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Letter from the Editor

It is no secret that the international community faces myriad challenges as we delve further into the 21st century. From armed conflicts and their impacts on personal security to climate change and environmentally displaced persons, countries, non-governmental organizations, and even individuals stand to confront some of the toughest practical problems in international and public affairs. The cover of the World Mind’s second issue features a young Syrian boy drawing water from a UNICEF water tank in the Zaatari refugee camp in Jordan. Though several of this issue’s articles deal directly with the topic of refugees, migrants, and other displaced people, the topics that fill these pages also raise broader questions of personal security, human rights, peace and conflict resolution.

Contributing Editor Erin Bovee begins the issue with an analysis of environment-related displacement, focusing particularly on Bangladesh, India, and Pakistan. Andrew Fallone then reports on the state of Mongolia’s urban rap scene and its relationship with the development of a new Mongolian nationalism and sinophobia. In the Americas column, I discuss the 1954 Guatemalan coup and what it implies for the Democratic Peace Theory, and Gretchen Cloutier calls for greater gender equality in Paraguay. Caroline Rose discusses the emergence of a new balance of power in the Middle East as it relates to Saudi Arabia and Iran’s manipulation of sectarian violence in the Africa and the Middle East column. Finally, Erik St. Pierre rounds out the regional section by highlighting the European reaction to its migrant crisis and advocates for a greater emphasis on humanitarian issues over political concerns.

Deborah Carey starts off the thematic section with a case study on M-PESA and an analysis of mobile money transfers’ impact on lesser-developed countries’ macroeconomic growth in general. Next, Sophia Vos relates one of the most pressing environmental concerns in recent decades—rising sea levels—to the existential integrity of Maldives and its environmentally displaced persons. Continuing the theme of refugee and migrant issues, Samuel Woods discusses why refugee camps seem to stick around for so long and presents the economic case for reconceptualizing refugee camps as permanent cities. Next, Emily Dalgo and Kellianne McClain relate two contemporary human rights issues—the use of drones and torture—to the Obama administration and post-9/11 U.S. foreign policy. Finally, Adam Goldstein applies a six-point framework of totalitarian regimes to the Saddam Hussein administration to assess whether it could be considered totalitarian or authoritarian.

Bringing the magazine home are Jeremy Clement and Laura Thompson in the Government and Political Theory columns. Clement relates current electoral patterns exemplified by presidential candidate Donald Trump to the history of American conservative populism. Thompson investigates presidential candidate Ted Cruz’s advocacy for religious liberty to legal and normative pluralism.

Following the success of our first issue, we at the World Mind take great pride in presenting the reader with our second issue. We humbly invite you along with us as this next issue’s contributors grapple with what are surely pressing global challenges.

William Kakenmaster
Executive Editor
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Environment-Related Displacement: Climate Change and Environmental Manipulation

Migration due to climate change and environmental manipulation is growing in places like Bangladesh, and the international community is not responding effectively

By Erin Bovee

Climate change is a growing concern in the international community for good reason. Yet, while several individual states within the international community have made pro-environmental changes, there several serious issues related to climate change remain unaddressed. One such problem concerns international migration resulting directly or indirectly from climate change, which currently plagues certain Southeast Asian countries like Bangladesh. Due to war's displacement of so many people, environmental migrants trying to escape unlivable conditions are not prioritized and often refused. Of course, climate change is not the only factor behind environment-related displacement; environmental degradation caused by some Asian development projects transcend international borders and force people out of their homes.

Situation in Bangladesh
The climate change situation in Bangladesh remains dire, even as the government’s corrective efforts have been noteworthy. In terms of renewable energy, Bangladesh is a leading world example of steady success, especially in sustainable solar energy development. An initiative to install solar home systems in rural Bangladesh, currently being carried out by the state-run International Development Company Limited (IDCOL) along with 47 partner organizations like the World Bank, has provided 9% of the population with solar-produced electricity, and there are plans to expand “mini solar grids” to provide for irrigation pumps. This clean-energy system is being implemented as the first source of reliable electricity for many in Bangladesh. Despite the prevalence of the clean-energy debate and the progress being made in the country, Bangladeshi citizens are increasingly being displaced due to water shortage issues. The main issue driving climate change migration in Bangladesh is the destruction of the delta region connected to the Bay of Bengal: massive amounts of flooding has led to the salinization and degradation of fertile land from brackish or salty river water, and the massive storms that occur periodically threaten the habitability of the area. Drought, especially in the northwest region of Bangladesh, largely contributes to the displacement of people and often leads to permanent internal or international migration.

Intersections between Climate Change and Environmental Manipulation
In Bangladesh alone, there have been serious challenges to the population’s ability to survive and work, especially in agricultural
fields. Regions in the center and south are consistently flooded while regions in the northwest may endure months of drought at a time. This has serious implications for Bangladeshi food production capabilities, aside from the documented internal displacement. Urbanization can only account for some of the massive population increases around cities, and in the capital of Dhaka researchers estimate that over 1/5th of the slum population is made up of migrants from the Bengal Bay area in response to flooding.

Broader implications for Bangladesh and its neighbors concern the massive and unavoidable migration that will continue to increase due to environmental conditions. Already, many Bangladeshis have fled to the Assam region of India, putting a strain on both Indian-Bangladeshi relations and the land in the region. Pakistan deals with serious issues concerning migration as a result of climate change, and the extremist influence in the region is worrying many that the destabilizing effect of climate change could not only displace more people, but also cause them to turn to extremist groups promising better living standards. In terms of diplomatic relations, environmental manipulation (such as the damming and political control of rivers by both China and India) causes a great deal of diplomatic tension. The ability to manipulate water flows upstream of India is, some suggest, a legitimate security threat to India; others are, alternatively, unconvinced of the threat to India’s security and insist the two Asian powers would never escalate the situation to actual conflict. Bangladesh has a long history of water-related bilateral negotiations with India, but has little bargaining power when faced with the long-term effects of infrastructure inside their neighbor’s borders. Meanwhile the water crisis in Bangladesh’s northwest regions pushes more agricultural workers to the city or out of the country entirely.

Response of the International Community

What, then, could the international community do to counter the negative effects of both climate change and environmental manipulation on vulnerable populations in Bangladesh and other areas? Large-scale environmental change was, of course, discussed on the international level in Paris last year, but while countries made an agreement to combat environmental change, no binding treaties were proposed or signed. Instead, the environment remains a domestic policy issue that can only be affected on a broad scale by pressure from one state or another. Unfortunately, little has been discussed with regard to the implications of migration as a result of worsening environmental conditions. UN Special Envoy for Climate Change Mary Robinson believes there should be more policies and programs designed to support those specifically migrating due to environmental degradation. She also believes, crucially, that these individuals should be treated as refugees, and that the international community is currently not honoring the UN Convention and Protocol relating to the Status of Refugees. Essentially, the international community should eliminate the “line drawn between refugees fleeing political oppression and migrants seeking better opportunities” due to environmental factors.

The implications of amending the UN Convention on Refugees to include those displaced due to environmental factors are serious. Under the Convention, states are held responsible for both the acceptance and the well-being of individuals; and yet, few states readily or easily accept the economic and security risks of doing so, or severely limit the number of accepted refugees. Additionally, accepting a broader definition for refugee status would greatly increase the already sizeable refugee population, and the current pressure on states especially in the European Union and the U.S. make the topic highly politically controversial. Would this broadening of status...
affect all those impacted by environmental stress, or just climate change-related environmental conditions? Do we exclude consideration for people living in regions like southern Bangladesh, which naturally experiences cyclone and flood damage, even when global warming has increased the severity of these cycles? It is relatively unlikely that the broadening of the term refugee under UN standards would ever occur, and the failure of the current UN Convention to cover these individuals perhaps indicates the need for a new way to categorize and deal with this kind of necessary migration.

The response of issues like upriver damming and other environmental changes that affect more than one state are delicate issues the international community is not yet effective at dealing with. For starters, the means to resolve disputes that arise from building dams that affect countries downriver have not been effectively institutionalized in Bangladesh’s case, though the government has tried to address the issue in the past. In an international community that is unable to come to a binding agreement on climate change even in high-profile situations, it is extremely unlikely that a greater focus will fall on environmental manipulation which can be labeled as isolated, regional, or simply bilateral in nature. It is more likely that until the ramifications of the population displaced by environmental concerns gains more attention than conflict refugees, the international community will focus on positive, state-based environmental policy, rather than negotiating or considering transnational environmental concerns.

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Straight Outta Ulaanbaatar
Class consciousness and sinophobia in Mongolia’s economic periphery

By Andrew Fallone

ULAANBAATAR IS A rapidly modernizing city, but some of its residents fear its new development may come at the price of its former uniquely Mongolian face. From the times of Chinggis Khaan, Mongolians have had their own united character as a people—despite all odds. After the collapse of the Mongol Empire, they were conquered and subjugated by the following Chinese dynasties. After being consumed into the Soviet bloc in the 20th century, the Mongolian people were subjected to further decades of anti-Chinese propaganda, when the USSR hoped to use Mongolia as a buffer to the possibility of a Chinese threat on its southern border. In recent years, as economic growth has boomed, new animosities have grown out of the influx of outside Chinese business investment which many Mongolians see as exploitative. Yet one new idea that globalization has brought to Mongolia has truly resonated with the population: hip hop. Mongolia’s crisis of identity, combined with a deep-seeded want to be separate from China, has spawned a new movement of nationalistic rap within the capital city—empowering the youth to feel a sense of pride, creating a commentary on modern Mongolian society, and exemplifying the underlying class tensions present, while also fanning the flames of anti-Chinese sentiments.

A New Nationalist Identity:
Emerging from Soviet colonialism, rappers within Mongolia are using the genre as a new platform to foster a nationalist sentiment within their youthful audience. Some older Mongolians had feared that the young generation would entirely discard their national identity for the glamorized Western way of life, yet Mongolian rappers are doing all they can to prevent such a loss of culture. One prominent rapper, Gee, inspires a powerful sentiment of unity within his audience. He grew up with a single mother in the Ger district of Ulaanbaatar—an extensive and destitute slum which houses nearly two-thirds of the nation’s largest city’s residents. Gee raps that “[i]n the ocean of globalization, Mongolia is like a boat without paddles. You better start to care before we [...] drown.” He is imploring his audience not to lose their Mongolian identity in all of the foreign influences pouring into the growing capital city.

Many Mongolian men are also afraid of losing their national identity by not being able to marry another Mongolian woman. They see their city as becoming overrun with Chinese foreigners who are impure, compared to their Mongolian blood. Yet the problem for these Mongolian men arises when Mongolian sex workers and even local women mix with members of the Chinese expatriate community.
within Ulaanbaatar. These fearful Mongolian men find comfort in music which promotes and glorifies the culture they are afraid of losing.

Rappers also fight against cultural assimilation within Mongolia, working to keep their own identity separate from all of those which globalization has brought to Ulaanbaatar. A member of the rap group TST says that “[w]e rap in our mother tongue, and we identify and distinguish ourselves from other groups with our own language,” and even their name TST translates roughly to mean “mother tongue.” The group wants to “inspire ethnic pride among their fans,” says reporter Yuan Ye, for more and more young Mongolians are learning Mandarin Chinese in hopes of economic benefits. The early adopter of the rap genre in Mongolia Sukhbaatar Amarmandakh, or Amraa for short, says that “[h]e is an unashamed Mongolian nationalist, hoping to instill young Mongolians with feelings of pride.” The rap culture is helping to rekindle an ethnic identity within the newly globalized population of Ulaanbaatar, and giving them a new way to voice their pride and opinions.

Rapping with a Conscience:

The Mongolian rappers set themselves apart from the hip hop scenes in many other countries by focusing on social issues over pop culture. Rappers use the platform to critique their society in hopes of improving their nation, and by doing so fostering even more national pride among the Mongolian people. The aforementioned rapper Gee says that “[m]ongol hip-hop should be wise and should tell the people what is right to do.” Indeed, there are significant hardships that a modernizing and urbanizing city endures, yet through rap music, Mongolians can create a commentary on these issues in hopes of solving them. The rappers work to combat substance abuse and violence within their city. Mongolian rapper Quiza states that “[t]here are lots of under-age victims who are addicted to alcohol and tobacco. This is because tobacco and alcohol companies are very powerful.” To combat this, both Gee and Quiza reject sponsorships from beer and cigarette companies, because as Quiza puts it, “[w]e have a responsibility to think about how we affect the younger generation.” Al Jazeera was right when they tweeted out that “Mongolian rappers have less bling, more heart,” for the rappers in Ulaanbaatar are really working to make a difference in their city. They are fighting to combat corruption within the government alongside social issues, so that common people can have a larger say in their own lives. The rappers of Mongolia contribute positively to their society in hopes of helping to create a new positive postcolonial identity as the nation reinvents itself socially and economically. As theorist Stuart Hall puts it, “[t]he very notion of an autonomous, self-produced and self-identical cultural identity [...] had in fact to be discursively constructed in and through ‘the Other.’” Hall argues that new identities come from making existing influences their own, and through taking the increasing westernization spawning from the Chinese investment in their young capitalist economy and using the new western styles of music the modernization has brought to create positive change, Ulaanbaatar’s rappers are creating a modern Mongolian identity with their music.
Class Consciousness on the Steppes:

Mongolian rappers are well aware that a divide exists between the core and the periphery in Ulaanbaatar, and that much of the core is made up of rich foreigners. The massive mineral deposits beneath the nation’s grasslands draw in Chinese mining companies who invest billions of dollars, but thanks to corrupt officials within the core, 30 percent of the nation still lives below the poverty line. In a studio surrounded by newly-opened upscale western clothing stores one rap group sings that “[a]lthough we grew up in yurts, after years in the city we’re forgetting our culture.” Yet the rappers are speaking out against some of the more seditious aspects of capitalism. The Mongolian rapper MC Bondoo says that “[w]e don’t admire luxury culture. We hate materialism, and the worship of expensive things.” Despite the efforts of Mongolian rappers to empower the periphery of Ulaanbaatar, the divide becomes even more profound when you examine how the core makes their money.

