ The Wagner Group is also known to have a significant presence in Libya,⁵ with plans to enter Mali.

Coincidence? Of course not.

It is difficult to determine Russia's ultimate goal in the CAR. Its engagement in active armed combat in the CAR is a blatant violation of the 2013 UN sanctions that remain in place. It appears that Russia's activity in the CAR has only brought them under closer scrutiny. But this disagreement between Russian officials and the UN sanctions panels, which monitor sanctions violations, only deepens Russia's distaste and distrust for the panels, which they claim to be "Western-dominated." Complaints about the lack of geographic diversity on the sanctions panels from Russia have been made before, but in the context of their actions in the CAR, it seems that this is just an attempt for the Russians to get off scot-free. UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres appoints between four and six independent sanctions experts to the panels; when all members of the UN Security Council have approved the appointments, only then can experts begin working. Within weeks of the June meeting where Russia was accused of misconduct in the CAR, placed a hold on renewing the experts' contracts, effectively blocking their work. The sanctions panels that Russia has blocked are all those of African nations—the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, South Sudan, and

Somalia.

There is clearly a pattern here: Russia needs to keep their activity in Africa as quiet as possible. Their complaint about the lack of geographic diversity on the panels is simply an attempt to secure greater control over the UN sanctions system; Russia is stacking the panels with Russian nationals to diminish scrutiny of their growing role in Africa – and it's working. A Security Council diplomat has said the Russians are engaged in negotiations with the UN Secretariat over panel composition, and that they are likely to secure some representation on the panels. This presents an existential threat to the UN sanctions system as it demonstrates the P3's waning commitment to holding Russia accountable for their sanctions violations. With the Biden administration perceiving China as a bigger national security threat than Russia, the Kremlin has sensed an opportunity to expand its sphere of influence and reassert itself as a great power in line with China and the U.S.

Taking Russia's complaint about geographic diversity on the panels at face value has dangerous implications for internal affairs in Africa and the UN sanctions system as a whole. It is yet another strategic maneuver to secure Russian influence on a global scale and to ensure that their role in Africa will go unquestioned. It is imperative that the P3 of the U.S., the U.K., and France punish Russia, and for once, the U.S. cannot depend on sanctions. The P3 must make it clear that Russia's wish for seats on African sanctions committees will not be granted and, critically, monitor Russia's role in Africa closely. The Russians have shown a flagrant disregard for human rights in the CAR already, so limiting their power, and with it, their ability to extend their influence in the region and commit further atrocities is absolutely necessary. Without action, the international community will fall into yet another Russian power play—and will, as they always do, regret it later.

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Western powers hypothesize Russia is lying about everything that happened in the CAR—including who was actually sent in.
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Brexit took formal effect at 23:00 GMT on January 31, 2020, three years after the razor-thin June 2016 referendum that set it into motion. However, after all the turmoil it unleashed in British politics, constantly dominating headlines while taking down two Prime Ministers, the impacts of Brexit were soon forgotten about for two reasons: first, the transition period, which kept Britain in the customs union and single market as-is for an extra 11 months; and second, the Covid-19 pandemic that for some time overshadowed it entirely.

That doesn't mean the impacts of Brexit haven't materialized. While some Britons felt vindicated after a strong vaccine rollout conducted separately from the laggard EU, things have soured since then. This fall, Britain faced a critical fuel crisis and the country looks ahead to a winter threatened by price hikes and severe supply crunches. Its ongoing disputes with the EU about Northern Ireland have only escalated, and its cross-channel relations with France are pitiful. This has worsened its international relationships, all while it stares down a new global security posture. All of these dynamics are partial or full byproducts of Brexit, so it's worth checking in on how Britain and its place in the world have been affected over 18 months after "B-Day." These developments have not only shown how Brexit was a major mistake for the United Kingdom, but that opportunities do remain to mitigate the downsides.

Supply Issues

The UK faces a stubborn supply problem that has manifested itself in different ways. It suffered an acute fuel crisis, which peaked in September, that saw widespread panic-buying and lines at petrol stations reminiscent of the 1970s.¹ More broadly, there are ongoing shortages affecting food and other critical goods that threaten to fester for months on end. While nearly every country is dealing with supply chain disruptions due to the pandemic, Britain's situation has been undeniably worsened

by the strictures brought on by Brexit.

The proximate cause of this supply problem is a labor issue: Britain is dealing with a shortage of over 100,000 truck drivers, easily attributable to an exodus of EU nationals after Brexit. Over 20,000 drivers who returned to their home countries because of the pandemic are unable to travel back to Britain because of the stricter post-Brexit work visa requirements.² Olaf Scholz, Germany's SPD leader and likely next chancellor, noted the day after their September election that it would have benefited from the EU's freedom of movement in fighting the shortfall: "We worked very hard to convince the British not to leave the Union. Now they have decided differently, and I hope they will manage the problems coming from that."³ The shrinkage of Britain's available labor pool—at least on-demand—will likely continue to have implications on the stability of its supply chains. While the pandemic has brought on a difficult new element, none of these problems were unforeseen. One of the Leave campaign's key tenets—and dog-whistles—was the desire to restrict immigration. The government then forged ahead with a hard-line Brexit that prioritized immigration crackdowns—both forcing some immigrants to leave as well as restricting entry for new ones—and left critical issues like the energy market to the side.⁴

Northern Ireland

The Irish border issue hobbled the Brexit process from day one. Northern Ireland's precarious position, beset by decades of sectarian violence during the Troubles conflict, takes the return of a hard border off the table—the strong remain vote in Northern Ireland in 2016 shows as much. But this is easier said than done given the Irish border also marks the border between the EU's single market and Britain's newly-independent one. As a part of the Withdrawal Agreement, both the UK and the EU agreed that some goods travelling between Northern Ireland and Britain would face checks to protect

The Meaning of "Brexit Means Brexit:" A Status Update, Two Years On

Aidan Woutas



the single market and avoid Irish border controls; certain EU regulations would remain in force in Northern Ireland for the same reason. Even with this compromise, however, the so-called "Northern Ireland Protocol" has always been fraught. This is especially true for Protestant Unionists who see any imposition of distance—economic, regulatory, or otherwise—between them and London as anathema.⁵

While Britain nonetheless agreed to these terms less than two years ago, it now contends

the Protocol is not working as intended and is threatening to essentially tear it up altogether unless a new deal is negotiated. This would upend the delicate arrangement that took years to negotiate and also threatens the peace process brought on by the 1998 Good Friday Agreement, which largely ended the sectarian violence in Northern Ireland. This new stance is particularly odd because Prime Minister Boris Johnson's government cast the deal as a negotiating triumph, but now dramatically derides it as a scam presented by Brussels

as a false choice.⁶ Time will tell if Britain's demands turn out to simply be a tactic to gain some modest concessions, or a true threat to the integrity of the Brexit agreement.

AUKUS and Britain's New Place in the World

The AUKUS security pact between the United States, Australia, and Britain was confirmation of the UK's drive toward a more global posture—at least on paper.⁷ Johnson's government has termed this pivot the strategic 'tilt' toward the Indo-Pacific region becoming of a reinvigorated 'Global Britain.' The pact, which provides Australia with advanced nuclear technology to build submarines, gives Britain a seat on the American side of the table in its competition with China. But it also enraged a jilted France which fumed over being left on the sidelines, especially as it canceled a submarine deal of its own with Australia.

This wasn't the first time France was enraged. Indeed, Britain's conflagrations with its erstwhile frenemy France have been a major theme of the last several years. Recently, the two countries have been locked in a nasty dispute over fishing rights in the Channel that separates them—at one point, they even

briefly sent naval ships to the island of Jersey over the quarrel.⁸ Both Johnson and French President Emmanuel Macron have domestic political incentives in ginning up this conflict, but there is a real threat of a trade war between the two if tensions don't cool. Britain will have to balance its global ambitions with its ability to maintain cordial relationships in its own backyard—otherwise, the entire project promises to fall apart.

Britain faces many unknowns because of its exit from the European Union, but many aspects remain within its control. It must remain closely aligned with its allies in Europe no matter whether they are no longer formally linked through the EU. Ending its confrontational posture, dropping its unrealistic demands, and seeking cooperation wherever possible would go a long way toward forging a successful new relationship that might at least make up for some of what Britain so foolishly threw away.

¹Taylor, Chloe. "Gas crisis, labor shortage, and supply chain chaos: Post-Brexit Britain faces a difficult winter," CNBC News, Oct. 18, 2021, <https://www.cnbc.com/2021/10/18/gas-crisis-labor-shortages-and-supply-chain-chaos-post-brexit-britain-faces-a-difficult-winter.html>.