Chinese mining magnates have relatively free reign from a corrupt and cooperative government to strip the nation of all the wealth they can. The government is relocating the nomadic farmers which symbolize the nation on the falsified grounds that they are depleting the grasslands in order to allow mining companies to move in and take the land, sparking further anti-Chinese sentiments and inciting one rapper to sing that “[o]vergrazing is a myth and a lie / We have grazed animals here thousands of years/ Why has the desertification started since only a few decades ago?” Mongolians know that they are being exploited by the Chinese, sparking rapper Gee to become almost violently anti-Chinese, going as far as to say that the Chinese want to take everything from Mongolia. The animosity is exacerbated by the intense connection many Mongolians feel to their land, and the destruction that Chinese mines bring to it. Many Mongolian rappers have songs that revere the beautiful grasslands which are now being turned into a dessert by bulldozers and dump trucks. The rappers see the wealth that the Chinese are siphoning out of their nation’s well of resources juxtaposed against their own people starving for a drop to drink. Rapper Amraa calls for social reform and creates an economic commentary by posing that “[w]e have homeless children, we have poverty, but we also have a very grand history that was inherited from our ancestors. We sing about kids living in sewers, and we ask, ‘Where’s your kid living?’ We want to get a message to the corrupt upper class.” The economic disparities present within Mongolia give fuel for Mongolian rappers to fire up and unite their audiences by calling for greater change.

The Smoldering Embers of Sinophobia:

Lauren Knapp quotes rapper Gee to say that “I’m not racist toward anybody […] except the Chinese. I hate the Chinese.” This sentiment is shared by most Mongolian rappers and much of the local population. Gee even released a new song whose title, “Hujaa,” is a racial slur against the Chinese, and rap group 4 Zug released a song of their own called “Don’t Overstep the Limits, You Chinks.” A history of conflict between the nations, alongside modern fears of Chinese economic imperialism, have heightened the racial tensions within Mongolia to a shocking level. It is possible that some of the sinophobia also stems from the sentiment in Mongolia that they are always a step or two behind China. Watching the Chinese mega-companies turn their national resources into huge profits, Mongolians might wish that they were able to do it themselves and see its benefits. On the world stage, China is seen as a key player, while Mongolia sitting immediately next to it has been relegated to backwater country. Thus, it is natural that anti-Chinese sentiments are a negative of the pan-Mongolian nationalism churned out by Mongolian rappers,
for they can use universal hatred of the Chinese to further unite their people. A consequence of the postcolonial attempts to reclaim some lost Mongolian identity is a xenophobia. This fear and hatred stems from the pride and chauvinism endemic to any exclusive identity, and unfortunately by promoting the identity, Mongolian rappers are also promoting the animosity.

In Mongolia, rappers have helped to cultivate a new identity as the nation emerges from centuries of subjugation and adjusts to its new role as a part of the periphery within the capitalist global economy. They evoke pride and a new sense of ethnic identity within the youth of Ulaanbaatar, and fight against addiction and political corruption. Yet, they also incidentally feed into ultra-nationalist sentiments which can lead to hatred and racism against the economic core Chinese.

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Guatemala and the Limitations of the Democratic Peace Theory

U.S. intervention and expanded conceptualizations of peace and democracy

By William Kakenmaster

In 1954, the United States covertly intervened in Guatemala, orchestrating a paramilitary coup d'état that deposed the democratically elected, Liberal government and installed a brutally repressive right-wing military junta. The story is well-known among Latin Americanists and foreign policy skeptics, but its theoretical significance for international relations (IR) has thus far been understated. More than just a foreign policy blunder, the case of Guatemala in 1954 represents the limitations of one of IR’s dominant frameworks: Democratic Peace Theory (DPT). DPT fails because it improperly conceives of its two key concepts—democracy and peace—ultimately narrowing them beyond any practically useful definition (e.g., one whose premises accurately reflect the world’s state of affairs). Western-style democracies—founded on Liberal values and free market capitalism—have no theoretical monopoly on legitimate democratic governance. To suggest otherwise ignores the realities and possibilities of equally legitimate democratic governance that may differ in form. Furthermore, and in spite of DPT, the absence of war does not sufficiently imply peace. To suggest otherwise insulates the realities of torture, police brutality, disappearances, and other human rights abuses that happen off the battlefield, but which violate peace nonetheless.

DPT and Its Discontents

DPT is the closest thing we have to a natural law of international relations—we are often reminded—and its mainstream proponents claim three principal reasons that, when combined, create a special peace among democracies. First, citizens of democracies wield power over their governments, and their natural reluctance to go to war limits democratic countries’ proclivity for war-making. Second, the leaders of democratic countries face institutional constraints on their powers; unlike kings and emperors, presidents and prime ministers must answer to legislatures and voters, causing decisions to go to war to be based on multiple actors and timelines. Third, democracies are founded on values that naturally prioritize and respect individuals’ right to life, ensuring their philosophical predisposition to peace. Beyond these three mainstream explanations, some scholars argue that democracies enjoy peaceful relations due to their related economic development—war disrupts trade, and hence democracies desirous of economic prosperity stop fighting and start signing trade agreements. Others argue that democracies are better at trusting one another because of their “unique contracting advantages” that make them more able and willing to negotiate peacefully amongst themselves. Whatever the reasons, proponents
of DPT all ultimately maintain the same principle: democracies “don’t attack each other.”

Though several scholars support DPT, several others do not. DPT’s discontents consist of both quantitatively and qualitatively oriented critiques. Quantitative critiques suggest that theorists manipulate their variables and selectively limit the scope of their dataset in order to produce more favorable results. Qualitative critiques argue that democracy is a subjectively understood construction and, therefore, unreliable as a variable upon which to base peace claims. However, such critiques are not without flaws of their own. Quantitative opponents of DPT suffer from the same hindrance as the theory’s proponents, for the danger of quantitative methodologies is that of over-simplification, which excludes alternative, but nonetheless democratic forms of political participation. If we can rank countries on a scale of “objective” criteria required for democracy, then we risk excluding phenomena like protest, union membership, and so on that less traditionally characterize democracies and which are generally more observable through qualitative methods. DPT measures any given country’s democratic-ness with the Polity index, scoring countries out of ten on—for instance—open and fair elections, constitutionalism, and political participation. But, the Polity index does not account for alternative forms of democratic political action such as non-violent demonstrations and human rights activism. In Guatemala, the former led to the overthrow of the U.S.-backed dictator Jorge Ubico and the latter led the world to recognize the government’s genocide of indigenous Maya people. Defining which countries count as democracies and which do not is a political project and, if we remain skeptical of DPT proponents’ supposed objectivity, then we must also remain so for DPT’s opponents that adopt the same methodology. In addition, I remain skeptical of mainstream qualitative critiques’ subtle Eurocentrism. It is quite easy to claim that democracies are constructed by “America-like” discourses when the cases studied consist primarily of central and eastern European countries—countries with which a large portion of the U.S.’s population shares its heritage. It is a bit harder to identify cases that contradict DPT from the global South, as Guatemala does. Though DPT’s proponents may not get it right, to a certain extent, neither do its critics.

Usurpation and Inter-Democracy Violence in Guatemala

The U.S. intervened in Guatemala in 1954 to overthrow the legitimately elected government that sought to promote Liberal, capitalist reform. In 1901, the Guatemalan dictator Manuel Estrada Cabrera granted the United Fruit Company, an American multinational agricultural corporation, the exclusive right to transport post between the U.S. and Guatemala, which became the company’s first entry into the country. United Fruit primarily produced bananas, eventually dominating the market, and creating disparate inequalities in Guatemalan landholdings. By 1944, 2% of Guatemala’s population held over 72% of the land. Moreover, according to Insatiable Appetite by the University of California, Davis’ Richard Tucker, U.S. agro-industrial capitalists—who needed ports, roads, and other vital infrastructure to export their products from Guatemala—controlled nearly every aspect in the chain of production through centralized, vertical integration of Guatemalan production and infrastructure. By 1902, Tucker finds that agro-industries like United Fruit “controlled most banana shipping to Europe, as well as to the United States,” and by 1912, it controlled the International Railways of Central America. Furthermore, Tucker notes that United Fruit ran the Guatemalan postal service
and Latin America’s first wireless telegraph company, the Tropical Radio and Telegraph Company. Meanwhile, policymakers in the U.S. Departments of State and Defense lined their pockets with shares in United Fruit (now known as Chiquita Brands International).

Eventually, popular uprisings ousted the authoritarian government and elected Guatemala’s first democratic president, Juan José Arévalo, who dreamed of Liberal, capitalist reforms and cited Franklin Delano Roosevelt’s New Deal as his primary source of political inspiration. In 1950, Arévalo’s democratically elected successor, Jacobo Árbenz implemented the controversial land expropriation policy Decree 900, which sought to break up United Fruit’s monopoly and combat the inequalities in landholdings. Árbenz’s Decree 900 drew upon Arévalo’s vision. In 1954, the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) intervened in Guatemala, training Honduran and Nicaraguan proxy troops that stormed Guatemala City and forced Árbenz to abdicate power. As justification, the U.S. labelled Guatemala a communist state infringing upon free market capitalism and individuals’ land rights. According to the then-Ambassador to Guatemala, John Peurifoy, and despite significant evidence to the contrary, Árbenz “thought like a communist, he acted like a communist, and if he is not one […] he will do until one comes along.” In a nearly cartoonish exaggeration of the Guatemalan political situation, the CIA overthrew a legitimately elected democracy that deliberately incorporated elements of American policy in order to advance Liberal, capitalist development and promote market competition.

The Limitations of the Democratic Peace

U.S. intervention in Guatemala in 1954 demonstrates how DPT improperly conceptualizes democracy as a specific type of government that is Western-styled, Liberal, free market, and allied with the U.S. politically and ideologically. Polity IV counts Guatemala just before the U.S. intervention as an “open anocracy” characterized by “mixed, or incoherent, authority.” Arévalo’s and Árbenz’s reforms therefore do not sufficiently reach the threshold of democratic governance for DPT. But, Polity’s mistake lies in its lack of consideration for states’ democratic capacities. In its first ever legitimate, national elections, Guatemalans clearly showed their democratic volition, but were plagued by the lack of democratic institutions typical of other, established democracies. To the extent that it could reasonably be considered so, Guatemala was a democracy in 1954 in that it had open, fair elections, support for Liberal human rights, and reforms to establish free and fair market competition. However, factoring in democratic capacity did little to make Guatemala a democracy in the eyes of policymakers. Recall how, despite the Liberal, democratic, and capitalist reforms instituted and sought after, U.S. policymakers claimed that, if the Árbenz administration was not communist, it “would do until one came along.” U.S. policymakers imagined the threat of communism in Guatemala because it did not pursue conservative, free market ideologies as the U.S. did, and because it did not explicitly reject the same Cold War allies that the U.S. did; and
Guatemala subsequently was not considered a democratic country in spite of evidence to suggest otherwise.

Moreover, DPT improperly conceptualizes peace, excluding violations of peace present in cases like Guatemala. Following the U.S. installation of the junta, Guatemala entered a decades-long period of authoritarian rule resulting in state-sponsored violence, disappearances, torture, and genocide against Guatemala’s indigenous population. According to mainstream DPT literature, “peace” is defined as the absence of war. War is defined as any formal, organized, inter-state conflict resulting in the deaths of over 1,000 belligerent soldiers. The Guatemalan Historical Clarification Commission estimated in 1999 that over 200,000 people were killed or disappeared during the country’s civil war and as a direct result of authoritarian rule. Few, if any, troops on either the U.S. or Guatemalan side died during the 1954 coup, however. Therefore, according to DPT, Guatemala’s is a case for peace. From this intuitively false conclusion, we can derive two important implications, the first of which deals with how we conceptualize peace. If peace is restricted to DPT’s definition, then repression, civil disobedience and political cleavages, torture, ethnic cleansing, and so on, count for peace besides our natural beliefs to the contrary. Leaving these instances out of the dataset makes the theory useful only for explaining the absence of war, not peace, especially given that these concepts are not perfect opposites.

The second conclusion deals with the dangers of narrowly conceptualizing peace in this way. If we exclude one type of violence that breaches the peace in favor of including another, then we introduce structural elements to IR theory that privilege one type of violence over another. War, at least DPT’s version of it, may be on the wane for a number of factors, but that does not necessarily imply a more peaceful world. Excluding Guatemala renders DPT potentially dangerous and privileging of a narrow, antiquated view of peace and its conceptual opposite. If we privilege formal, organized, inter-state war as the only acceptable form of peace for IR theorizing, then other atrocities that violate peace between people (not to mention between states) fall off scholars’ radars. Essentially, genocide and the legacy of human rights abuses in Latin America from colonial mass killings and rapes to the state-sponsored slaughter of indigenous people as recently as the late twentieth century equally violate peace in IR.

Excluding Guatemala renders DPT potentially dangerous and privileging of a narrow, antiquated view of peace and its conceptual opposite.

Conclusions

The U.S. coup in Guatemala deposed of a democratically elected regime seeking to advance Liberal, capitalist reforms. DPT’s proponents rely on overly narrow and useless definitions of peace and democracy. To claim that DPT adequately explains inter-democratic relations ignores the fact that Guatemala’s open, fair elections constituted democratic governance to the extent that its limited democratic capacity allowed. To further suggest that, because fewer than 1,000 belligerent combatants died on either side of the intervention, Guatemala sufficiently constitutes peace obfuscates the U.S.’s use of proxy troops and the resulting brutality of the U.S.-backed authoritarian regime.