²Landler, Mark. "U.K. Fuel Crisis is a Brexit Crisis, too," The New York Times, Sept. 28, 2021, <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/09/28/world/europe/brexit-britain-fuel-johnson.html>.

³Boffey, Daniel. "End to freedom of movement behind UK fuel crisis, says Merkel's likely successor," The Guardian, Sept. 27, 2021.

⁴Ziady, Hanna. "Boris Johnson's Brexit choices are making Britain's fuel and food shortages worse," CNN Business, Sept. 29, 2021, <https://www.cnn.com/2021/09/28/business/brexit-fuel-food-shortages/index.html>.

⁵Castle, Stephen. "E.U. Offers U.K. Concessions on Northern Ireland. Here's What the Spat Is About," The New York Times, Nov. 8, 2021, <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/07/21/world/europe/northern-ireland-protocol-uk.html>.

⁶Castle, Stephen. "Britain Escalates Dispute With E.U. Over Northern Ireland," The New York Times, Oct. 12, 2021, <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2021/oct/12/cult-boris-johnson-optimism-brexit-plan-northern-ireland-protocol>.

⁷Tewari, Suranjana. "Aukus: UK, US, and Australia pact signals Asia-Pacific power shift," BBC News, Sept. 16, 2021, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-58540808>.

⁸Landler, Mark. "With Fish, Trucks and Submarines, U.K. and France Bicker Over Brexit," The New York Times, Nov. 4, 2021, <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/11/04/world/europe/brexit-britain-france-johnson-macron.html>.

MIDDLE EAST.

ICIJ: A Multimillion Dollar Empire and a Struggling Nation

Sumayah Basal

In the recent International Consortium of Investigative Journalists' (ICIJ) release of the Pandora papers, 35 heads of state and 300 political figures from 100 countries were exposed for their offshore holdings of real estate. One such figure is King Abdullah II of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan. The revelation of offshore holdings worth \$106 million has the potential to goad an already discontent populace amidst ongoing political turbulence, substantial income inequalities, and austerity measures imposed by the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

In June 2020, Jordanian authorities and the Prime Minister called for a crackdown on hidden wealth and corruption due to an estimated \$800 million being funneled out of the country each year. This made the revelation of off-shore holdings especially untimely as public tensions run high in the face of Covid-19 struggles and an overall discontent of the

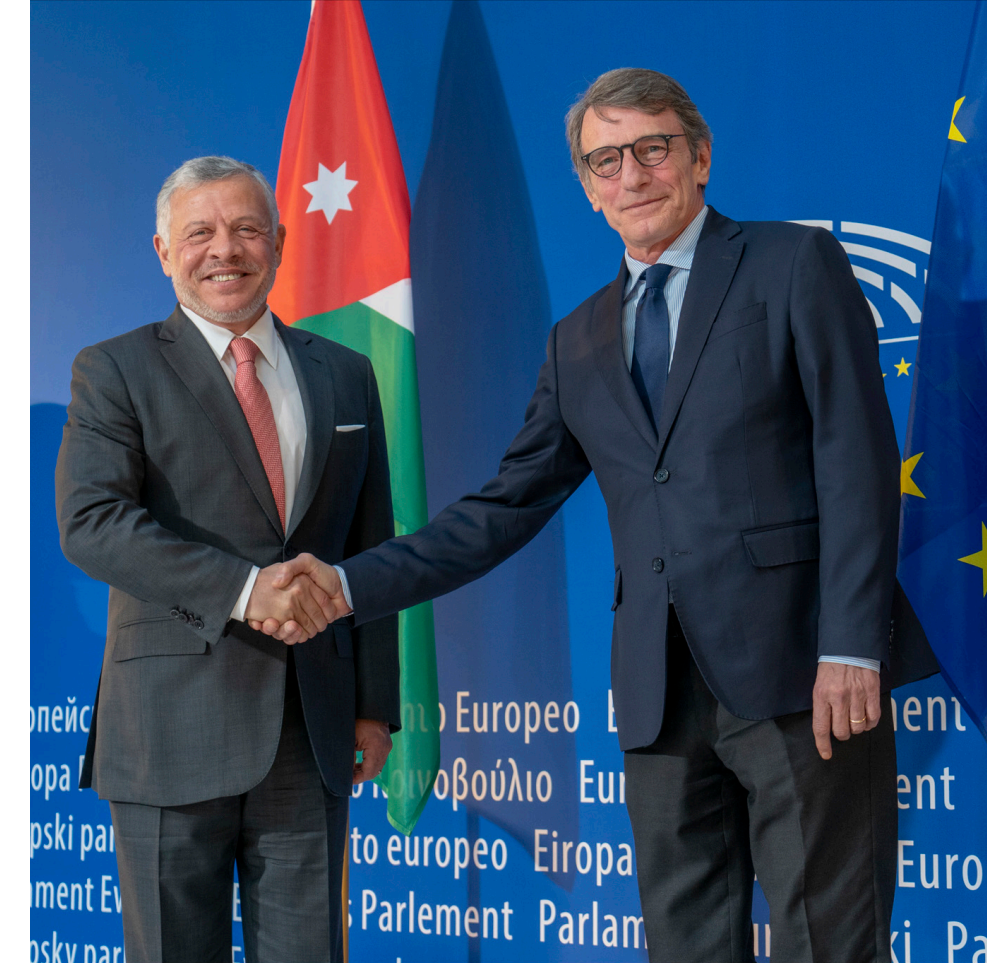
people that has been stirring in the past decade.² Consequently, the King has implicated himself with those who the government sought to find and remove. Yet, implications of the offshore holdings go beyond social tension and government transparency. Instead, they bring the economic regime and the suffering of the Jordanian people to light. When compared to any of the Khaleej or Saudi royal families' spending, Abdullah's spending seems laughably small, and yet, it has prompted outrage worldwide. The landscapes of protest and secrecy must, then, be examined through the economic conditions of Jordan at large.

Jordan is poor. It is resource poor, it is economically poor, water scarce, and unable to rely on oil reservoirs as the gulf states do. A large proportion of Jordan's income is derived from foreign aid, with the U.S. giving \$1.5 billion in humanitarian aid and military funding, and the EU giving \$218 million.³ This,

coupled with Jordan having one of the highest refugee populations in the world, has put an excessive strain on the economy and infrastructure of the nation. Thus, while monarchs of neighboring countries openly flaunt exuberant purchases and wealth, the Jordanian monarchy has to strike a delicate balance between keeping the population content, and satiating Western donors who support a great deal of Jordanian development. This balancing act is to make sure that Western donors continue to view Jordan as impoverished and needing help. The U.S. and U.K. rely on the relatively stable and progressive image of the Jordanian King and his wife as a foothold in the region.¹

Yet, even with foreign aid, Jordan still suffers under aggressive economic regimes as imposed by the IMF's austerity measures in the past decades.⁴ These measures have led, primarily, to the cutting of fuel, bread, and other government subsidies. This has tangible

impacts on the political stability and livelihood of Jordanians, and their perception of King Abdullah. These measures resulted in successive tax increases and cuts to essential subsidies for bread, electricity, and fuel, threatening Jordanians' livelihoods. This led to protests throughout Jordan, as seen in 2018 when Abdullah imposed a tax-hike as prescribed by the IMF.³ The Jordanian population is unequipped to deal with the cuts towards the welfare state as the population largely relies on the subsidies to maintain their livelihoods.⁵ Despite these measures, the ratio of debt-to-GDP in Jordan has skyrocketed from 60 to 93 from 2011 to 2015, implying that the measures have done little to quell the rising debt that the Jordanian government faces.⁶ Though Abdullah suspended the measures in the face of the protests, the impacts of loans are far from gone. In addition, the huge efforts of secrecy "to which Abdullah has gone to hide details of the purchases also



How Iranian Proxies Continue to Infringe on Iraqi Sovereignty

Will Kielm

When the Iraqi army collapsed and the city of Mosul fell to ISIL (Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant) in June 2014, Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani, the top Shia cleric in Iraq, issued a fatwa, or Islamic decree, that called for the defense of Iraq and a counteroffensive against ISIL. Armed with the religious legitimacy of the fatwa and facing imminent destruction of the Iraqi state by ISIL, former Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki established what is now known as the Popular Mobilization Forces (PMF)—an umbrella of various Shi'ite paramilitaries that have fought alongside the Iraqi army. Following its creation, the succeeding Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi—who failed to control the PMF as a part of the Iraqi armed forces—decided to recognize it as a legitimate, state-affiliated entity as opposed to integrating it into the Iraqi Army, leading it to be recognized as a state institution by the Iraqi parliament. Since then, the PMF has continued to engage in key military operations in the Middle East alongside the Iraqi army, such as in the Second Battle of Tikrit, which recaptured the city of Tikrit from ISIL. However, the PMF is largely independent from Iraqi oversight and mostly remains loyal to Iran. Given the extent of Iranian influence in Iraqi politics and security policy, Iraq should centralize its security forces by integrating the anti-Iran factions of the PMF, and re-establish its autonomy over its own military forces.

Currently, the PMF has three distinct factions.¹ The most significant faction remains loyal to Iran's Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, the second to Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani, and the third to Muqtada al-Sadr, the leader of the Sadrist Movement and the former leader of the Mahdi

Army. The Khamenei faction of the PMF, the most prominent element of the PMF, is little more than an Iranian proxy that does the bidding of Iran's geopolitical interests. Key paramilitaries of the PMF include Shi'ite militia groups such as the Kata'ib Hezbollah (KH), Asa'ib Ahl al-Haq (AAH), Harakat al-Nujaba, and Kata'ib Sayyid al-Shuhada (KSAS).²

Most significantly, the Badr Organization headed by Hadi Al-Amiri is the largest component of the PMF loyal to Khamenei. Established in Iran in 1982 by the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC), the Badr Organization formed as the armed wing of the Supreme Council for Islamic Revolution in Iraq (SCIRI), an Iraqi Shia Islamist political party later renamed Islamic Supreme Council of Iraq (ISCI).³ Furthermore, following its guerilla warfare against the Ba'athist regime in Iraq, the Badr Organization fought alongside the Iranian forces during the Iran-Iraq War and proactively participated in the Iraqi Civil War alongside the Mahdi Army after the 2003 U.S.-led invasion of Iraq. Additionally, it is the biggest political faction within the Tahalof al-Fatah (Conquest Alliance) coalition, which was the second-largest coalition in the Iraqi Parliament.

The PMF has notably acted several times in recent years in alignment with Iran's geopolitical interests. It engaged in the Syrian Civil War on the side of Bashar al-Assad's Syrian Arab Armed Forces, as seen with the 2015 Southern Syria Offensive against the Free Syrian Army (FSA) when KSAS, alongside the IRGC, Hezbollah, and the Syrian Armed Forces, captured seven villages in the Daraa Province. The PMF's former administrator, Abu Madhi al-Muhandis, led the attack on the U.S. Embassy

in the Green Zone in Baghdad in December 2019 and also coordinated multiple military operations with Iran's Quds forces until his death by a U.S. drone strike in January 2020 alongside the former Quds Force commander Qasem Soleimani, signifying intimate partnership with Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps. With the PMF pursuing Iran's interest in Iraq, it serves to destabilize the region in favor of Iran and undermines Iraqi sovereignty over its own territory and politics.

However, the Pro-Iran elements of the PMF have been faltering over the recent months. The Saraya al-Salam, otherwise known as the Peace Brigades (PB), is also a Shi'ite militia and the second largest component in the PMF, but opposes both Iranian and American influence. Muqtada al-Sadr leads the Sadrist Movement, an Iraqi Islamist Party that draws support from the Shi'ite population in the country. Such factionalism compromises the cohesion of the PMF, leading former Prime Minister Adil Abdul-Mahdi attempting to integrate the PMF into the Iraqi Military in July 2019 with an executive order to move past over-reliance on decentralized and mostly autonomous militias as opposed to the weak, centralized Iraqi military.^{4,5} While the Sadrist and Sistani factions are relatively more amiable for cooperative integration, the large Pro-Iran loyalist elements of the PMF that are loyal to Khamenei render such integration difficult, which means that selective integration with the Sistani faction and Sadrist faction in the PMF with the Iraqi security forces is more politically feasible.

Luckily, recent events have shown vulnerability within the PMF as well as the limits of its popular support from

the Iraqi people. In the 2021 Iraqi Parliamentary elections, the PMF's political coalition (Iranian-backed Al-Fatah Coalition), which grants legitimacy to its military efforts, saw their seats reduced from 57 seats they gained in 2018 to 16 seats in the Parliament. The Sadrists, on the other hand, increased their seats from 54 to 73. The PMF predictably rejects the result of the election, issuing threats against election officials and engaging in violence.⁶ Furthermore, sources indicate that Prime Minister Mustafa Al-Kadhimi was targeted by the Kata'ib Hezbollah and Asaib Ahl al-Haq in a drone strike, an assassination attempt in response to the result of the 2021 Iraqi Parliamentary election.⁷

The recent assassination attempt by Iranian-backed militia and contesting of Iraq's October democratic election by those proxies are mere examples of its broader plan to destabilize Iraq's democracy and bend it to the will of Tehran. Additionally, the recent election shows that the PMF's bid for political power from the barrel of the gun has failed in light of the voice of the Iraqi people. The PMF has been losing support from voters, as shown by the recent protest movements against it and Iran.⁸ The PMF is no longer viewed as heroes that defeated ISIS. It is time for Iraq to rid the PMF of external Iranian elements, prevent Iran from meddling in Iraqi internal affairs, and finally grant Iraq strategic autonomy that is independent from Tehran's political meddling.

suggest he is aware they will be a politically awkward matter to explain to his subjects." This is due to the fact that Abdullah is conscious of the economic hardships faced by his people, and that transparent visuals of immense wealth would potentially enrage people. This secrecy has the effect of protecting Abdullah from outrage, but simultaneously runs contrary to government efforts of monetary transparency as evaluated earlier. It is important to consider how the imposition of strict neoliberal regimes onto a country whose average monthly salary is \$678 fares in the ultimate economic advancements of the country.⁷ As welfare is cut, discontent surges, and the King becomes more susceptible to public scrutiny.

The context of the purchases is paramount. Though King Abdullah has maintained a relatively favorable image in the eyes of Jordanians, yet, the 2012 Arab uprisings represented an unusual turn against the King. Subjects swarmed the streets in protest of the removal of a fuel subsidy, once again prescribed

by the IMF, comparing Abdullah to the Ali Baba of One Thousand and One Nights who became rich by looting a cave full of gold and gems. They chanted "Oh, Abdullah son of Hussein, where did the people's money go? There are those stealing millions and the rest eating plain Bread." Thus, although the money is of private means, the protestors and Jordanian people are not quick to absolve the monarchy of their unusually immense riches as they face poverty and austerity measures that threaten the very function of life. Against this backdrop, Abdullah purchased several properties abroad that make up his real estate profile signaling his attempts to protect against an uncertain future in Jordan. In turn, IMF loaning practices and colonial pasts must lead to questioning the extent to which Abdullah himself is responsible for the economic precarity of the nation. The colonial regimes and Sykes Picot division of the Middle East have cemented nations that are resource poor, unindustrialized, and unable to keep up in an already developed world. Perhaps even further, it represents a questioning of

the deservedness of additional ire against the King himself and his offshore properties. This is not to say that a King whose population suffers from an 18.5 percent unemployment rate is warranted in exuberant purchases, but it may contextualize such actions.

As we perceive and examine Middle Eastern leaders outside of the gulf, the penchant for extreme scrutiny becomes ironic. Many of the fundamental struggles and economic weaknesses are a byproduct of aggressive colonial regimes and the mapmaking of the 1940s. Thus, the evaluations of the King's finances must be fairly taken in the context of the Jordanian economy.

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⁷"Jordan Avg Monthly Wage per Employee: Professionals | Economic Indicators | CEIC." <https://www.ceicdata.com/en/jordan/average-monthly-wage-per-employee/avg-monthly-wage-per-employee-professionals>.

Too Little, But Not Too Late: Why the U.S. Must Do More in Syria

Heba Malik



Stacked in neat rows, emaciated bodies cover the cement ground of a dark warehouse in Mezze, Syria. The edges of labeling tape lift from the curves of foreheads. Their eyes gaze at nothing. Among them, a man walks with purpose. He is a medical examiner tasked with assigning their deaths. No, they were not tortured. No, they were not starved. No, they were not killed. According to him, they died of “cardiac arrest.”

He’s lying.

This narrative is not fiction. It describes one photograph of torture victims in a collection of 53,275 known as the Caesar files.¹ Not only did the publication of these photographs shock the world, but it also led to the 2020 U.S. Caesar Syria Civilian Protection Act. Introduced by Representative Eliot Engel with bipartisan support, the CSCPA sanctioned the Syrian government, including President Bashar al-Assad, for war crimes against the Syrian population. It constitutes the broadest sanctions ever applied against Syria by targeting businesses, individuals, and government institutions for any and all economic activities that propped up the Assad regime and its affiliates. Unlike previous sanctions, the CSCPA included third-country actors under its jurisdiction, particularly cross-border business networks and profiteers in Lebanon, Russia, China, and Iran.² The law also codified support for limiting violence against civilians.