The 1954 U.S. intervention in Guatemala represents more than just a foreign policy blunder—it shows the vastly insufficient conceptualizations of peace and democracy that underpin one of the dominant contemporary IR
theories. Of course, fully developed, accurate conceptualizations of both democracy and peace would be exceedingly useful for IR theorizing if defining these concepts were removed from countries’ and scholars’ political agendas. Such conceptualizations are, however, outside the scope of this essay and would require more in-depth research. But what is clear is that those employed by DPT are insufficient. To secure its place in IR scholarship, DPT would need to rectify its definitional shortcomings and adequately account for alternative forms of democracy and violations of international peace off the battlefield. However, to the extent that they represent subjectively understood elements of a Liberal political project, the inherently narrow representations of peace and democracy only indicate DPT scholars’ inability to objectively determine them. Democracy consists of innumerable philosophies of governance far beyond its narrow understanding in the DPT literature and peace consists of a state of human affairs, whose maintenance or violation inter-state wars’ have no theoretical or practical monopoly—neither concept can be so reductively defined as in the literature lest we ignore alternative, valid approaches to democracy and alternative, tragic violations of peace.

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Reproductive Rights and Violence against Women in Latin America: Spotlight on Paraguay

Violence against women and denial of reproductive rights in Latin America
By Gretchen Cloutier

As the pro-choice versus pro-life debate surrounding abortion continues in the United States, the status of reproductive rights in Latin America remains highly restricted. The politically conservative and predominately Catholic continent generally restricts access to contraceptive and family planning services, and denies abortions except when the mother’s life is in immediate danger.

The cultural and legal taboo of abortion is exemplified by the tragic case of an eleven-year-old Paraguayan girl who gave birth in 2013. According to Amnesty International, the girl was taken to the hospital by her mother in April, when she was then only ten-years-old, and was found to be 21 weeks pregnant. The father of the child is alleged to be the girl’s own stepfather, who raped her on several occasions. An international outcry among human rights groups and pleas from the girl’s mother to terminate the pregnancy proved unsuccessful. In Paraguay, abortion is restricted only in cases of serious danger to the mother’s life. The girl carried the pregnancy to full term, and was placed in a center for young mothers. The girl’s mother has been arrested and charged with negligence, despite reporting the sexual abuse of her daughter in 2013. Her stepfather has been arrested, though he denies the allegations, and it is unclear whether he will face time in prison.

This case hinges on the fact that, despite the girl’s young age, doctors ruled that she did not face immediate physical danger from carrying the pregnancy to full term, the only permissible reason for abortion under Paraguayan law. However the risk of maternal death in Latin America is four times higher among girls under sixteen years of age than among women in their twenties. This is due to complications of underdeveloped reproductive organs and physical immaturity among younger girls. Paraguay’s record for maternal and reproductive health is troubling, especially in comparison to regional, albeit more developed, neighbors.

The maternal mortality rate is extremely high, with 132 deaths per 100,000 live births, compared to 22 in nearby Chile and 14 in the United States. Infant mortality is in the double digits, at 18 per 1,000 live births, compared to a rate of seven in Chile and six in the United States. Instances of infant and maternal mortality are even more likely among younger mothers. It is crucial that women have access to quality health care to reduce these rates—especially family planning services and prenatal care.

Contraceptive prevalence in Paraguay was 79 percent among married women ages 15 to 49 in 2008. While 79 percent represents
relatively good access, there are many problems with this indicator. First, it only includes married women. Most statistics regarding contraceptive prevalence only measure married populations, making it difficult to estimate prevalence among single, or cohabiting populations. This is a group that has an arguably higher demand for contraceptives because they are not in a traditional union that signals a readiness to settle down and have children. This group may also face greater stigma and challenges in obtaining and using contraceptives. This indicator also does not include access or availability of emergency contraception, such as the “Plan B” pill, which is often outlawed in Latin America. Finally, this indicator does not capture girls younger than fifteen who are likely survivors of rape and sexual assault, such as the eleven-year-old girl mentioned previously. In order to address the contraception needs of a modern and diverse population, better indicators must be developed to uncover and close the gaps. Survivors of sexual assault and rape should be offered every possible option—including emergency contraception and abortion, or pre-natal care if she chooses to continue the pregnancy.

The measures of physical health determined by Paraguayan doctors in evaluation of eligibility for an abortion do not take into consideration the mental health of these mothers, who may be victims of rape and sexual assault. According to Amnesty International spokesperson Guadalupe Marengo, in the case of the Paraguayan girl, “the physical and mental repercussions of continuing with [...] high-risk pregnancy could be devastating and are akin to torture.” The World Health Organization finds that violence, including sexual violence, by an intimate partner is related to higher instances of injury and death, depression, alcohol abuse, sexually transmitted infections, unwanted pregnancy, and low birth-weight babies. Among women in Paraguay who had experienced partner violence in the past twelve months, 68 percent reported severe anxiety or depression and 14 percent had considered or attempted suicide.

It is estimated that one in three women ages 15 or older in Latin America has experienced physical or sexual violence in their lifetime.

Systematic denial of quality health care services and reproductive rights in Paraguay is related to the larger crisis of violence against women. Violence against women is a form of gender-based violence and “refers to any act that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual and psychological harm to women and girls, whether occurring in private or in public.” It is not unique to Paraguay, and plagues societies all around the globe. Sexual violence can cause unwanted and unintended pregnancy leading to devastating results if women cannot access health care that prioritizes their psychological and physical health, as well as their quality of life.

It is estimated that one in three women ages 15 or older in Latin America has experienced physical or sexual violence in their lifetime. Most of these transgressions are not committed by strangers in dark alleyways, but rather by men who have close relationships to the survivor. In Paraguay, prevalence of intimate partner violence is highest among girls aged 15 to 19, and this trend is fairly consistent across Latin America. The 20 to 24 age bracket also experiences high levels of intimate partner violence. As can be seen, violence against women starts disturbingly young. Among women ages 15 to 24 who have had sexual intercourse, 2.2 percent reported that their first experience was forced or rape, and 14 percent reported that their partner “convinced them.”
Power inequality dominates young women’s intimate experiences, and it persists throughout their lives.

According to a report by WHO/PAHO, almost 8 percent of women in Paraguay reported unwanted sexual intercourse with a partner out of fear of what he might do if they refused. Even more troubling, only 12 percent of women sought help in dealing with sexual assault from police, a hospital, a religious group, or a women’s organization. The most common reasons women did not seek advice or assistance were that they “thought she could solve it alone,” “shame,” and “fear of retaliation.” These last two responses are indicative of the social stigma placed on survivors of assault. Women who seek help or report the crime often face humiliating questioning by officials who do little to investigate. Perpetrators then benefit from high levels of impunity. Cases of sexual assault are frequently characterized by victim blaming and “he-said-she-said” adage. Although Paraguay’s parliament passed a law against domestic violence in 2000, it does not outline avenues for justice by including criminal repercussions. Without proper institutional support and policies that act in the survivor’s best interest, it is unlikely that assault reporting will increase and impunity will be reduced.

As stated previously, limited reproductive rights and violence against women is not unique to Paraguay. The situation is similar across the Americas. Latin America has the highest rate of maternal death (an estimated 2,000 women annually) from attempting to obtain an unsafe abortion. Only three regional bodies—Cuba, Uruguay, and Mexico City—permit abortions within the first term of pregnancy for any reason. On the other hand, El Salvador, the Dominican Republic, and Chile prohibit abortion under all circumstances, including risk to the mother’s life, rape, and unviable fetus. El Salvador has come under scrutiny for imprisoning women who have miscarried naturally, under allegations that they induced an abortion. In Honduras, it is even illegal to provide women with information about emergency contraception (which does not terminate an already fertilized egg) and abortion. Millions of women experience physical and sexual abuse each year across the region, with high rates of impunity and few options to bring their abuser to justice.

The case of the eleven-year-old Paraguayan girl who was denied an abortion is just one example of the perils of allowing violence against women to persist while systematically stripping them of their right to chose how, when, and if they have children. Regardless of an individual’s view on the morality of abortion (which is outside the scope of this article), it is morally unquestionable that women should be provided with quality healthcare that prioritizes their health and wellbeing, as well as resources for support and justice in the case of rape or assault. Paraguay, along with the rest of the region, should work to improve the lives and health of its women by introducing effective legislation that condemns gender-based violence, and providing resources for women to control decisions about their bodies and health.

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Saudi and Iranian Manipulation of Sectarian Violence as an Incubator for an Emerging Balance of Power

Balance of power theory, the geopolitical landscapes of sectarianism and conflict, and their incubation by Iran and Saudi Arabia

By Caroline Rose

The history of man is the history of crimes, and history can repeat. So information is a defense. Through this we can build, we must build, a defense against repetition.
—Simon Wiesenthal

The theory that history repeats itself has never been truer than in the Middle East.

In a region that has always been what strategist George Friedman calls a “geopolitical flashpoint,” 2016 has started to become reminiscent of 1979. This past January, the House of Saud beheaded a Shi’a Sheikh, Nimr al Nimr, prompting Iranians to take to the streets and torch the Saudi Arabian embassy. Saudi Arabia, just like in 1988, has strangled relations with their Iranian neighbor; and both states have embarked on a power-grab. Iran has incited the Kingdom’s Gulf neighbors with Shi’a minorities—most notably, the Houthis in Yemen—to liberate themselves from their Sunni leaders. Across the Levant, North Africa, and the Gulf, the gloves have come off and the two powerhouses have conducted interventionist strategies, funded terrorist organizations, propped up dictatorships, and manipulated religious fervor—all to fuel a sectarian conflict in this winner-takes-all game.

Many scholars and critics have deemed the violence in Syria as a turbulent power vacuum. They are correct; a witch’s brew of dictatorial greed, decades of religious persecution, cultural and religious landscape at odds, and vulnerable economic conditions have produced one of the largest conflicts since the conclusion of the Second World War. We have come to know this conflict as an open invitation for foreign intervention. But many perceive Syria and Iraq as the second chapter of the Cold War, a stage for Russia and the United States to carry out countering strategic interests through proxy warfare. I will argue that this perception is clouded. The regional sectarian violence is really a theatrical showdown between two regional rising stars: Iran and Saudi Arabia, who puppeteer such violence to incubate a new balance of power in the Middle East, where Iran’s rising power un hinges Saudi hegemony.

Questioning a Balance

In international relations, balance of power theory endures, yet is seldom experimented upon. If Kenneth Waltz saw the Middle East today, he might consider it a picturesque representation of anarchy. The competitors view themselves as custodians of Islam, vying for control in a region that has lacked a consistent multipolar power dynamic. Hans Morgenthau deems that the balance of power is a “perennial element” in international relations, regardless of the “contemporary conditions” of the international system. Many
scholars are looking to the Middle East as a hub that places traditional realpolitik back in business—and see that play out between the power plays between Tehran and Riyadh.

In the balance of power, states use various mechanisms to balance. There is equilibrium of power that mandates states adjust accordingly; when one makes gains, the other must outmaneuver to re-balance the scales. In the Middle East, however, the mechanisms of balance of power differ from those in the West. States do not necessarily focus on power plays amongst one another, but rather on what scholar Stacie Goddard calls the “dynamics of collective mobilization” and struggles for influence among political communities. To manipulate the balance of power in the Middle East, states must first establish one—something both Tehran and Riyadh have done through decades of military, economic, and religious expansion. States’ mechanisms to achieve regional power are not as simple as the West’s, and concentrate primarily on the nationalization and expansion of crude oil industries, leveraging their control of regional institutions (like the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries, the Gulf Cooperation Council, and the United Arab League) tapping into the anger of the Sunni-Shi’a divide, feeding nationalist fires, vying for huge arms deals with Western countries, and competing for great powers’ good graces. Saudi Arabia and Iran have been at odds over the region’s balance of power, moving levers to advance their position and hollow out a decaying power structure.

Exploring Historical Ramifications

Is some of this sectarian violence a motive that truly reflects the interests of both states, or a sway of rhetoric? Before looking forward to understand these possibilities, we must reflect on the history between Saudi Arabia and Iran. Regional supremacy in the Arab World has been a strategic goal of Iran since the days of the Shah and since the al-Saud family’s rise to power. While these objectives are not new, the opportunities to achieve them are. The weakened governments in Iraq and Syria, the dormant Shi’a minority populations under Saudi-supporting leaders, and the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action under the International Atomic Energy Agency all bolster Iran’s hopes to spread its influence in the Arab World, and incentivize Saudi Arabia to halt them in their steps.

Since the rule of the House of Saud, Sunni Wahhabism has thrived in Saudi society today and dictates the shape of its foreign policy. When the Crown Prince Saud came to power in 1953, he seized the opportunity to enhance the state’s presence in international trade. The years that followed introduced OPEC in 1960, the OIC in 1969, ownership of Aramco in 1980, and founded the GCC in 1981. Throughout this period, the Saudis learned the importance of dollar diplomacy and economic mastery. The 1990’s saw the al Sauds using the American relationship to advance their position and maintain stability in neighboring states by, for example, requesting American intervention in Kuwait in 1990. But it was in 2011 when the state of the union began to evolve for Saudi Arabia. The Arab Spring struck a chord with the al Sauds, prompting the government to ban public protests by Shi’a minorities in the East, to crack down in neighboring Bahrain, and to violate several international human rights obligations. Post Arab Spring, Saudi Arabia has sighed relief in maintaining regional control, yet looks upon their neighbors with caution.