Now, this is all well and good. The sanctions are closely targeted. They constitute a major obstacle

to Assad and his networks, particularly concerning reconstruction efforts on land taken from displaced Syrians. As with all sanctions, however, the Caesar Act has not achieved its purported objective. Mechanisms to support the civilian population have not enacted reform. Instead, they have deteriorated civilian quality of life to the point of starvation due to economic woes while the regime continues to survive.³ Granted, the collapse of the Lebanese economy and Assad’s continued violence against his people have done more harm than the Caesar Act. But a one-and-done sanctions law is not a panacea. President Biden has heralded human rights as the center of his foreign policy strategy—yet Syria remains on the backburner. The Caesar Act proved insufficient to counter the Assad regime. The U.S. must take on a greater diplomatic and strategic role in the Syrian conflict, or it will continue stewing in its own hypocrisy.

Eleven years into the Syrian conflict, more than half a million Syrians have been killed, 12 million displaced, and 2 million permanently injured.⁴ While the Syrian military fought armed rebels, the government threw hundreds of thousands of civilians into detention centers to be tortured.⁵ An estimated 128,000 never returned. According to the UN, “women and girls have been raped and sexually assaulted in at least 20 military and political branches, and men and boys in 15 of those.”⁶ Detention conditions are so extreme that they amount to extermination.⁷ Cells lack toilets and adequate

food, medicine is withheld, and injuries are often left untreated.⁸ These realities amount to crimes against humanity and are direct violations of the UN Convention Against Torture which specifies that “a state of war or a threat of war, internal political instability or any other public emergency” cannot be invoked as a justification of torture.

For too long, the culprits have hidden in the shadows, protected by their president, Bashar Al-Assad. Few have left the country, and even fewer have been caught. But a landmark German case may turn the tide.⁹ In February, under universal jurisdiction, a German court convicted a former member of Syrian President Bashar Assad’s secret police of facilitating the torture of political dissidents in a detention center known as Al-Khatib.¹⁰ Witness statements further exposed the Syrian government’s explicit role in civilian torture and murder—a role the Assad regime continues to vehemently deny.

The United States knows this. Yet, the government continues to turn a blind eye, citing low payoff and mission creep. They’re not wrong. The situation in Syria has metastasized past the point of productive U.S. intervention. Policymakers missed low-risk opportunities to check the growth of extremist groups at the beginning of the conflict.¹¹ But these failures cannot translate to a complete lack of action. The United States cannot be a sitting duck on the Syria file when its Secretary of State is traveling the world preaching about the importance of human rights.

Critics will, of course, argue that a continued presence in Syria would only anger Russia and risk a major war.¹² These risks, however, should not deter policymakers from creating a more coherent policy framework. The United Nations and the European Union have outlined a Syrian-led and Syrian-owned political transition to a more inclusive government as a tentative path to stability.¹³ However, with support from Iran and Russia, Assad sees no reason to budge. The U.S. must appoint a new special envoy to Syria and play a greater diplomatic role in peace processes. Federal prosecutors should note Germany’s success in prosecuting war criminals under universal jurisdiction and encourage Turkey to do the same. As the country with the largest Syrian refugee population, it is in a unique position to prosecute a substantial number of known ex-officials.¹⁴ Lastly, while the U.S. continues its military presence in northeast Syria, its goals in the region remain vague. They should be translated into concrete action plans. The U.S. should leverage stabilization funding to coordinate efforts with Kurdish-led authorities to de-escalate violence and build protections for civilians against arbitrary arrest and subsequent torture.

The Syrian government believes they won, that they tortured and killed their citizens—and got away with it. The U.S. must prove them wrong.

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Press Freedom Backslides in Jordan Following the Pandemic

Josephine Ness

I need to feed my family, what should I do now? Should I resort to stealing or selling drugs? Should we start begging on the streets?" questioned a man on Jordanian television. In April 2020, at the start of the pandemic, Roya TV in Jordan aired a news segment of this man accompanied by a crowd of Jordanian workers complaining about their inability to work due to the government's Covid-19 lockdown.¹ Shortly after it aired, the military arrested the news director, Mohamad al-Khalidi, and the general manager and owner of the television station, Fares Sayegh. The state ordered that they be detained for 14 days. This detainment of influential figures in the press in combination with other attacks on the media reflects the degradation of press freedoms in Jordan. The Jordanian government took advantage of the pandemic, leveraging the panic of the situation to set a

dangerous precedent on media censorship and criticism of the government.

As the Covid-19 situation in Jordan escalated in the spring of 2020, its government imposed stringent restrictions on free speech and the press. The pandemic situation in Jordan proved to be one of the worst in the Middle East, causing panic among the public and inciting a desire in the government to take concrete action. In response, the government published Defense Order No. 8 in late April 2020, which criminalized publishing and circulating news on any platform that could create a panic regarding the pandemic. Under this legislation, the Jordanian government granted officials the power to fine and imprison people for up to three years.

Then-Prime Minister Omar

Razzaz's reassured the public that the order "would be applied in the narrowest limits," but this quickly proved to be an empty promise. The implementation of Defense Order No. 8 was followed by a series of arrests of journalists and workers in the media.² Similar to the case of al-Khalidi and Sayegh, Bangladeshi journalist Selim Akash was arrested in Jordan after publishing a story on his personal Facebook page detailing the struggle Bangladeshi migrants faced as they financially supported their families during the Covid-19 lockdown.³ According to a relative of Akash, "police just told him that he was detained for posting news on Facebook." He was held in prison from April to at least December. Akash's detainment contradicted the Prime Minister's promise of narrow implementation of the order, and the lack of

"insulting the head of a foreign state," and publicly criticizing electoral processes (advoc). Additionally, following the attempted coup linked to Prince Hamzah, a two-day internet blackout affected parts of Amman, Jordan. Furthermore, a general prosecutor issued a gag order banning media outlets from publishing information related to the coup plot, preventing the spread of information about this consequential political event.⁵

According to The International Press Institute Executive Board Vice-Chair Daoud Kuttab, "The frequent detention of journalists undermines the democratic reforms that the Jordanian government had promised." Without concrete actions to protect press freedom, Jordan risks backsliding into a society of restricted information and silenced government opposition. Under Article 19

explanation by the government set an adverse precedent on what was considered acceptable in regards to the treatment of journalists and media users in Jordan.

Increased economic and political turmoil following the start of the Covid-19 pandemic caused considerable backsliding in regards to the rights of journalists and press freedom that now extends past Covid-19 related news and infringes on the rights of the media in general. Of the six Jordanian journalists interviewed by the Human Rights Watch, all reported experiencing increased restrictions on journalistic freedom in the last two years. These restrictions include gag orders, harassment by authorities, and withholding of reporting permits. A 2018 survey found that 92 percent of journalists in Jordan practice self-censorship, and a report in 2020 found that these rates increased as a result of the Defense Law's implementation.⁴ Without journalists openly publishing stories and opinions, diversity in the media diminishes and the flow of information is disrupted.

While Jordan is relatively lenient with the free press compared to its neighbors Saudi Arabia and Egypt, Jordan's censorship practices have become increasingly similar to those of the latter two countries in recent years—not only concerning the pandemic, but also in more political spheres. The Jordanian government arrested journalists for reporting teachers' protests,

of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, which Jordan acceded to in 1975, "everyone is entitled to seek, receive, and impart information and ideas of all kinds." In order to improve the situation of the free press in the country, the Interior Minister of Jordan must order government agencies to halt the arrests and harassment of journalists. The Attorney General's Office must also implement more specific guidelines as to what is allowed in gag orders to ensure that these orders are to protect investigations rather than silence the press.

While censorship is a significant issue in itself, the situation in Jordan reflects a more widespread and troublesome phenomenon: the tendency of government officials to take advantage of catastrophic situations in order to solidify their power and quiet their opposition. The Jordanian government exploited the panic surrounding the pandemic and used it as an excuse to censor the media not only on pandemic-related issues but also issues that portray the government in a negative light. Jordan must take decisive action now to prevent government-sponsored censorship from escalating and crumbling the country's free press beyond repair.

A new quest for hope two years after HIRAK

Mia Whitfield



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Every night in Algeria, dozens of hopeful migrants board illegal boats and embark on a dangerous journey across the Mediterranean to Spain. Slicing through black, choppy waters in the middle of the night, these boats carry Algerian families and youth who are prepared to die at sea, desperate for an opportunity for a better life. And many have died on this journey. In a single weekend in September 2020, 80 boats disembarked around 1,500 Algerian *harraga*, or “burners”—a term referring to migrants who burn their identity papers upon arrival to a new country in order to avoid repatriation. Four of the boats that departed that weekend never made it to the coast of Spain. These boats, wrecked not far from their destination, took 50 hopeful *harragas* down with them, with others still missing.¹ In 2020 alone, more than 8,000 interceptions and rescues were made by the Algerian coast guard. This figure does not consider the number of Algerians who successfully made it to the Spanish coast or those who did not make it at all. The human rights situation in Algeria is grim and Algerians, desperate for a better life, are willing to risk everything—their past, their families, and their own lives—to have a chance at bettering their fate in a future devoid of oppression and fear. To escape this vicious cycle, it is necessary that the Algerian government put an end to its abuses and start listening to the people. In order for this to happen, international and domestic organizations must continue to put pressure on the government to cease quashing

dissent and criminalizing movements for change as it has been doing.

Algerians are attempting the deadly voyage across the Mediterranean with increasing frequency. Many like Khaled Dih, who departed for Almeria, Spain on his 21st birthday, describe Algeria as a place of despair: “I’d rather die than stay in Algeria. There is nothing here, no work in the *bled* [old country].” The situation was not always so desperate. At one point, Algerians found hope through the 2019 Hirak movement, which was a popular anti-government uprising opposing corruption and demanding democratic practices and respect for fundamental civil liberties. This movement offered an abundance of hope in this despair, but that momentum has dissipated due to Algeria’s increasingly oppressive regime and the pandemic which dealt a crippling blow to the economy and any ongoing social movements. The government’s attack on human rights by its suppression of freedoms of expression, assembly, association, as well as the blatant ignorance of gender inequality in the country, among many other offenses, have fostered an environment of despair and hopelessness within Algeria. As a result, many are willing to risk an unforgiving voyage across the sea. These feelings of despair are perpetuated by the regime’s blatant hostility towards any government opposition or open advocacy for change within Algeria. With the recent court decision to dissolve the Rassemblement Action Jeunesse (RAJ) (Youth Action Rally in English), which has existed since 1992 and was at the forefront of the Hirak movement, Algeria has truly reached a new low point in the fight for human rights.

Said Salhi, Vice President of the Algerian League for the Defense of Human Rights, remarked that the RAJ was an actor of cohesion within the civil society during the Hirak movement. Even more, it was “a hope for Algerian youth,” and provided an alternative to those who “seek a suicidal path by crossing the sea.”² The

national association has worked to mobilize young people and encourage social, cultural, and civic activities and respect for human rights, promote open and free expression, and create bridges of solidarity for peace and tolerance. They have also attempted to move young Algerians away from ideas of the inevitability of unemployment and despair, exclusion, and illusory dreams for almost 30 years.³ Most importantly, it created hope in a nation where many were taking to the Mediterranean. The October 13, 2021 administrative court decision in Algiers to dissolve RAJ was unprecedented but not completely surprising in the current context of extreme repression against those who have or had any association with the Hirak movement.

Since the beginning of the Hirak protests, 11 members of RAJ were arrested and prosecuted.⁴ As of September of 2021, over 200 Algerians were detained and more than 2000 were prosecuted for their participation in Hirak. Countless activists, professors, students, journalists, and political party members have been arrested for expressing critical viewpoints or for participating in the protests. Many journalists have been sentenced to years in prison for providing news coverage of the Hirak protests. 20 peaceful women’s rights protesters were arrested in Oran last October for denouncing gender-based violence in Algeria following the rape and murder of a 19 year-old girl. Algerian authorities also filed a formal judiciary complaint in April and May this year demanding the dissolution of the Union for Change and Progress (UCP), a major political party that supported Hirak. There is a recurring pattern within Algeria of the government targeting independent organizations and voices for change. The fact that change is so desperately needed in Algeria (in terms of the economy, addressing poverty, social/gender problems, and much more) but taking steps to enact said change is being criminalized by the government is one reason so many are ready to pack up their lives and leave.

The Algerian government’s forceful dissolution of the RAJ and others is a shocking new low for freedom of association in Algeria. In the case of RAJ especially, targeting a pro-democracy, pro-human rights youth organization is indicative of Algerian authorities’ readiness to silence the independent and peaceful voices of the younger generation. “Young people,” according to Said Salhi, “are slipping back into disillusionment and despair after a moment of hope sparked by Hirak.” This has led to such desperate voyages across the Mediterranean Sea. And the situation continues to worsen. Over the summer, the president of Algeria, Abdelmadjid Tebboune, revised the Penal Code to expand the definition of terrorism to facilitate further criminalisation of peaceful dissent. The new revisions are incredibly broad and imprecise and can lead to potential prosecution of virtually any voice of government opposition.

Hope inspired by the Hirak movement has dissolved into a discouraging reality characterized by a repressive and essentially authoritarian regime, a regime that has driven Algerians to take on the identity of a *harraga* and leave their home and history. The Algerian authorities’ harsh actions and criminalization of peaceful dissent, combined with its ignorance of desperately necessary political and economic reforms, have launched the country into a catastrophe of multiple dimensions with no resolution yet in sight. The dissolution of the RAJ is just one more dimension that has been put into the spotlight by multiple human rights NGOs. Algerians deserve freedom from the criminalization of peaceful assembly and expression. Looking forward, it is likely too late and not entirely safe for Algerians to openly advocate for the ‘radical’ changes that Hirak demanded, but we can hope that reforms can be made gradually, with persistent external advocacy by the international community (and, to a limited extent, internal advocacy) to rebuild and revitalise the political institutions of Algeria.

“ Hope inspired by the Hirak movement has dissolved into a discouraging reality characterized by a repressive and essentially authoritarian regime... ”

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Hydropower and hyperinflation:

The case for renewable energy amidst Lebanon's liquidity crisis

Sophie Clark

On October 9, 2021, Lebanon was plunged into darkness as the national energy grid became the next victim of the country's liquidity crisis. The total outage began shortly after one of the two main plants—the Zahrani power station—ran out of fuel; the other main plant—the Deir Ammar station—had stopped running the day prior.¹ These fuel shortages, however, were not due to a lack of natural resources, but rather the ongoing financial crisis faced by the state. The liquidity crisis began in August 2019 when the black market exchange rate of the Lebanese pound (LPB) began to rapidly diverge from the official exchange rate.² By the end of the year, Lebanon's GDP had dropped 11 billion USD.³ This period of rapid hyperinflation led to a series of protests and the ultimate resignation of Prime Minister Saad Hariri and his administration.⁴ The country quickly spiraled into a full-blown economic crisis categorized as one of the world's three worst over the past 150 years.⁵

While the outage on October 9 only lasted 24 hours, it signalled a much larger and more worrisome trend facing the country: the collapse of the national grid. Of the industries hit hardest by the economic downturn, the energy sector is one of the most critical. Since the start of the crisis, the country has faced extreme

fuel shortages. In an effort to abate the issue, the government turned to fuel subsidies to keep the market rate at the official exchange rate. Soon, the value of the pound fell by 90 percent, causing the pegged rate to be replaced by an informal rate, and by September 2021, the central bank decided to end the subsidies, which totaled 3 billion USD annually. Almost immediately, the price of petrol hiked by nearly 38 percent. Over the next month, Lebanon would rapidly lose its ability to power the grid—a loss it could not afford. To prevent a total collapse of its grid as well as begin to deal with its economic woes, Lebanon needs to bolster its renewable energy infrastructure, focusing specifically on solar, wind, and hydropower.

The global transition to renewable energy is inevitable as fossil fuel supplies run barren and climate change reaches a critical point. For Lebanon, however, the need is more urgent. Electricity is now a scarce commodity, and the grid faces chronic power cuts of up to 20 hours per day. A major proportion of the country's citizens are now forced to utilize personal generators to power their homes and businesses.⁶ With rising fuel prices and increasingly long blackouts, this practice

is proving to be unsustainable. Fortunately for Lebanon, it is a prime candidate for near-total renewable energy. With its abundance of natural resources, wind energy potential, and average 300 days of sunlight per year, Lebanon is in a highly favorable position to initiate a transition to renewables. In fact, prior to the civil war, 75 percent of the country's power was hydropower, although that number had dropped to just 6.1 percent by 2010 due to increased political and economic interest—on behalf of the government—in oil markets. Outside the public sector, demand for renewable energy has risen massively over the past year as wealthy Lebanese have moved to install solar power units—a rise in demand so large the stock of such units disappeared from Lebanese markets for a month.⁷ The interest in renewable energy is salient within the country—at least on the constituent end as renewable technology becomes the only accessible and reliable form of power. The major challenge lies at the top level with government corruption, financial incentive, and political interests.