Shi’a Islam has always been a key fixture in Persian society in Iran, and for centuries. But it was in 1979 when the Shah was exiled and the Islamic fundamentalist, Ayatollah Khomeini rose to power, spreading messages of anti-Americanism, call for the Shah’s extradition, the infamous Hostage Crisis at the United States
Embassy in Tehran, and attempting to thread Shi’a Islam and nationalism together. It was during the 1980’s when Iran closely aligned itself with Russia, pushing the United States in the direction of the Saudis—establishing a dynamic that served as the "status quo" until the twenty-first century. The United States introduced the first round of sanctions against Iran in the 1990s, with oil and trade sanctions justified by an alleged support of terrorist organizations. The second wave began in the early 2000s, with the IAEA suspicious of uranium enrichment programs and a United Nations investigation, continued with the 2005 discovery of Iran’s violation of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. Just in 2015, the international community has reached a long-awaited Joint-Comprehensive Plan of Action with the Iranian government on limiting the state’s nuclear production facilities through inspections.

The Middle East’s balance of power crucially shifted in 1979. The Iranian Revolution exacerbated Western-Iranian tensions and swung the United States to the side of the Saudis. The decades that followed saw the rivals compete for foreign alliances and play their animosity out through calculated measures, such as attacking embassies in 1988, cutting diplomatic relations in 1989, and carrying out small proxy wars in neighboring conflicts, such as Bahrain, Yemen, Iraq, and of course, Syria.

**Sectarianism as a Political Sheath**

Today we are witnessing the second phase of this tense relationship come to fruition. This has been accomplished through both states’ angering sectarian factions. Farea al Muslimi, an analyst, states, “All the sectarian rhetoric is becoming a self-fulfilling prophecy for these regimes who love to play the sectarian card.” In 1991, Iran and Saudi Arabia resumed diplomatic relations, and both nations experienced a relatively friendly period until the American intervention in Iraq in 2003, where Saudi Arabia perceived Iran manipulating Shi’a militants with the defeat of the Ba’athist Regime. Scholar Brendan O’Neill claims that “much of the bloodshed in Syria is an expression of the Saudi-Iranian battle for the vacuum created by the post-Cold War,” and this rings true when applying balance of power theory.

When the Arab Spring was alive and well, Iran perceived these uprisings as precious opportunities to support Shi’a minorities in neighboring Gulf States, while Saudi Arabia saw it necessary to defend them. I say this because in 2011, Bahrain experienced attempted revolution with the return of Shi’a activist Hassan Mushaima—believed to collaborate with Iran—and popular demand for a republic. Days later, Saudi Arabia and the GCC sent military-transport vehicles into Bahrain to stop the uprising in its path. But this is a two-way street. One can see Iranian attempts for influence across the region through the funding of terrorism and revolutionary missions. In Lebanon, Iran has funded the Shi’a terrorist organization, Hezbollah. In Palestine, Iran has been linked with Hamas. In Bahrain—a 61.3% majority Shi’i country under Sunni leadership—it has been hinted Iran encouraged Shi’a citizens to protest al Khalifa’s leadership.
In Yemen, Iran funded the Zaidi Shi’a rebels, called Houthis, in a successful attack upon the Yemeni government and President Abd Rabbuh Mansour Hadi, forcing him to flee in February 2015. Saudi Arabia followed up with aggressive airstrikes to defend their custodianship of Sunni Islam and purview of their southern neighbors. In Syria, both powers vie for influence among the sectarian divide, with Iran deploying their elite Revolutionary Guards to defend the Alawite Assad Regime and allegedly pour $9 billion into the war effort. This cat and mouse game has molded Iran into a regional risk-taker and Saudi Arabia into a vulnerable monarchy, cornered and cautious of its neighbors, yet ready to defend those loyal to Sunni religiosity.

Yet, if one singular event turned this cold war between Tehran and Riyadh hot, it has been the Iranian nuclear deal. The inclusion of Iran in the international community is a fundamental threat to Saudi Arabia’s status quo, a status quo backed by a series of American administrations and supplemented through an expensive oil trade that ensured Saudi Arabia a strategic advantage over Tehran. The relationship with the United States has been integral in striking a truly unipolar balance of power in the region, and both states understand that. Saudi Arabia, along with the rest of Gulf countries, knows too well the historical lesson that a weakened relationship with the United States leaves them at the doorstep of their foes. A long-standing ally of the United States, Saudi Arabia feels “betrayed, and now they feel like they must do something, even if it’s the wrong thing.” Riyadh sees the Iran nuclear deal in zero-sum terms and has calculated a more aggressive strategy against Iranian presence in the Gulf, further enhancing this rivalry. To mask this insecurity, Saudi Arabia has been buffering its defense systems. Riyadh has established a 34-member military campaign against terrorism, with states such as Qatar and Pakistan, an alliance that alienates Iran, Syria, and Iraq, despite sharing a common enemy: ISIS. Saudi Arabia’s aggressive foreign policy leaves it vulnerable in the region. Its friends in the Gulf have prompted questioning, its reliable allies in the Levant have frayed under the spark of revolution, and Iran has broken the status quo.

**Manipulating the Threads of Sectarianism**

For these two regional powers, the logic of driving such a hard-lined sectarian agenda lies in maintaining domestic stability. Escalating sectarian tensions does not only establish a state as a custodian of its religious sect, but also attempts to promote nationalism among citizens. As has been the case of stirring nationalism at home, foreign threats have also assisted in this pursuit. ISIS—while a threat to national security—has furthered nationalism, especially within Iran. ISIS has deemed itself the true representation of Sunni Islam and has persecuted Shi’a militants, governments, and civilians as a result. While ISIS brands itself as Sunni, it has been a clear-cut national security threat in Saudi Arabia. Yet, Saudi Arabia has tried to catapult itself into the role of commander in an Arab operation against the Islamic State. While it has shared success in isolating Iran, it has garnered several problems in its organization. First of all, Saudi Arabia has named the mission, “The Islamic Coalition,” yet has isolated important Muslim-majority states in the region, such as Syria and Iraq.

When the Kingdom executed al Nimr and ceased diplomatic relations with Iran—a calculated public relations strategy—it expected GCC states to follow their lead. Thus far, only Bahrain and Sudan have cut relations with Tehran, and the United Arab Emirates has promised to “downgrade” their relations with the Persian state. Yet the remaining series of the Saudi family’s allies have remained—an unflinching demonstration of shifting
confidence between traditional alliances.

**Theorizing for the Future**

Saudi Arabia and Iran’s rivalry in the region will certainly not alter the global power balance, but it will establish a new dynamic in a region. Looking forward, there are many reasons for Saudi Arabia to be cautious, as there many opportunities and bellicose maneuvers for Iran to seize.

When applying balance of power theory to Middle Eastern sectarian violence, one will realize that two powerhouses are not only tapping into existing ancient Islamic lesions, but also adopting a religious persona that compromises any political exhaustion of the Arab Spring and a fraying political system of dictators. Moving forward, government officials and citizens should be concerned that a rivalry between the two giants will give the Islamic State more leeway to operate and execute their objectives. In addition, the deteriorating relations will deter the momentum of the Syrian Peace Process, and establish an undercurrent of tension that will undercut whatever diplomatic resolution comes to fruition.

*Through this we can build, we must build, a defense against repetition.*

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Refugees Suffer and Europe Falters

Europe condemns asylum seekers within Greece to a hellish limbo through the recent EU-Turkey refugee deal

By Erik St. Pierre

THE SPRAWLING MAKESHIFT Idomeni refugee camp now risks becoming a permanent shantytown after the recent closure of the Balkan migrant route through Europe. The Idomeni refugee camp, lying on the Macedonian-Greek border, is home to fourteen thousand refugees from war-torn Syria and Libya who face squalor conditions, food shortages, disease, and little options of what to do next. Idomeni, a small town on the Macedonian-Greek border, contains roughly half of all asylum seekers attempting to use Greece as a transition state to more affluent nations in the North of Europe. The 2,000 capacity limit refugee camp originally served as a waiting station for refugees with the hope of passing through the border into Macedonia. With the recent closure of the Balkan route, the Idomeni refugee camp is now becoming a bottleneck of refugees as it becomes severely overpopulated with little funding for proper shelter. However, rather than improving the conditions of refugees within Europe, the EU has opted to discourage those escaping war from fleeing to the West. The recent implementation of the EU-Turkey refugee deal attempts to do this by converting refugee camps, such as Idomeni, into bona fide detention facilities as newly arrived refugees face deportation back to Turkey. The EU-Turkey deal is has made it clear that Europe would rather send asylum seekers back into the fire rather than extend a helping hand. Idomeni is an unfortunate embodiment of the EU’s priorities.

The creation of Idomeni and closure of the Balkan route by Macedonia, Slovenia, Serbia, and Croatia illustrates the divide within Europe over the solution to the refugee crisis. Chancellor Merkel of Germany slammed the recent closure stating “Sure, it brings us less refugees [...] but it brings Greece more, and that’s not sustainable.” The chancellor then went to underscore the importance of finding a European solution. In other words, a solution in which all countries of the European Union participate, rather attempting to slow the flow of refugees through unilateral action. Balkan countries are still standing by their decision to close their borders. They claim that the closure has slowed the flow of refugees from Greece into the rest of Europe and that a consistent stop will discourage more refugees from entering Europe through Greece. Regardless of the truth to this Greece is still left with over 36,000 refugees hoping for asylum and little resources to properly care for and process them.

Despite this it appears that many asylum seekers will be taking up residence in Greece. Why is it that Greece has been so hard hit by the refugee crisis? The answer is a combination of Greece’s geographic location, the Schengen
Agreement and the Dublin Regulation. First, Greece is located across the Aegean Sea from Turkey and is one of the first European Union countries in close proximity to Turkey that provides direct land access to other EU countries such as Germany. This makes Greece an ideal entry point into the EU for refugees fleeing the Syrian civil war through Turkey. Second, the Schengen Agreement abolished internal borders within the EU, allowing for ease of travel for all once granted entrance. The Schengen agreement then created an external border of countries that lie on the edge of the EU, such as Greece. As a country that lies along this external border, Greece faces greater strain than other members in processing refugees as they are checked in Greece before entering the EU. Third, the European Union’s common law concerning asylum seekers, the Dublin Regulation, devotes the duty of asylum application processing and relocation to the refugee’s country of entry. Under the Dublin Regulation if a refugee moved on to another EU country, the government of the country can file a transfer request to the country of entry. This places the majority burden on all EU border countries in regards to the refugee crisis, but Greece most of all.

The EU attempted a so called “European solution” for the refugee crisis as mentioned by Chancellor Merkel with a recent deal between the European Union and Turkey. This agreement attempts to ease the disproportionate strain on Greece. Largely endorsed by European leaders as well as the prime minister of Turkey, the deal attempts to “smash the business model of people-smugglers.” However, it has been condemned by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) for arresting refugees and turning refugee processing “hotspots” into detention centers. In short, the proposed deal states that all future refugees entering Greece through the Aegean Sea after departing Turkey will be deported back to Turkey. For every refugee sent back to Turkey, another will be relocated in Europe from Turkey. Furthermore, the European Union will double the 3.3 million euros already pledged to increase the quality of Turkey’s refugee camps, renew talks concerning Turkey joining the EU, and release visa requirements of Turkish citizens. This deal has divided Europe with some hailing it as the solution to Europe’s refugee crisis and others slamming it for turning a blind eye from Turkey’s border closure to thousands of refugees escaping war torn Syria. On top of this the legality of this potential “solution” in Europe’s refugee crisis has been called into question. Critics who question the legality of the EU-Turkey refugee deal point out that Turkey not only has a large number of refugees without adequate facilities to house them, but also has not fully accepted the Geneva Convention. As such, this deal may break European and international law concerning that all asylum applications must be properly considered and cannot be sent back to any country without necessary protections for them. Due to the question of legality regarding the deal and the subsequent detention of refugees the office of the UNHCR has withdrawn much of its support for facilities in Greece that registered and assisted entering refugees, refusing to participate in the unlawful arrest of people escaping war. Despite all its flaws, this potential deal is seriously seen by the EU as a solution to the refugee problem in Greece and Europe as a whole. However, with the recent Balkan route closure and the stranded 36,000 refugees within Greece this couldn’t be farther from the truth. European leaders should be focused on improving the current humanitarian conditions of refugees within Greece, rather than condemning them to a figurative and literal limbo before deporting them back to where they risked so much to escape.

The Idomeni refugee camp is
unfortunately an excellent example of the consequences of Europe placing a higher priority on denying safe haven to refugees rather than properly housing and protecting them. Jim Yardley of the New York Times visited Idomeni the day of the Macedonia border closure and describes an outrageous scene. Women and children sleep in mud, sewage flows from portable toilets, and illness spreads from person to person. Pictures from Quartz also depicts the Idomeni refugee camp as a hopeless situation for an unfathomable number of men, women, and children. Seemingly endless rows of tents cover a ground littered with trash as people sit with hope that they will be allowed to move on from Idomeni into the rest of Europe. In an attempt to make Idomeni at all visible to Europe, two refugees lit themselves ablaze in a recent protest to illustrate their desperation. Europe cannot call the refugee crisis solved by the EU-Turkey deal with such cries for help emanating from Idomeni and other camps.

The International Rescue Committee (IRC) recently concluded that refugees who were recently prevented from crossing into Macedonia from Northern Greece are at an increased risk of humanitarian problems. The IRC found that refugees at the Idomeni camp faces water, sanitation, and hygiene facilities pushed past their limits, a despairingly large amount of trash with no sanity location for it, a short supply of feminine and general hygiene products, as well as limited heating. Limited heating is of a particular concern as refugees resort to lighting their own fires, often in close proximity of tents which presents a very large fire hazard. The increasingly permanent refugee camp also lacks the proper number of actors to protect women, children and the elderly from those who seek to take advantage of the most vulnerable in humanitarian crises. Women lacks safe spaces to seek solace from abuse and the camp has limited sufficient lighting which makes it even more dangerous for the vulnerable. Idomeni is nothing less than a humanitarian crisis and becoming worse. Europe must act and provide funding to care for the refugees within Greece, rather than cutting them off and shouldering them onto another country that is equally ill prepared to house them.