Past administrations have been reluctant to implement renewable energy systems, largely due to collusion with fossil fuel moguls. But, despite Lebanon's political history,

the current administration is showing promise for sustainable development. President Michael Aoun has shown support for sustainable energy development, and in a statement released by the Minister of Energy Dr. Walid Fayad at the High-Level Dialogue on Energy, the administration made clear that "it is unquestionable that sustainable energy is the main milestone to build a reliable and prosperous energy sector in Lebanon."⁸ This signals immense progress in the political atmosphere of the country and demonstrates that development may not face the political challenges it has in the past.

Fayad continued in his statement that "sustainable energy is going to be one key aspect to get out of this crisis," stating that the administration has set a goal to have renewable energy constitute 30% of Lebanon's electricity consumption by 2030 by utilizing around 4,000 MW of energy from solar farms and 1,000 MW from wind farms. However, the development should not end there. Lebanon's National Renewable Energy Action Plan (NREAP) found that revitalizing the country's existing hydroelectric infrastructure would increase the country's annual generation by up to 1000 GWh, with new plants bringing in an additional 368 MW.⁹ This would substantially increase

grid self-sufficiency and stability. Looking back to the country's historical success with hydropower specifically, this is a critical opportunity for which the costs would be far lower than the benefits. The most recent NREAP estimated the cost of these developments to be around 1.7 billion USD—just over half the cost of the annual fuel subsidies implemented by the Lebanese government—which demonstrates the

financial feasibility of such an undertaking.

Given its history in renewable energy, the current state of its economy, and its rapidly collapsing energy sector, there is a very narrow path to energy stability for Lebanon. By modernizing its grid through the development of renewable energy, Lebanon can prevent the total collapse of its grid and energy sector. In doing so,

millions of Lebanese would have access to the power necessary to sustain quality of life, not to mention run businesses, attend school, and carry out other necessary activities that require a stable supply of electricity. In its current state, the grid cannot be sustained, and with the economy still in a state of collapse, there is little chance the fuel market will see major improvements at any time

in the near future. Now, the only path out of darkness for Lebanon is renewable energy development.

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Holding the U.S. Accountable for Protecting Women's Rights as the Taliban Regain Control of Afghanistan

Anna Tuohey



The controversial withdrawal of U.S. troops from Afghanistan was marked by devastating images of Afghan citizens clinging to planes on the Kabul Airport tarmac, desperate to flee the country and impending Taliban rule. In the initial months of Taliban control, the group has repeatedly insisted that their emerging governance will not be the same highly oppressive regime that ruled two decades prior.¹ In the first Taliban press conference following U.S. withdrawal, spokesperson Mujahid addressed the international community, stating, "if they have concerns, we would like to assure them that there's not going to be any discrimination against women, but of course within the frameworks that we have. Our women are Muslim. They will also be happy to be living within our frameworks of Sharia." However, such claims that women would be allowed to work and attend school as long as it was within Sharia law did little to quell the sense of uncertainty felt by both international onlookers and Afghan citizens, who now wait apprehensively as the Taliban begin to establish their government.

While the Taliban define their ideology a based in Sharia law, this interpretation is exceptionally strict, and is not a reflection of widely held Muslim beliefs. Rather, the group primarily using the Muslim religion as a false source of legitimacy rather than reflecting the true faith. This ideology is particularly harsh on women, expecting them to remain in their homes while severely limiting education, employment,

and legal freedoms. For Afghan women, the expansion of Taliban power threatens their freedom and future. As a self proclaimed beacon of democracy and human rights, the U.S. must place a central emphasis on upholding the rights to health, education, and legal protections of women as it begins to develop foreign policy strategy regarding the emerging Taliban government. Prior to the U.S. invasion of Afghanistan in 2001, the Taliban ruled for five years, during which time they imposed their rigid interpretation of Sharia law that regulated most aspects of daily life. Some of the heaviest restrictions fell upon women, with limitations on education, work, legal protections, healthcare access, and societal participation. Under Taliban rule, women could not leave their homes without being accompanied by a male relative, had little to no employment opportunities, and experienced extremely low literacy and education rates. During the two decades of U.S. occupation, the country made marginal yet important advancements in women's rights. The interim government adopted the Elimination of Violence Against Women Act in 2009, in an attempt to advance legal protections for women. Such measures especially pertained to punishing perpetrators of domestic violence, which is estimated to affect more than 80 percent of Afghan women at some point in their lifetime.² Other notable improvements included female enrollment in secondary education, which grew from 6 percent in 2003 to 9 percent in 2017, and female life expectancy, which increased

a remarkable 10 years from 56 to 66 across the same time period.³

The Taliban's actions during their first few months back in power suggest this promise of better embracing modernity will be broken. As feared, the Taliban have already instructed many female employees to stay home from work, disrupted girls' education, and closed shelters for domestic violence victims. Afghan women's activists worry that such closures are only the beginning; Sunita Viswanath, co-founder of Women for Afghan Women, laments "our shelters, our women's protection centers, are gone. It is highly unlikely that most of the work we do for women, we will be able to do as we have done it." With the Taliban back in power, Afghan women--especially those from more urban communities who have experienced the greatest expansion of personal freedoms--apprehensively watch as the Taliban's actions increasingly suggest a reversion back to the restrictions of the old regime.

Afghanistan is now in the midst of a worsening human rights crisis, which has affected women in particular. As an extremely poor country, Afghanistan relies heavily on foreign aid, much of which has been frozen or

restricted following the Taliban takeover. The Afghan people are already suffering in the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic and recent famine, with burdens such as family responsibilities, and providing food falling especially on women and girls, meaning that the lack of aid will exacerbate issues affecting the most vulnerable citizens. Therefore, such sanctions relief will be crucial to the Taliban's establishment of political, economic, and social stability. Additionally, the Taliban are likely to face greater pushback from the Afghan people as they did during their initial time in power, as a large portion of the female population has pursued an education and employment, and has grown accustomed to expanded freedoms.² Therefore, the group has a greater incentive to be responsive to the demands of the international community, especially when it comes to women's rights which can be an example demonstrating that they are not the same oppressive regime as that which made them an international pariah in the late 1990s.

Just as the Biden administration's decision to withdraw American troops this past August was controversial, so too will be their next step: the question of if and how to establish a diplomatic relationship with the Taliban. As

is often the case regarding U.S. foreign policy in the Middle East, there is no clear best course of action. However, the Taliban are not going anywhere. If Biden is to fulfill his promise "that human rights will be the center of our foreign policy," the U.S. must demonstrate this commitment to human rights by demanding that Taliban leadership include protections for women, as well as empowering individual Afghan women and women's advocacy organizations so that they may continue to operate. Additionally, the U.S. must supply assets and aid that will provide much needed help to the Afghan people who feel betrayed by the withdrawal of American troops. The U.S. has a responsibility to continue to promote the rights of the Afghan people, and can use conditional aid to insist on protections for the women and girls they left behind.

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Sticks and Stones

Quentin Powers

As uproar arises over a recent remark, we take a look back at the tempestuous relationship between Saudi Arabia and Lebanon.

Sectarian cleavages have defined much of post-colonial Lebanon's history. After acting as a major driving force of the bloody civil war that raged from 1975 to 1990, the near-even split between Shiites (28 percent of the country) and Sunnis (31 percent) has consistently dominated issues of power-sharing and political positioning within the country.¹ Today, however, the fighting is tactical rather than violent; it is waged in the government buildings of Beirut rather than the capital's streets. Perhaps more crucially, the sectarian divide is characterized by the benefactor for each side: Saudi

Arabia for the Sunnis and Iran for the Shiites. Indeed, Lebanon's religiously polarized society has become the perfect proxy arena for Saudi Arabia and Iran's fight to become the paramount power of the Middle East.

At the crux of the issue, Saudi Arabia, once Lebanon's chief benefactor, has become incensed at the increasing power of the Iranian-backed Shiite militia-turned-political party Hezbollah. Over the past decade or so, this has led to less economic investment in the country from Riyadh; donor conferences in 2001 and 2002 were marked by a \$700 million

general aid pledge, and Saudi investors were incredibly active in boosting the Lebanese tourism sector in the years following the war.^{2,3} Saudi spending decreased in 2005 with the assassination of former Prime Minister Rafic Hariri and has decreased even more drastically since the 2016 election of President Michel Aoun, who shares close political ties with Hezbollah; Aoun's Free Patriotic Movement is a member of the March 8 Alliance along with the Shiite party. More recently, in response to recent remarks (more on those in a bit), the Saudis and their friendly Gulf neighbors—the Bahrainis and Emiratis—have all

recalled their ambassadors to Beirut and expelled Lebanese ambassadors from their respective capitals in a display of political gamesmanship.⁴ More alarmingly for Lebanon, the Saudis instituted a total ban of Lebanese imports, depriving the already-weakened Lebanese economy of access to the Arab world's largest market. Lebanon has arrived at a crossroads: the country risks isolating itself from the Gulf at a time when its economic might is desperately needed, but turning heavily towards Tehran would risk Lebanon's alienation from the West. At the same time, bowing to Saudi demands and reducing

the influence of Hezbollah in the country would represent a severe blow to Lebanese autonomy and risk a spike in violence. Lebanese autonomy is rather fragile in the context of Saudi protectionism; after all, it was just over four years ago that the Saudis detained then-Lebanese Prime Minister Saad Hariri in Riyadh and forced him to tender his resignation.