The EU’s focus on preventing more refugees from entering Europe combined with the recent Balkan route closure has created a situation in which Greece is becoming a hellish nightmare for asylum seekers. The EU-Turkey refugee deal is an attempt at a “European solution,” to the refugee crisis, but it prioritizes ending the flow of refugees into Europe through inhumane and illegal methods, rather than improving the conditions of asylum seekers suffering in Greece. It’s clear the EU has the resources to properly care for refugees already within Europe, as evidenced by the money given to Turkey. However, the European Union lacks the will to extend a helping hand in the name of humanity, preferring instead to give that job to somebody else. Whether the recent refugee deal does end the flow of refugees from North Africa and the Middle East into Europe will remain to be seen. Regardless, it overlooks the thousands who already risked it all to escape war and violence present in Idomeni and other camps within Greece. If the refugee crisis is to be truly solved we cannot ignore those who have found themselves at the mercy of our care.

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Mobile Money and Macroeconomic Development: Case Study on M-PESA

Offering financial inclusion while ensuring the accountability of private institutions

By Deborah Carey

One of the many effects of globalization on lesser-developed countries (LDCs) has been the rise of cash payments in traditionally barter economies. However, with 70% of the world’s poor living in rural areas, accessibility to cash and the financial institutions that manage currency can be challenging. New innovations have emerged in areas where the formal banking sector has failed to provide financial services to low-income and rural populations. One of these new technologies arose in the years following the boom in mobile phone infrastructure: mobile money transfers. Mobile money transfers yield positive results in macro economies since low-income people are able to participate in their local financial markets and avoid bank corruption. However the fee structure of these transfers, along with the potentially corrupt deals of private phone companies require us to remain vigilant in our analysis and critical approach to this innovation in development economics.

According to the World Bank, the mobile banking platform M-PESA represents a classic case for mobile money transfer in an LDC. M-PESA was developed by Vodafone and launched in 2007 by its Kenyan affiliate Safaricom. Safaricom is the largest mobile provider in Kenya, and its M-PESA pilot program proved successful in its ability to deliver accessible mobile money transfer to low-income Kenyans. M-PESA is now ubiquitous in Kenya, and has spread all over the Global South, most notably in Tanzania, Afghanistan, and India. A survey-based study by William Jack and Tavneet Suri of MIT states that users deem it be “faster, cheaper, more reliable, and safer” than other financial institutions. But how did M-PESA initially become widely used among poor populations?

An article in the Economist attributes M-PESA’s success to two major factors: the “send money home” campaign and the political atmosphere in Kenya after M-PESA’s introduction. With a large rural population, strong family ties, and the high cost of travel, remittances given between family members living away from home is an important part of the domestic economy. M-PESA’s marketing strategy, called the Send Money Home campaign, was widely effective. It encouraged Kenyans to employ M-PESA to pay remittances. In 2014, remittances in Kenya totaled $1,440,846,022 dollars, which was a $506,696,865 dollar increase since just 2011. The year M-PESA launched coincided with the famous 2007 election that resulted in severe post-election violence and Kenya’s temporary coalition government. This intense violence lasted for a number of months, and much of the nation’s poor population (especially those
located in Nairobi slums) were unable to work or travel due to the danger. Those affected used M-PESA as the safest way to send money to family and lessen the economic pressures of those in isolation. As a result, there was a network effect that introduced many new users to M-PESA’s services.

Numerous scholars have proclaimed mobile money such as M-PESA as an innovation that provides financial services to rural and low-income populations. But what are the development implications of more Kenyans using M-PESA accounts than debit cards? And what are the effects of M-PESA on Kenya’s macro economy?

Some economists fear that mobile money could reduce countries’ monetary policy autonomy since transactions can be made more readily than cash transfers. However, a study by Isaac Mbiti and David Weil has found that, contrary to popular belief, the velocity of M-PESA transfers does not exceed the velocity of cash. They also found that previous estimates of M-PESA’s percentage control of GDP were inflated. Mobile money is still “small relative to other monetary aggregates,” and so yields minimal impact on monetary policy autonomy. This being said, a continued increase in users and rise in the maximum transfer cap could drastically challenge the study’s findings. It is also assumed that putting money into a company rather than a bank would result in a lower multiplier effect for the macro economy. However, Safaricom does not manage M-PESA funds. According to the Consultative Group to Assist the Poor, the “funds are held by a trust which is owned by Vodafone, deposited in several commercial banks, and cannot be accessed by Safaricom.” M-PESA money then has the same multiplier effect as other currency held by banks. The interest earned on these accounts is also put into the “M-PESA Foundation,” which works on development projects all over Kenya. In consideration of its development implications, M-PESA appears to have a positive impact on Kenya’s macro economy.

Another implication of M-PESA for Kenya’s macro economy has been increased public trust in financial institutions. During the 2007 election, corruption was rampant in Kenyan banks. The emergence of M-PESA allowed citizens to put their money in a safer environment, while giving banks competition that would force them to abide by established laws. At the same time, Safaricom itself has been involved in a number of corruption scandals. In 2013, Safaricom adopted a strategy to report employee fraud in yearly reports. Financial crimes have since gone down by two-thirds, but corrupt practices are still present. In late February of this year, a prominent Nairobi lawyer revealed a $30 billion scandal between the Kenyan government and Safaricom deemed “Safaricomgate.” While investigations are still underway, rumors of these corrupt practices cloud M-PESA’s transparent reputation. In 2014, Safaricom allowed its vendors to simultaneously sell airtime for its rival, Airtel, before the Competition Authority of Kenya forced it to do so. The increase in competition of the mobile money market has helped to curb corruption, since customers can now switch companies if they are unsatisfied with Safaricom.

M-PESA has also contributed to structural changes in Kenya’s economic culture. For example, Hughes et al discuss Safaricom’s “Jipange KuSave” program, which allows low-income people to save money through their M-PESA accounts. Since lower-income people have less money to save, savings accounts are not feasible for them in formal banks, which have minimum deposit requirements. However, by putting aside small amounts through their M-PESA account, Jipange KuSave has the goal of “reinventing the microfinance market” by giving low-income users autonomy over their savings. Olga Morawczynski’s study also found
that M-PESA has improved women’s rights since M-PESA “decreased the risk of the money being stolen by their husbands.” He also found that urban migrants have had more estranged relationships with their families, since M-PESA allows them to make fewer trips back to their villages. Menekse Gencer contends that mobile money has revolutionized food security, since lower-income families that use mobile money are less vulnerable to shocks that may prevent them from accessing food.

While M-PESA has not delegitimized formal banking structures, scholars do call for more action by governments and researchers. Isaac Mbiti and David Weil call for a common regulation of all mobile money platforms at the East African Community (EAC) as the utilization of this financial tool continues to increase. Every company creates their own regulations, so having common laws to regulate the market would be beneficial. These laws would require all companies to play by the same rules while increasing governmental authority, since the state would regulate this market. They also call for more research to be done on mobile money’s effect on money supply and inflation, especially as this method increases in popularity. The European Investment Bank also encourages banks to innovate and gain the capability to incorporate mobile money in with their formal banking operations.

A number of economic development challenges still exist in regard to mobile money transfer programs such as M-PESA. Kenya’s 40,000 M-PESA agents are always at risk of theft, and Safaricom has attempted to implement security measures for these workers, but to little avail. M-PESA carries transaction fees with every transfer and, while relatively affordable, these fees are still inefficient from a macroeconomic perspective. Rather than gaining revenue from advertisements or only charging for certain transactions (such as, for example, Venmo does with credit cards), M-PESA charges for every transaction, depending on the size of the transfer. However these charges are disproportionately more expensive for low-income people, who tend to transfer small amounts at a time. For example, sending the minimum of 10 shillings would result in a 30% transfer fee (3 shillings), while sending the maximum of 25,000 shillings would result in a fee of less than half of a percent (75 shillings). This fee structure creates incentives for higher volume transfers, which is positive for the macro economy, but not conducive to low-income families. While M-PESA offers financial inclusion for low-income people, the ethics of charging these rates for lower quantity transactions should be critically considered, especially in regard to M-PESA’s target population.

Mobile money like Kenya’s M-PESA has undoubtedly increased low-income people’s accessibility to financial institutions and currency markets. Developmental economists have rightly praised M-PESA as a new tool that includes Kenya’s poorer population in the country’s rapidly growing macro economy. However, like any new innovation, the excitement of the opportunity mobile money provides should not mask the potential downfalls it may present in the future. It is imperative that we continue to analyze mobile money’s impact on the macro economy and its implications for development.

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The Maldives and Climate Change: A New Type of Refugee

How climate change and rising sea levels lead to environmental refugees and threaten a nation

By Sophia Vos

“IF YOU ALLOW for a two degree rise in temperature, you are actually agreeing to kill us,” argued Maldivian President Nasheed regarding the international community’s attempt to mitigate climate change at the Copenhagen Climate Summit in 2009. This country is comprised of 1,200 tiny islands, only 345,000 people, and a GDP per capita of only $14,000. This might seem inconsequential, however Maldives is likely to be the first victim of climate change. In the next 100 years the Maldives may be completely uninhabitable by humans, which would make it the first nation to be eradicated by the effects of climate change. The emission of carbon dioxide around the world, but especially from the United States, China, and India cause warming and thus a melting of arctic ice. The resulting sea level rise could engulf the Maldives, since it is one meter above sea level. The Maldives is a victim of climate change because its vulnerability and minimal contribution to the problem. Due to the continued rising of sea levels, migration will be the best possible option for the Maldivian people. As the Maldivian government has previously states, a new refugee status should be considered because they are being robbed of their national identity, property, and culture by the political decisions of nations that contribute most heavily to carbon emissions.

There are natural and geographical factors that put the Maldives in an extremely vulnerable position to the effects of climate change. As aforementioned, the Maldives is the lowest lying island in the world only a meter above sea level. According to the Environmental Protection Agency, if the ocean rises only one meter, it would be enough to put the island entirely underwater. Even a small rise in sea level would be enough to make the island uninhabitable while other unaffected nations would be reluctant to change their lifestyles or policies. In addition to rising sea levels, the warming sea is bleaching the coral. The coral reefs are becoming “bleached” because they lose their color. 15% of the coral is now white and 50-70% has begun to pale.

Maldives’ perilous future is largely caused by human dilemmas that have had destructive effects on the island. Rising sea levels are a direct effect of the way top emitting nations release exorbitant amounts of carbon dioxide (CO2) into the atmosphere. This carbon dioxide is then trapped, which causes the planet to warm and sea levels to rise. The top six emitters of carbon dioxide (China, the United States, the European Union, India, Russia, and Indonesia in that order) are responsible for over 60% of the Earth’s CO2 emissions. The emissions already released into the atmosphere affect the environment
The current trends of climate change, sea levels rising, and the delayed effect of emissions on warming suggests that migration away from the Maldives is an inevitable reality for the Maldivian people.

While environmental science supports that sea levels are rising in the future, this tragedy is not the only reason to migrate away. Climate change has negative impact on the Maldives even today. As the atmosphere accumulates carbon, the ocean absorbs more of this carbon. This process results in ocean acidification, which has a plethora of negative effects, such as decreased numbers of fish able to survive in this area. The Maldives depends heavily on fish as a main source of food and jobs. Those who depend on fishing to make a living or as a food source are going to face a lowered quality of life. Climate change also provokes a heightened degree of natural disasters, thus the area will become more physically dangerous to inhabit. Lastly, the people of the Maldives will have to face the extremely challenging psychological reality that they come from an island that their grandchildren will never be able to live on or fully understand their roots with, and the tombs stones of their grandparents will soon be lost at sea. These damages to the environment,
economy, and psychology of the Maldives is enough to make the nation a very unsustainable and unfulfilling place to live. Although the Maldives contributes minimally to climate change, the nation is investing billions of dollars into going carbon neutral by 2020. Through this effort, the administration hopes to send a symbolically political message to top emitters who have more resources. The Maldives’ emissions are not enough to change whether or not they will go underwater but they are still investing their capital to reduce the few emissions they produce. The Maldives is an ideal place for solar panels, since it is sunny and flat. The Maldives is also offering individual incentives to help citizens lower their carbon footprints. Other nations have much higher GDPS and thus a much greater access to resources to lower emissions. The Maldives is leading by example in order to make a political statement to other nations and portray that since they can limit emissions, others can as well.

As migration is increasingly necessary for survival, the Maldivian people will need a new type of refugee status that combines political and environmental aspects which respect the loss of the Maldivian people. The current status for political refugees is one that is temporary, individually granted, and catalyzed by the presence of a totalitarian authority. This definition does not apply to the Maldives as their migration from the island would be permanent, would apply to all people on the island, and is not the fault of a totalitarian dictatorship. Another possible status that does not fully encompass the Maldivian experience is that of displaced people because of natural disasters. While the natural world is causing the sea levels to rise, this is not a random arbitrary act of nature as a hurricane or a tsunami might be. The reason for displacement of the Maldivian people is because of the action (and inaction) of nations like the United States, China, and India. These nations emit large amounts of carbon, accounting for about 60% of the world’s emissions as a whole. The Maldives contributes only a tiny fraction to this number but is deeply affected by the carbon emissions of other nations. The Maldives is certainly a victim of climate change, and there are many perpetrators. Individual nations need to be held accountable for the effects of climate change, including the tragic destruction of the Maldivian national identity, culture, property, and sense of home. For this reason, Maldivians should be granted a refugee status that is somewhat political as a way to hold others accountable. This is an environmental disaster, but it is not without human apathy, destruction, and slander. In Geneva in 1951, the Maldives asked in a conference to be given a new definition for political refugee, as the description of the time period did not suit their needs or properly explain their circumstance. Over 70 years later, the international community has not pursued status, but Maldivian people have continued to suffer at the hands of greedy international emitters. These nations do not curb their emissions in time to save a nation they are destroying with their lack of concerned action.

The Maldives is arguably the first and most significant victim of climate change, yet
they do not have any significant contribution to the problem. In less than 100 years, only a couple generations, they stand little chance of being above water. This “Small Island Developing State” could be the real-life version of the mythical City of Atlantis. Attempting to go carbon neutral by 2020 with a very small GDP and few resources, the Maldives asks the political question: "If we can change to make a sustainable future with so little, why can other nations who have so many more resources not do the same?" Without hope of ever regaining a homeland, the Maldives’ people will migrate as refugees whose status and future location have yet to be determined. This terrible injustice deserves to be met with respect and recompense or reparations. There are several possible solutions that would be respectful of the trauma involved in permanently losing one’s nation, and hold major emitters accountable for the damage they have directly caused. One option is requiring large emitter nations to pool money together and buy another island that is bigger and less low lying than the Maldives, allowing the Maldives to maintain their status as a sovereign state, but relocate as a nation. The second, more plausible option is for major emitters to accept refugees from the Maldives into their nations based on the amount they emit. The greater the emissions, the more refugees a nation could accommodate. This scenario would not allow for Maldivian people to continue in their native cultural tradition but it would not require the Maldives people to build a new nation on a recently acquired land as in my first scenario. Both of these options must be paired with a serious commitment to lower carbon emissions, otherwise they would be treating the symptoms of a larger problem. The Maldives is arguably the first nation to be this intensely victimized by climate change, but other nations will undoubtedly face similar dilemmas. The Maldives is a serious warning of the atrocities soon to affect all human life. If we do not change our apathetic ways, the Maldives will be the first in a series of human atrocities that touch the whole world.

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The Refugee Camp Economy and the Economic Argument for Re-Conceptualizing Camps as Permanent Cities

The economics of refugee camps and the benefits of accepting their permanent nature

By Samuel Woods

Though the European migrant crisis has refocused Western attention toward the plight of the refugee, the issue of how a host country should deal with incoming refugees is not new. Many host countries choose to house refugees in camps, or designated areas often prepared in haste for the temporary housing of incoming refugees. However, these camps tend to exist longer than initially anticipated, and eventually begin to resemble makeshift cities, sometimes with tens of thousands of inhabitants living in a given area for an extended period of time. In time, a local economy begins to take form, and while the refugee camp economy is currently rather under researched, what economic and ethnographic research that has been done reveals key economic inefficiencies in the way camps are constructed.

In a few ways, the refugee camp economy functions much like one might expect. The primary economic actors tend to be the inhabitants themselves (as opposed to local citizens of the host country), many of whom come into the camp with previously developed productive skills and some even with access to valuable commercial networks or even financial capital back home. That being said, there are no large corporate businesses, and instead most commerce is conducted through either small specialized shops in designated market districts, or generated via the refugees’ agricultural production.

Perhaps surprisingly, there are often benefits to living and working in these camps as well. The 1951 Refugee Convention requires that taxes and tariffs levied on refugees may not be higher than the level that nationals of the same tax category pay, though often refugees do not pay taxes at all, or pay lower taxes than citizens of their host country. For example, Afghan refugee truckers working in Pakistan are exempted from licensing fees that Pakistani truckers must pay. Likewise, asylum seekers coming to Nakivale (Uganda) receive a plot of land with which to start a farm for free upon arrival. It seems from these observations that host countries generally recognize that there is typically little revenue to gain from refugees, and that refugees can typically contribute more to a country’s overall economic well-being as cheap labor than as direct revenue sources.

However, the economic costs associated with living and working in a refugee camp tend to offset or even overshadow the small benefits enjoyed by refugee workers. The most fundamental of these costs is the restrictions on movement outside of the camps. In order to travel outside of a given camp, refugees are almost always required to possess a permit issued by a settlement commander. These permits, though often in high demand, are not...
always easy to obtain. Werker (2007) notes that in the Ugandan camp in Kyangwali, the commander only issues permits on “one or two scheduled days each week”. Though these permits are generally free, they are issued at the commander’s discretion, exposing the permit allocation process to favoritism, prejudice, or even outright corruption.

This makes it difficult to conduct trade as a refugee. First, there are significant time costs involved, even if you know exactly when you will need the permit and when to see the commander, as the refugee must travel to the commander’s office and wait for however long it takes to see the commander, a process that the refugee must set aside at least a half of a day to complete. In addition, the refugee must have the foresight to plan ahead when exactly they will require access to an outside market, and then hope that they will be able to obtain the needed documentation when they expect to need it. Because of these high transaction costs associated with doing business with the outside world, a refugee is incentivized to start a business that caters to the needs of those inside the settlement. This means that refugee entrepreneurs are limited to maintaining small shops or general stores inside the camp itself, limiting themselves to smaller market sizes and lower growth potential.

Additionally, refugees face restrictions on their ability to work outside the camps, in addition to restrictions on their ability to leave the camp. Typically, in order to work outside of the refugee camp, refugees must get a work permit from the national visa office in the host country’s capital. This permit is difficult to obtain because of both time and monetary costs associated with obtaining the visa. In terms of monetary costs, the refugee must pay for transportation to the host country’s capital and back, and pay administration costs for the work permit itself. Altogether, for the refugees living in the Kyangwali camp in rural Uganda, it costs more than a season’s worth of agricultural revenue just to make the journey to Kampala (which itself does not guarantee the permit), and around 6.5 times as much as the average season’s agricultural revenue to cover administration costs, which is “prohibitively expensive” for many refugees to obtain. With respect to time costs, the refugee must obtain a permit to leave the camp, travel to the host nation’s capital, jump through all the hoops associated with obtaining the work permit, and return to the camp before the permit to leave the camp expires. One mistake could throw off the timing of the delicately constructed journey, jeopardizing the refugee’s ability to make it back to the camp on time. The complexity and financial infeasibility of the process of obtaining a work visa discourages refugees from working outside the camp, even if the job opportunities within the camp limit the refugee’s ability to realize their full earning potential. Though specific details concerning its nature have not been recorded, similar restrictions to refugees’ movement (either by law or economics) have been reported in Zaatari (Jordan) and Calais (France), indicating that the Kyanwali account is not unique.

In addition to limiting one’s ability to work, barriers on easy movement present at many refugee camps (as well as the physical distance from the host nation’s population
centers found at some of the more rural camps) contribute to unreasonably high information costs concerning economic activity in the outside world. In refugee camps, there tends to be little to no up to date information for refugee businesses concerning prices, new suppliers, best fertilizers, who is selling what crop, etc. This is particularly detrimental to farmers, and appears to at least partially explain why farmers in the Nakivale (Uganda) tend to grow maize more often than not, even when other crops have reportedly brought in seven times as much revenue in markets nearby, but outside of Nakivale. Obviously this puts refugee businesses at a disadvantage and, much like how restrictions on work limit a refugee worker’s earning potential, the lack of up to date information limits the growth potential of refugee businesses.

Additionally, the extreme isolation, maintained in part by restrictions on movement, creates an environment that is ripe for predatory pricing on behalf of host country nationals doing business with refugees. The isolation of the camp means that the camp receives relatively few external traders selling goods to the refugees and buying the refugees’ agricultural products. Even if the external traders do not explicitly collude in a collective effort to cheat the refugees, the nature of this kind of oligarchic market sustains unfair prices for longer periods than in the more competitive markets that exist outside of the refugee camp.

Likewise, the isolation of camp, either as a product of sheer distance or by movement restrictions imposed on refugees, limits the market size and complexity available to refugees. As a business, this limits one’s growth and diversification potential, as it forces the business to cater to the demand of the camp exclusively, as opposed to being able to diversify to the demands of the camp and several other local markets in the region. As a laborer, the lack of diverse employment options limit’s one earning potential, as it becomes increasingly difficult to find employment that best matches one’s particular set of skills as the total market size of the camp, and subsequently the total amount of employers, decreases.

In fact, we see again and again that the status quo of refugee camps imposing strict constraints on refugees’ ability to move and work outside the camp yields economic inefficiencies (without mentioning, of course, the potentially unlawful nature of such restrictions). Naturally, one may wonder why host countries adopt these restraints on refugee movement and work in the first place. The obvious explanation is that there are security concerns with allowing refugees to move freely around a host country. Concerns over security are certainly legitimate, and can justifiably supersede concerns about economic inefficiency. Less justifiably, but certainly realistically, it would be difficult to doubt that there is a prejudicial tendency on behalf of the host country to want to keep refugees confined to certain areas, and that sometimes these prejudices can overshadow one’s better judgment.

Additionally however, restrictions on movement and work are put in place because the refugee camp is intended to provide temporary asylum from immediate danger. They are often built in haste and grow in an ad hoc manner, as tents are pitched the day they are needed. This lack of long term planning and emphasis on temporary solutions indicates that there exists a conception that refugee camps are merely interim working and living arrangements meant to exist after the refugee has fled their home country, and before they return. Therefore, the host country is not looking to assimilate refugees into their economy, but merely support them for a few years before they leave. Restrictions on work and movement become comprehensible policies, as this makes it difficult for refugees to
root themselves in their host country long term.

In the face of this observation, it becomes clear that in order to make it easier justify lifting barriers to movement and work, and realize the economic gains to be had from a large population of laborers with diverse skills, it would behoove host countries to re-conceptualize refugee camps as permanent refugee cities instead of mere spaces of temporary asylum. At first take, this idea of accepting the permanent nature of these refugee settlements explicitly undermines any hope that refugees or host countries may have of the refugees returning to the life that they once had. The ideal narrative of refugees coming to a camp to wait out a conflict in their home country until it is safe to return, is only a valid conception of the situation if it is understood that the camps, and the circumstances that drive refugees into the camps, are ultimately temporary. For the refugees themselves, framing life in a refugee camp as ultimately temporary implies an eventual return to normality, fueling a feeling of hope that is doubtlessly valuable at such a difficult time.

But this narrative has been deemed incompatible with reality by recent history. By UNHCR estimates as of 2003, the average amount of time spent in "protracted refugee situations" (i.e., refugee situations including, but not limited to, living in refugee camps) is 17 years. This explicitly undermines the narrative that refugees only need asylum for a few years while they wait out danger. In reality, refugees who come to refugee camps (or choose to formally migrate to other countries altogether) should be seen as individuals who are, more often than not, there to stay.

And once this idea of permanence is accepted, the host country is in a better position to lift the restrictions of movement and work currently imposed on migrant communities. If one believes that refugees are only in a host country for a couple years to wait out a conflict, it is easier to accept the inefficiencies associated with limiting the growth potential of refugee businesses, constricting the earning potential of refugee laborers, subjecting refugees to unfair trading dynamics, and lack of access to information. If it is accepted that the refugees will be in a given camp for an average of 17 years, the economic inefficiencies derived from restrictions on movement and work become glaring, as the host country is essentially giving up a generation of lost productivity. It becomes obvious that both the individual refugee and the host country's economy stand to gain from the refugee's free movement and ability to work.

What the persistent metropolises of Dadaab and Nakivale make clear is that camps tend to stay open much longer than intended, and are better thought of as permanent fixtures in their regions rather than temporary anomalies.

Unfortunately, empirically estimating the economic effects of these restrictions on movement and work has proven difficult, and much of the academic work concerning refugee camp economies has been founded upon direct observation and the application of general economic principles. Likewise, no refugee camp has officially been designated as a permanent city or area of asylum, denying the opportunity for a natural experiment. This lack of empirical work leaves room for further exploration as to the magnitude of the claims made in this article.

What is no longer up for debate however, is whether refugee camps should be
seen as temporary housing, or as permanent cities with citizens able and willing to contribute to the host country’s economy. What the persistent metropolises of Dadaab and Nakivale make clear is that camps tend to stay open much longer than intended, and are better thought of as permanent fixtures in their regions rather than temporary anomalies. Considering this fact, it simply makes sense to re-conceptualize refugee camps as cities, and to lift the economically unnecessary restrictions on work and movement currently imposed on the inhabitants of these cities. At the very least—perhaps if security concerns render this solution improbable—it must be recognized that current restrictions on movement and work that refugees face in camps is economically inefficient, and that finding a way of easing these restrictions would improve the welfare of the individual refugee and host country concurrently.

Of course, basic asylum for refugees fleeing immediate danger should remain the priority, and capturing the economic gains from these refugees should be of second order to this immediate need for safety. But acknowledging that there is a hierarchy of priority when dealing with refugee camps does not preclude realizing second order goals entirely. This is not about shifting the focus from providing asylum for people in need to turning desperate people into economic gains. Rather, it is about capturing what is already there.

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Legal and Human Rights Abuses of the Obama Administration’s Drones

U.S. strikes have violated international humanitarian and human rights law and are setting a dangerous precedent for future American foreign policy

By Emily Dalgo

The Obama administration has largely abandoned one of the most vital elements of governmental responsibility in lieu of national security. The protection of human rights has become an afterthought in the wake of the administration’s foreign policy on drones since President Obama took office in 2008. Although the government will not confirm or deny any specific casualty numbers, independent research groups have found that as of 2014, the United States had carried out at least 400 drone strikes since Obama took office, killing upwards of 2,600 people. From 2009-2012 the Obama administration carried out at least 239 covert drone strikes, a significant increase from the 44 strikes approved under George W. Bush. These strikes violate not only international human rights law, but international humanitarian law—the laws of war—and are the cause of increasing international legal scrutiny against the United States, as well as civil outrage across the world.