The impetus behind the latest bit of Saudi diplomatic and economic vitriol comes from a rather surprising source: a remark from a game show host. To be more exact, Mr. George Kordahi is an ex-game show host, yet still not the usual type of luminary whose words ignite a diplomatic conflict. Kordahi, a member of the Lebanese cabinet and the Minister of Information, recently commented offhandedly on the proxy war where the Saudi-Iranian Cold War has turned hot: Yemen. Kordahi claimed that the Houthi rebels, backed by Tehran, were merely "defending themselves against an external aggression" and that continued Saudi involvement in opposing the rebels is "futile."⁵ Such an innocent remark from a rather minor minister would rarely ruffle feathers, but provided the perfect pretext for Saudi anger over the increased presence of Hezbollah. To Saudi Arabia,

Kordahi's remarks represent a growing trend in Beirut to take political positions which oppose the Saudi government's geopolitical goals, all due to the increased influence of Hezbollah.

Hezbollah emerged in the midst of the Lebanese Civil War as an offshoot of the nascent Islamic Republic of Iran's goals to spread Islamic revolution.⁶ The war proved to be a fertile ground for the growth of a militant Islamic group, but in a strange twist of fate, the group pirouetted from ragtag militia into salient political party after the war. The group exists in a gray area; it is regarded by much of the West as a terrorist group with a political arm, but is backed by its Shiite proponents as a legitimate political party with a small militant force. The party has been heavily implicated in the 2005 assassination of Hariri, a staunch Saudi ally whose death dealt a heavy blow to Riyadh's influence in Lebanon. Still, roughly 35 years since its founding, Hezbollah holds 13 seats in Lebanon's parliament, good enough for just over 10 percent of the representatives in the body. These are democratically elected seats—Hezbollah holds support from a large portion of the Lebanese public, especially

in the heavily-Shiite south of the country, and garnered just under 300,000 votes in the most recent parliamentary elections in 2018.⁷ Moreover, Hezbollah enjoys a 15 year-old alliance with Aoun, which predates his time in power and has cemented its position as a major power broker in Lebanese politics. The situation is complicated: Saudi Arabia wants Iran out of Lebanese politics, which means it wants Hezbollah out of Lebanese politics. There is no chance of a decoupling between Hezbollah and Iran; the party exists because of Tehran and the two will forever be heavily intertwined. Yet, because the party has been voted into office by the people, Saudi demands represent an external threat to the sanctity of Lebanon's democratic process.

Lebanese politicians have a choice to make—to kowtow to Riyadh would result in a great loss of autonomy. Saudi economic assistance would return, but with stipulations that would interfere with

Lebanon's already fragile democracy. To fall further into the clutches of Tehran, on the other hand, runs the risk of potential isolation from the West during a time where the country is in no position to lose allies. Lebanon is truly stuck between a rock and a hard place and, for the time being, Lebanese politicians would do well to play off both sides as much as they can in order to assert their independence. Over time, though, the Saudi vice, expecting Lebanese capitulation, will squeeze tighter and tighter, forcing Lebanon to come to a final decision over who it wants as its ally. As a pawn in the Saudi-Iranian game of chess, Lebanon appears destined to follow the way of the pawn—fought over until won, then haphazardly forgotten.

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⁶Norton, Richard Augustus, *Hezbollah: A Short History*; Ch. 2 (Princeton Univ. Press: Princeton, 2009), <https://ebookcentral-proquest-com.proxy.lib.umich.edu/lib/umichigan/reader.action?docID=457869>

⁷Kenner, David, "The Secret to Hezbollah's Electoral Success." *The Atlantic*, 7 May 2018, <https://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2018/05/lebanon-election-hezbollah-sunni-shia/559772/>

CROSS- REGIONAL.

The effects of colonialism are harmful, pervasive, and long-lasting. This past year, individual communities and the world alike have begun to do the work of reckoning with colonialism. Whether this reckoning stems from better understanding a country's history as a colonizing power, or from an acknowledgement of a nation's past as a colony under siege, open dialogue about these consequences is pivotal in holding powerful parties accountable for their actions. Across the board, we have risen to disavow societal glorification of colonizers and rewrite colonial history through the lens of the colonized. Our Middle East group analyzes how British colonization of Iraq laid the foundation for the U.S. military intervention and subsequent destruction of Iraqi civil society. Writers for our Americas region dive into indigenous movements in South America undergoing "symbolic trials of the past" through statue deconstruction. The Africa team examines how great powers in Europe accept responsibility for atrocities perpetrated under colonial rule. Analysts for our Europe section tackle African art repatriation. And lastly, the Asia-Pacific region writes about cricket as both a remnant of colonialism and a mechanism to bring former colonies together. There is still plenty of work the global community must do to address long-lasting colonial structures. But this year's reckoning is a step forward in acknowledging the flaws of our past, and re-shaping our reality for the future.

Colonial Legacies in Iraq: How the British Occupation Paved the Way for Western Intervention

The West's colonial history in the Middle East is extensive and devastating, but few countries have suffered under Western hegemonic powers like Iraq. In 1920, Britain seized Iraq from the Ottomans and established a Hashemite monarchy. The Sykes-Picot agreement of 1916 left Iraqis particularly sensitive towards foreign interference, as the country's post-Ottoman fate had been decided with no Iraqi representation. Subsequent British rule after the agreement, as well as the presence of a heavily British-backed Iraqi monarchy following independence in 1932, only served to sharpen this sensitivity. Iraq was left divided along sectarian lines and left vulnerable to in-fighting and exploitation by Western powers who primarily targeted Iraqi oil reserves.¹ Great Britain's colonization of Iraq left the country in a vulnerable state that Western powers argued warranted intervention.

Ethnocentrism and a perceived European superiority laid the framework for the British occupation. These beliefs underwrote continuous efforts to replace ancient traditions and structures—both cultural and political. The predominant attitude among British colonial rulers was of a need for development among a population of “noble savages.”² Iraqi civil society, or a perceived lack thereof, was thereby labeled as inferior to European standards and in need of repair. The Global North adopted a pseudo-development

discourse in Iraq with a heavy emphasis on militarization and the implementation of Western structures to increase the validity of Iraqi governance. This emphasis on rebuilding infrastructure and removing traditions laid the framework for European involvement and eventual U.S. intervention in Iraq. The subsequent 1958 overthrow of the monarchy cemented the Iraqi anti-imperialist attitudes that Saddam Hussein would successfully exploit over his decades in power. Thus, while some Iraqis initially welcomed the toppling of the despotic Hussein, they were increasingly irked by the continued unilateral American military presence after his death. The histories of interventionism and adverse Western involvement have fostered anti-Western sentiments and have crippled the political structures and organization of the Iraqi state. As modern military day interventionism throughout Iraq, and the Middle East, persists, the Iraqi population cannot help but feel the echoes of British imperialism. The country faces a troubling path of negotiating their standing in a world whose dominant regimes have never been friendly. In turn, it also forces the world to consider the ways in which hostile attitudes of colonialism and orientalism carry forth under the guise of a different name: American hegemonic interventionism.



When it comes to reckoning with atrocities, no nation is perfect. But some aren't even trying.



From 1904 to 1908, Germany carried out a genocide that claimed the lives of 80,000 members of the Herero and Nama peoples. The genocide—which occurred in what is now Namibia—went unacknowledged for decades, with repeated German denials. The subsequent lack of accountability left much of the world in the dark, unaware that the systematic killing ever occurred. However, in May 2021, Germany formally accepted responsibility when it

issued an apology and pledged \$1.35 billion to development and reconciliation efforts in Namibia.¹ While belated, Germany's acknowledgement of the Herero and Nama Genocide is an important—albeit incomplete—step in the right direction for a colonial power attempting to right the wrongs of the past. It is time for other European colonial powers to follow suit and acknowledge their roles in the decimation of the African continent through

colonial exploitation and genocide.