In 2008, when Obama took the oath of office, few would have associated the young President with the term “targeted killings,” but these often clandestine counterterrorism operations have become one of the most prominent and controversial characteristics of the Obama administration’s reign. To date, the United States is known to have carried out targeted killings using drones in Afghanistan, Iraq, Libya, Pakistan, Somalia, and Yemen. Many of these operations have breached international human rights and humanitarian laws, have violated certain articles of the United Nations Charter, and are arguably infringing on the national sovereignty of the states in which these strikes are conducted. While drones have supposedly been effective in targeting specific militants that the Administration claims could not have been killed without their use, the large civilian death toll violates human rights so gravely that it renders the policy morally unfeasible, no matter its reported efficacy. International humanitarian law, also known as the law of war, applies to all states in armed conflicts, or any state in conflict with an armed non-state actor. For an attack to be lawful, it must discriminate between combatants and civilians and “the expected loss of civilian life or property cannot be disproportionate to the anticipated military gain of the attack.” While all attacks that cause civilian deaths violate the laws of war, attacks that target civilians, are indiscriminate, or cause disproportionate civilian casualties do violate these laws.

The Obama administration’s drone strikes have frequently violated one or more of these stipulations. Obama has asserted that the United States strikes only when it has “near-certainty” that no civilians will be harmed.
However, a Human Rights Watch investigation of seven U.S. drone operations in Yemen found clear violations of international humanitarian law in two attacks, one of which killed 14 militants and 42 sleeping civilians. The Obama administration evidently contradicts its position that it resorts to targeted killings by drones only when civilian lives are almost certainly safe from harm. “The U.S. says it is taking all possible precautions during targeted killings, but it has unlawfully killed civilians and struck questionable military targets in Yemen,” said Letta Tayler, senior terrorism and counterterrorism researcher at Human Rights Watch. The second unlawful strike identified by Human Rights Watch killed 12 civilians coming home from the market. The other five drone strikes targeted cars in a wedding procession, killing 12 men and wounding 15 others. Although the Obama administration may claim otherwise, the undoubted awareness of civilian loss of life suggests the indiscriminate nature of these attacks. Each attack was indiscriminate and caused disproportionate civilian loss of life—each of these attacks represented violations of international humanitarian law.

These unconscionable acts of unmitigated violence are not going unnoticed in the states in which they are perpetrated. Terrorist organizations are growing each day, likely in response to the violence caused by American drone strikes. Malala Yousafzai, 18-year-old Nobel Peace Prize winner and survivor of a Taliban assassination attempt, spoke to the Obama administration about the drone strikes in her home country of Pakistan. She claims that drone strikes only cause more violence: “I expressed my concerns that drone attacks are fueling terrorism. Innocent victims are killed in these acts, and they lead to resentment among the Pakistani people.”

While the law prohibits states from targeting civilians, individuals “directly participating in the hostilities” are not legally immune from state aggression. This condition has multiple interpretations, and the United States seems to be exploiting this fact. Human Rights Watch claims, “It is generally accepted to include not only persons currently engaged in fighting, but also individuals actively planning or directing future military operations.” But the United States may be using an “overly elastic” definition of an individual who may be lawfully attacked during an armed conflict, according to Human Rights Watch. A November 2012 drone strike in a military town in Yemen killed an alleged al-Qaeda recruiter in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP), even though recruiting activities alone are not sufficient legal grounds under the laws of war to target someone for attack, because recruiters themselves are not the ones carrying out attacks that can be considered “imminent threats.” While Obama’s policy guidelines state that the U.S. conducts strikes only against individuals who pose an “imminent threat to the American people,” and when capture is not feasible, the administration has evidently not been accountable on either of these standards.

The Peshawar High Court (PHC), the highest judicial institution of Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa, one of the four Pakistani provinces, ruled in 2013 that the United States drone strikes in Pakistan breached national sovereignty, were in violation of provisions of the Geneva Conventions and the UN Charter, and were in “blatant violation of Basic Human Rights.” Article 2(4) of the UN Charter strictly prohibits “the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any state.” The PHC determined the United State violated Pakistani sovereignty based on this Article, taking into account opposition to the strikes by the president of Pakistan, the prime minister, his cabinet, and parliament.

The court cited 1,449 civilian deaths and 335 civilian injuries since 2008 in the North and South Waziristan, concluding that the majority
of individuals killed have been civilians. The PHC referenced provisions of the Genocide Convention as well as the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights to legitimize their rulings that these killings violated the laws of war. A further legal opinion given by international legal authority Francis Boyle determined that the “murderous drone campaign is both widespread and systematic and thus qualifies as a crime against humanity that verges on genocide.”

The United States has, moreover, failed to meet its international legal obligations in its lack of transparency and accountability in regard to drone strikes. According to the European Court of Human Rights, “There must be a sufficient element of public scrutiny of the investigation or its results to secure accountability in practice as well as in theory, maintain public confidence in the authorities’ adherence to the rule of law and prevent any appearance of collusion in or tolerance of unlawful acts.” The lack of transparency does not just give the U.S. a negative international standing, it is against UN policy. Article 51 of the UN Charter states that “measures taken by Members in the exercise of [their] right to self-defense [...] be immediately reported to the Security Council.” The United States has not made any such report. Unmasking the secrecy surrounding the program and enforcing accountability, especially where civilian casualties occur, is crucial both morally and legally. That the Obama administration has prioritized a stringent, often excessive foreign policy on counterterrorism over basic human rights is abhorrent.

Beyond its violations of the laws of war, the United States’ use of drones does not conform to international human rights law, which is defined in the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights as a state’s duty to respect, protect, and fulfil human rights. Particularly sidestepped by the Obama administration is the legal obligation under this Declaration to “protect individuals and groups against human rights abuses.” In recent years, and in response to human rights groups and other pressures, the U.S. has succeeded in reducing the proportion of civilian casualties to militant casualties. However, because of increased operations the total number of human rights violations by civilian deaths has showed no significant decline.

The use of drones for targeted killings does have certain advantages. Drones can help minimize civilian casualties in comparison to manned aircraft operations, and can have enhanced surveillance capabilities that, in theory, allow for a more thorough and accurate strike. But the use of drones, as has been demonstrated in the U.S., can be “hampered by poor intelligence or local actors’ manipulation.” There are also no safeguards in place to ensure that these attacks are completely lawful and appropriate. According to a Justice Department white paper from 2011, any person, including any citizen of the United States, can be targeted and killed if an “informed, high-level official” believes that person poses an “imminent threat of violent attack” and capture is not “feasible.” Citizens of the U.S. have fallen victim to this unbridled display of power, including Anwar al-Awlaki, former al-Qaeda propagandist and United States citizen, who was killed in Yemen in 2011. The 2001 Authorization to Use Military Force Act (AUMF) played a major role in the decision to target and kill al-Awlaki, and this law is as broad as it is controversial. The AUMF is not bound by geographic or temporal limitations, raising many questions about the safety of Americans within the United States. If the Obama administration believes an individual is acting against the United States, regardless of citizenship, location, or time of involvement with an anti-American force, that person is subject to being targeted and killed. Al-Awlaki was the first known U.S. citizen
deliberately targeted and killed by an American drone strike, but he may not be the last. The administration’s official policy is that the AUMF should “ultimately be repealed” but does not support its immediate repeal.

The Justice Department white paper that outlined the ability to attack does not disclose who qualifies as a high-level official, what information is necessary to be considered informed, or what qualifies as evidence for a targeted attack to take place. The paper also does not outline the exact definition of an imminent threat. These holes in policy represent only some of the many transparency and accountability violations that are needed in order for the United States’ drone strikes to be considered legal on the basis of international humanitarian law.

**It is time to ask the crucial question, “Are we creating new terrorists faster than we can kill them?”**

The Obama administration has targeted and killed more militants that it believes to be threats to national security via drone strikes than any other administration. Yet this administration has also killed more innocent civilians through drone strikes than any other. These attacks have turned families in Pakistan, Yemen, and several other states into “terrorist sympathizers” and have fueled more anti-American sentiment than ever before. The United States has violated both international humanitarian law and international human rights law in these attacks, setting a dangerous precedent that promotes an abusive foreign policy, while simultaneously undercutting its ability to criticize others’ ability to exercise similar attacks.

The administration’s use of drone strikes has been exceptionally opaque, with covert missions as the norm rather than the exception.

No pre-strike or post-strike assessments of civilian harm have been confirmed or presented to the Security Council as mandated by the UN Charter, fostering a dangerous custom without investigation or accountability. No meaningful safeguards against abuse or error currently exist, propagating human rights violations with each strike. Human rights have become an afterthought in the wake of the Obama administration’s foreign policy on drone strikes. It is time to ask the crucial question, “Are we creating new terrorists faster than we can kill them?”

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“Do As I Say, Not As I Do”: American Exceptionalism and Post-9/11 Use of Torture

American values seemingly oppose torture. So why do we use it?
By Kellianne McClain

In a press conference on August 1, 2014 President Obama answered a question regarding the handling of a then recent report on Retention, Detention and Interrogation (or RDI) by stating that, “Even before I came into office it was very clear that in the immediate aftermath of 9/11 we did some things that were wrong. We did a whole lot of things that were right, but we tortured some folks. We did some things that were contrary to our values.” Indeed, historically, American values have been opposed to torture. A 2004 article published in New Political Science claims that “Americans tend to think of systematic government torture as a hallmark of fascism; or of backward third world regimes such as that of the thuggish Saddam Hussein in Iraq.” The article later notes that no one would have imagined that the systematic and organized practice of torture would become central to American foreign policy. This is further highlighted in Examining Torture: Empirical Studies of State Repression where the authors Tracy Lightcap and James Pfiffner argue:

In the twentieth century, the U.S. State Department regularly published accounts of torture in some countries, publicly condemning its use and urging improvements in human rights in these countries. In particular, the United States condemned the use of torture practices as partial justification for the U.S. invasion of Iraq in 2003. Thus, it is with some irony that the United States itself has been condemned internationally for the use of torture in its interrogations during the War on Terror.

Even President George W. Bush has been quoted as stating that “The United States does not torture, it is against our laws and it is against our values” with similar sentiments being echoed by others in his administration, such as former Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice.

However, extensive evidence shows that torture was the practice and de facto policy of the Bush administration and was executed primarily by the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) as a core component of the “War on Terror.” In a six-thousand page report issued by the Senate Intelligence Committee (of which a 500 page summary was released to the public in December 2015) numerous acts of torture were documented, many of which violated international human rights law and stood contrary to American values.

If the use of torture is so contrary to “American values,” why then was torture a tool so routinely used by policymakers and valued by the public in the War on Terror? This ethical dichotomy between “American values,” which traditionally oppose torture, and the reality of the use of torture exists due to the way in which
attitudes towards American exceptionalism (which were heightened after 9/11) combined with misinformation in the media and pop culture regarding the effectiveness of torture and the identities of those subjected to torture. This dangerous combination formed the conception that torture is an effective tool against agents who threaten “American values,” while disregarding the way in which the American state would degrade its own values by using torture.

Hilde Restad, Associate Professor of Peace and Conflict Studies at Bjørknes College has worked extensively on the topic of American Exceptionalism. In her book, American Exceptionalism: An Idea that Made a Nation and Remade the World, she asserts that in the aftermath of 9/11, “the Bush administration communicated a conception of American exceptionalism that set the United States apart from the rest of the world as a leader of a new crusade for democracy, strategically playing on this sense of national identity in order to engender support for specific practices.” This conception of American exceptionalism fell more closely in line with the good-versus-evil rhetoric commonly employed during the Cold War (and particularly the Reagan administration) than the still present, but less overt, ideals of American exceptionalism communicated between the fall of the Soviet Union and the attacks of 9/11. President Bush, Hilde Restad asserts, consistently framed the attacks of September 11, 2001 as an assault on freedom and the United States’ democratic institutions. This rhetoric helped to establish the idea that the United States was the “moral leader in the crusade against terrorism.” The association of fighting terrorism with defending American values treated support for the War on Terror as a test of patriotism, and this tactic was used in 97% of presidential rhetoric immediately following 9/11. It is unsurprising, then, that there was widespread bi-partisan support for the War on Terror.

This rise in the salience of American exceptionalism in U.S. political discourse is exemplified in a 2011 New York Times op-ed addressing a foreign policy debate among that year’s presidential hopefuls. The Times reported, “This is a crowd that’s big on exceptionalism, and not according to its onetime definition: as a reference to the peculiar and advantageous circumstances of our country’s genesis. They’re asserting that we have a unique global standing, our eminence essential and our values worthy of export.” The candidates were not off-base in trying to appeal to American exceptionalism in their campaign rhetoric either, as a 2010 Gallup poll showed that 80% of Americans agreed that “because of the United States’ history and Constitution, the United States has a unique character that makes it the greatest country in the world.”