Although Germany's apology represents a genuine attempt to make amends, it is not without critique. This apology was Germany's second attempt at acknowledging the genocide: Germany's development minister delivered a more tepid apology back in 2004, which was widely criticized as insufficient. Moreover, others have critiqued the apology by comparing it to Germany's much more comprehensive and far-reaching response to the Holocaust, which they cite as the model response for genocides. Moreover, Namibian leaders stated that the statement felt rushed and ingenuine; its delivery came as a surprise and “everyone, including the Namibian government, was caught off guard.”² At the time Germany delivered its official apology, leaders representing the affected Namibian groups were reportedly still in discussions with the German government, which decided to go ahead with the decision after French President Emmanuel Macron spoke about his country's role in the Rwandan Genocide.

While there are certainly valid criticisms of Germany's response, it is an apology, which is more than other European colonizing powers have provided. The French

government still refuses to apologize for its colonial actions in Algeria and the murder of 200,000 to 250,000 Algerian civilians between 1954 to 1962.³ When discussing the topic, French President Emmanuel Macron was blunt: “there will be no repentance, there will be no apologies.” Similarly, the United Kingdom has never apologized for its conduct in the Boer War, which represented the first widespread use of concentration camps, within which over 26,000 Boer women and children and 20,000 African civilians died.⁴ While Queen Elizabeth II said the war was a “tragic chapter” in Britain's history, she did not actually apologize for her country's actions. As such, Germany's apology should serve as an impetus for other colonizers to also reflect critically on their roles in various historical atrocities.

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²Fattah, H. M., & Caso, F. (2009). *A brief history of Iraq*. New York: Facts On File

¹Gleckman-Krut, Miriam, and Hambira, Kavena. “Germany Apologized for a Genocide. It’s Nowhere Near Enough,” *The New York Times*, July 8, 2021.

²“Viewpoint: Why Germany's Namibia genocide apology is not enough,” *BBC*, June 1, 2021.

³“Ali Boumendjel: France admits ‘torture and murder’ of Algerian nationalist,” *BBC*, March 3, 2021.

⁴“Queen's regret over Boer War,” *BBC*, November 10, 1999.

The Looter's Dilemma



The legacy of European colonization is not only characterized by what was left behind, but also what was taken away. Colonial powers such as Britain, France, Belgium, and Germany robbed colonies of their culture by stealing artwork and precious artifacts from the areas they ruled, bringing them back to their home countries and placing them on display in their museums. One example are the Benin Bronzes, a collection of metal plaques created in what is now Nigeria, which were stolen in an 1897 punitive expedition by the British. Thousands of miles away from their place of origin, these pieces are now on display in the British Museum in London.¹ Indeed, the list of artifacts in British hands and the countries that demand them back is long, from the marbles claimed by Greece to the moai from Easter Island to the famous 105-carat "Koh-i-Noor" diamond from India that once adorned Queen Victoria's brooch.

Museums across Europe are now reckoning with demands to return artifacts to their rightful owners. And those who have fought for this restitution for decades are starting to see results. Germany recently returned the Benin Bronzes to Nigeria.² Early in October, French President Emmanuel Macron announced his country would return 26 prized art pieces—the "Abomey Treasures" which feature royal thrones, ceremonial altars, and statues—to Benin. "We need to be honest

with ourselves," Macron said.³ "There was colonial pillage, it's absolutely true." Yet other former colonies are having more difficulty repatriating prized pieces of their culture, particularly when Britain is the colonizer in question. The government claims it is constrained by the British Museums Act of 1963 which forbids removing artifacts from national museums, but time will tell if rising pressure overcomes this legal hurdle.

India, for instance, has struggled for decades to recover some of the countless items looted during the British Raj. Ironically, even the English word "loot" itself was taken from India by way of the Hindi language. In this way and many others, the implications of colonialism—and Europe's role in it—are still playing out to this day.

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²Treisman, Rachel. "Germany will Repatriate Benin Bronzes, Plundered from Africa in the 19th Century," NPR, Apr. 30, 2021, <https://www.npr.org/2021/04/30/992496264/germany-will-repatriate-benin-bronzes-plu>

³ Charlton, Angela "Our imagination was violated": France to return African art," Associated Press, October 8, 2021, <https://apnews.com/article/emmanuel-macron-benin-africa-europe-france-7a285a706448503697a736e04a14022d>.

Destroy a Statue, Reclaim a Legacy

In October 2020, Mexico City's statue of Columbus was dismantled, allegedly for restoration, though many believe it was in preparation for Columbus Day protests. The pedestal stood empty for over a year, until on October 14, 2021, when Mayor Claudia Sheinbaum announced its replacement by a statue of an indigenous woman. The move was framed as an effort to denounce colonial legacies and recognize the fight of indigenous peoples in Mexico, particularly women, who have dealt with years of racial and gender-based discrimination.

In June 2021, the discovery of unmarked graves of indigenous children in former Canadian Catholic boarding schools shocked the world. The horrific discovery led to nationwide calls to reassess Canada's colonial legacy. It is estimated that at least 150,000¹ children were taken away from their families and forced to assimilate into Canadian society. Tensions culminated when protesters toppled statues of Queen Victoria and Elizabeth in Canada amid the growing outrage.² On the other tip of the continent, Chilean Mapuche leaders and Bolivian Aymara activists have expressed their solidarity with the indigenous nations of Canada. Indigenous solidarity across the Americas, from Chile to Canada to Martinique to the West Indies, has become a defining feature of recent reckonings with colonialism.

Although decolonial movements in the United States and Canada are important in acknowledging legacies of indigenous oppression, a larger proportion of indigenous people lives in Latin America, and lack of a ruling colonial power, making reckoning with colonialism in Latin America a more central and powerful discussion.³

Monuments and memorials define how future generations reflect on history. By replacing these physical displays of colonial abuse, countries are beginning to reclaim their roles as active participants in their own histories. Nonetheless, critics assert that the replacement of a statue fails to substantively advance rights of indigenous peoples and women or address centuries of colonial violence. Fatima Gamboa, a lawyer with the Indigenous Lawyer Network in Mexico, voices similar concern regarding female statues that have been erected to honor women: "They are focusing on the statue, without focusing on the rights of women who are alive." While removing statues may not materially improve indigenous lives, the act itself serves as a "symbolic trial" of the past.⁴ By deconstructing statues that memorialize imperial histories, indigenous groups symbolically reclaim urban spaces and reject oppression and colonialism.



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⁴Velandia, Sabrina. "Which colonial statues are being torn down in Latin America?" Global Voices, January 23, 2021 <https://globalvoices.org/2021/01/23/which-are-the-colonial-statues-torn-down-in-latina-america/>

Cricket Diplomacy Has Become the Medium for Navigating India & Pakistan's Complex Relationship

Britain's colonial influence on Pakistan and India has long shaped the social tensions, geopolitics, and economy of South Asia. Before the 1947 Partition, both countries were one India under the rule of the British Empire.¹ After decades of struggle, they gained independence, but their separation resulted in regional instability that continues to this day. This instability can best be seen through their mutual interest in the sport cricket.

Cricket is a remnant of Pakistan and India's colonial ties to Britain. It was first brought to India by the British East India Company in 1721, and was often a medium for British officials to reinforce their control and superiority by replacing traditional Indian sports.² Over time, however, cricket gained popularity in India. After the Partition, India and Pakistan took ownership of their passion for cricket, establishing national teams and partaking in international tournaments. Pakistan-India matches in particular drew large crowds, reaffirming their lingering rivalry caused by colonization.

Pakistan's win over India in this past November's T20 World

Cup match re-ignited tension and concerns surrounding the control of Kashmir. This conflict has been ongoing since 1947; it is complex and rooted in the British Empire's habit of arbitrarily dividing land based on its own economic profit rather than the ethnic make-up of each region. Today, these divisions have furthered land disputes between India and Pakistan as they both struggle to control these different regional ethnic groups, including in Kashmir. The T20 match turned from a game into a symbol for which country retains more power.

To politicians, the intensity of the T20 match was representative of the waning relationship between both countries. This has been a pattern: in 1999, in the midst of animosity following the Kargil War, India withdrew from the Asian Test Championship and cancelled its proposed cricket tour to Pakistan.³ In 2004, however, when relations were less tense, the Indian team did a tour of Pakistan, where thousands of visas were given for people to easily cross the border. Cricket has become a marker of Pakistan and India's volatile relationship.

Considering its historical implications, it is interesting to see how this British sport has now become a medium for diplomacy to address issues also caused by colonization. Pakistan-India cricket matches draw in the crowds, not only for the thrill of the game, but for how they depict the geopolitical fractures caused by Britain's pervasive and detrimental influence in South Asia.



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