Data also show that, as recently as December 2014, just after the release of the Senate Intelligence Committee’s report on torture (which revealed that the CIA committed acts such as playing “Russian Roulette” with detainees and subjecting them to rectal
dehydration), many Americans still believed that the CIA’s treatment of suspected terrorists did not amount to torture and that the torture of suspected terrorists could be justified. Specifically, a Washington Post-ABC news poll revealed that 38% of Americans believed that the CIA’s treatment of suspected terrorists did not amount to torture, and 58% of Americans believed that torture of suspected terrorists could often or sometimes be justified, additionally 19% responded that torture could be justified in rare instances. Of the same group of respondents, 53% believed that the use of enhanced interrogation techniques on suspected terrorists produced information that could not have been produced any other way. These types of sentiments are echoed not only by the general public, but also by American soldiers, as a 2007 Washington Post article revealed that at least one-third of American soldiers believed that torture should be allowed if it helps gather important information about insurgents. These statistics clearly show that, while around three-quarters of Americans believed there to be at least some rare instances that justify torture, the majority of respondents assume that the use of torture or enhanced interrogation techniques can result in information that advances U.S. national security. Unfortunately, and contrary to many Americans’ beliefs, torture does not typically result in reliable information. After the release of the Senate Intelligence Committee’s report on torture, the Washington Post stated that “the report found that more than two dozen detainees were wrongly held, that the program was poorly managed, and that the CIA misled U.S. officials about the effectiveness of the program.” The New York Times also found at least eight specific instances in the report in which CIA claims of torture being effectively used to gain intelligence were shown to be false. The most high profile case in which the CIA lied about the effectiveness of its program was in relation to the killing of Osama bin Laden. In this case, the CIA claimed that information produced under its enhanced interrogation program led to vital information about one of bin Laden’s secret couriers and ultimately aided the now famous 2011 raid that killed the al-Qaeda leader. As it turns out, however, the CIA had information about this courier as early as 2002 and that information had been obtained from a different detainee who had been cooperative from the outset. Furthermore, in 2012, researcher John Scheimann concluded in his paper “Interrogational Torture: Or How Good Guys get Bad Information with Ugly Methods” that, although information from interrogational torture is unreliable, it is likely to be used frequently and harshly.

In addition to, or perhaps because of, this misinformation from the CIA, the idea that torture is a useful and essential tool in obtaining information is prevalent in many contemporary elements of pop culture, which helps explain why so many people find the arguments for torture so convincing. Even recently deceased Supreme Court Justice Anthony Scalia once cited the television show 24 and its main character Jack Bauer as relevant background for constitutional jurisprudence regarding “rough interrogation” methods. He states that “Jack Bauer saved hundreds of lives [...] Are you going to convict Jack Bauer? Say that criminal law is against him? [...] I don’t think so.” But as both the Atlantic article where this quote appears, and satirical news anchor John Oliver point out, Jack Bauer is not real, and torture works in shows like 24 because it has to in order to move the plot along.

So although American values, according to academics as well as public officials oppose the use of torture, many actions taken by the United States government, and the Central Intelligence Agency in particular, following 9/11 can be classified as torture. Further, an
overwhelming number of Americans think that the use of these techniques was essential in obtaining information relevant to American security and the War on Terror. After 9/11, there was a rise in the frequency of rhetoric on American exceptionalism, framed in the context that the terrorist attacks were the result of hatred for American constitutional freedoms, such as the freedoms of religion, speech, and democratic election. The hatred of these values and freedoms, which 80% of Americans believe make the United States the greatest country in the world, now poses a threat to American security and American lives. In post-9/11 America, the pairing of growing support for the idea that the United States is a beacon of democracy, and the greatest country in the world, now threatened by terrorism, with the false information that torture effectively produces intelligence that is crucial to national security can be attributed to the ethical dichotomy in which American ideals are fundamentally opposed to the concept of torture.

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Saddam Hussein: Was He the Totalitarian We Were Led to Believe?

Assessing the accuracy of totalitarianism as a label for the Iraqi regime

By Adam Goldstein

Introduction and Operationalization

In his 2002 State of the Union address, then-President George Bush accused three states of forming a new “axis of evil.” Saddam Hussein, then leader of Iraq and a member of the “axis of evil,” soon became one of the United States’ chief enemies. In order to juxtapose the United States with Iraq, much of the American political discourse framed Saddam Hussein as a totalitarian leader. Dr. Ahmed Chalabi, a member of the three-man council leading the Iraqi National Congress, an opposition group to Hussein’s Ba’ath Party, labeled Hussein a totalitarian. However, as Peter Grieder notes, one of the criticisms of totalitarianism as an effective model to understand government is that it is often used as a normative label. Much of the rhetoric surrounding the use of totalitarianism as a label is itself politically charged and used to generate a specific response, making it difficult to understand exactly how accurate of a label it is.

Before exploring the efficacy of totalitarianism as a model for understanding Hussein’s government, some explanation of the term must be given. Friedrich and Brzezinski’s definition of totalitarianism will be used for this paper. For Friedrich and Brzezinski, totalitarianism has six components: An official ideology geared toward a perfected state of mankind that demands complete adherence; a mass party led by one person; a system of terror, which could be physical, psychological, or both; a monopoly of control by the government of all means of mass communication; a similar monopoly of control by the government of the military and weapons; and finally, a centralized command economy. Their definition, Grieder notes, achieved consensus in scholarly circles. Friedrich and Brzezinski’s definition is used because it reaches an appropriate equilibrium between specificity and generalizability. Theories in political science are usually too specific or not specific enough, but Friedrich and Brzezinski’s theory is balanced since it allows for unique examples within the regime of study, but is also broad enough to allow comparative analysis. Thus, it presents the best model to assess the extent to which the Hussein regime could be considered totalitarian.

Totalitarianism is a very specific system of governance. Many states that are labeled as totalitarian are, in fact, authoritarian. Because totalitarianism is a political extreme—meaning that it is the zenith of authoritarianism—and thus requires total adherence to Friedrich and Brzezinski’s formula, it is imprecise to place that moniker on regimes that do not meet all of its requirements. The two regimes that are most often correctly labeled totalitarian, Hitler’s Germany and Stalin’s Soviet Union, met all of
these requirements. Hussein’s regime, however, did not. Although Hussein’s government comes quite close to totalitarianism, its allowance of private gun ownership precludes it from truly being totalitarian. Despite the fact that Hitler only removed the right to gun ownership from “undesirables” and Stalin also allowed private gun ownership for hunting and self-defense, the extent to which other totalitarian institutions were utilized more than made up for this. Hussein, on the other hand, never had a military as strong as Nazi Germany’s, and never had a security apparatus as robust as the Soviet Union’s. Therefore, Hussein’s regime can correctly be called near totalitarian, rather than truly totalitarian.

Regime Analysis

The first of the six points is that a totalitarian regime will establish an official ideology geared toward a perfect state of mankind that demands its subjects’ complete adherence. Hussein’s party subscribed to Neo-Ba’athism, which is a splinter faction of the socialist, secular, and pan-Arab Ba’ath party. After the original Ba’ath party split in 1966 due to factionalist infighting and ideological differences, it began to seize power in Iraq. Iraqi Neo-Ba’athism, which is also called Saddamism—the ideology followed by Hussein—stipulates that Arab states should look to Iraq as the leader of the Arab “nation,” and invokes militarist and nationalist rhetoric and policies. It diverges from traditional Ba’athism by placing a single state as the leader of the Arab “nation,” as well as rejecting notions of class conflict, arguing that Arab states do not have similar class structures to the West. Lastly, Saddamism maintains a strong link between ancient Mesopotamian civilizations and modern Arab nationalism. Political dissidence in Saddamist Iraq was crushed; Hussein frequently orchestrated brutal purges and jailed political dissidents on often-imagined charges.

At one point, Hussein gassed the Kurdish village of Halabja in 1988, killing 5,000 and injuring 10,000, all on suspected beliefs of disloyalty. When considering Friedrich and Brzezinski’s first point of totalitarianism, Hussein forced adherence to a supremacist political ideology, which demands a perfected Arab world, so it applies.

The second point of totalitarianism, that there is a mass party led by one person, is also true of Hussein’s regime. Although the Iraqi Ba’athist party had leaders before Hussein, once he came to power, the party was completely controlled by the dictator. A coup orchestrated by Hussein in 1968 installed him as vice president, which he used to develop a robust national security apparatus. In 1979, Hussein won an internal power struggle over his brother, allowing him to come to the presidency, after which he instituted the first of his purges. From this point onwards, Hussein led the Iraqi Ba’athist party, frequently purging opponents within government as well as ethnic and cultural minorities in Iraq to further consolidate power. Two other states that can be considered totalitarian, Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union, instituted frequent purges of undesirables to allow further consolidation of power around a single leader, such as Hitler or Stalin. Purges as tools of political consolidation, are frequently used by totalitarian leaders, and allow for one person to lead the mass party. Friedrich and Brzezinski’s second point of totalitarianism applies to Hussein’s regime as well.

The third point, that a totalitarian state possesses a system of state led physical and/or psychological terror is true for Hussein’s regime. The common facilitator for state led terror is a secret police force. The Iraqi Intelligence Service, also called the Party Intelligence (which is important to know because it demonstrates the allegiances of the secret police), was Iraq’s version of the secret
police. The Party Intelligence orchestrated the Dujail massacre, killing between 142 and 148 Shiites in a reprisal attack for an assassination attempt against Hussein by Iranian-backed militias. The massacre at Dujail was but one of many state sponsored attacks against civilian populations. Totalitarian leaders frequently play up biases among ethnic groups to help facilitate purges and state attacks. The Nazi party blamed Jews for Germany's problems, and state intelligence services like the Gestapo would take them to concentration camps. Stalin would call his enemies capitalists or traitors to the communist cause, and would murder them. In Iraq, the major cleavages were along ethnic and religious lines, between Kurds, Shiites, and Sunnis. Hussein would plan and would execute state attacks on Shiites and Kurds in order to sow fear into the minds of the population. The third point of totalitarianism, state sponsored terror, also applies.

The fourth point, a state monopoly on means of mass communication and media was present under Hussein's regime as well. Article 36 of the 1990 Iraqi constitution stipulated that the national government, led by Hussein, had the right to prevent production or dissemination of anything harming "national unity" and the "objectives of the People." Freedom of the press was nonexistent under Hussein, and the state possessed the right to both pre-hoc and post-hoc prevention and cancelation of materials they found disagreeable. This is a strategy used by totalitarian regimes to eradicate civil society. With weakened press, entertainment, and scholarly sectors, materials critical of Hussein's regime would not be allowed to exist. By preventing alternative discourses on Iraqi politics, Hussein could spout his propaganda, indoctrinating the population. The sole news network under Hussein was the Iraqi News Agency, which functioned as a propaganda tool for the regime. According to a 2002 report by the United States Department of State, "The government restricts severely freedoms of speech, the press, assembly, association, religion, and movement." By preventing people from freely expressing themselves, Hussein's regime could spread their political ideology unimpeded, further allowing the regime to maintain total control. The fourth point of totalitarianism, government control of mass communication applies to Hussein's Iraq.

The fifth point of totalitarianism, a state monopoly on weapons and soldiers, somewhat breaks with the trend in this analysis. While the military was controlled and used as a tool of state oppression, individuals were curiously allowed to possess firearms. According to a 2003 New York Times report, "Most Iraqi households own at least one gun." Totalitarian leaders, by definition, possess monopolies on force; otherwise they could be contested violently. Hussein's regime allowed households to own a firearm for self-defense, breaking lockstep with his other more totalitarian policies. Logically, a person attempting to establish a totalitarian regime would not want widespread individual gun ownership, but Hussein likely would have wanted individuals to own guns to deter invasion by his enemies, such as Iran or the United States. So, in one way, this could be seen as a nationalistic tool. On the other hand, however, Hussein is lucky an armed uprising did not occur to the extent that he could have been overthrown.

This paper takes the position that private gun ownership presents a flaw in connecting Hussein's regime to totalitarianism, as it left political stability up to the ability of the regime to carefully maneuver itself politically. Additionally, Hussein's totalitarian institutions were not nearly as robust as other totalitarian regimes. The Party Intelligence could hardly be compared to the Soviet Union's secret police force, the People's Commissariat for Internal Affairs, and Hussein's propaganda machine
lacked its own Goebbels. While other totalitarian regimes allowed gun ownership, Hussein’s totalitarian institutions lacked the robustness to deter and prevent real armed opposition, and thus, gun ownership precludes true totalitarianism in this case.

The other aspect of the use of force in Hussein’s regime was the role of the military. The military under Hussein’s regime, expectedly, was under his direct control. The most important part of the military under Hussein was the Republican Guard, which constituted the elite paramilitary troops of the Iraqi Army. Formed in 1969 as the Presidential Guard, the role of this organization was to maintain state stability against perceived internal and external enemies, essentially, guaranteeing Hussein’s regime power. A report from the Washington Institute for Near East Policy labeled the Republican Guard as an integral structure in Hussein’s regime.

Point five of totalitarianism only half applies. The military institutions necessary for a successful totalitarian regime were present, but Hussein’s allowance of private gun ownership prevents his regime from truly reflecting this aspect of totalitarianism.

Point six, the final point, stipulates that a totalitarian state runs a command economy; in other words, a highly centralized, state run economy. According to a 2003 report from ReliefWeb, a human rights organization, Hussein’s economy was a highly centralized command economy. Nationalization of oil, prohibitions against foreign ownership of businesses—leading to state owned enterprises as the primary form of big business in Iraq—and high tariffs on foreign goods were all policies implemented by Hussein’s regime. Because the state runs the economy, individuals are inherently linked to and dependent on the state, helping to strengthen and maintain the low levels of personal agency of the regime’s subjects. By weakening individual agency, political opposition is limited. Command economies allow the totalitarian leader to build high levels of capital for their endeavors, and prevent political opposition. Hussein used his command economy policies to reach these goals. Point six, that is a command economy, applies to Hussein’s government.

**Conclusion**

By using Friedrich and Brzezinski’s conceptual framework for a totalitarian government, we can say that Hussein’s regime is more “totalitarian lite,” rather than a completely totalitarian system. Iraq under Hussein met most of the requirements laid out by Friedrich and Brzezinski: The ideology advocated for an ideal state and opposition to said ideology was crushed; the Iraqi Ba’athist party was led by Hussein once he swiftly gained power and was not relinquished until the United States invaded Iraq; a state led system of terror facilitated by state intelligence agencies was present; the state heavily censored forms of media and communication, and ran the only legitimate avenues for media and communication; while there was no monopoly on guns, the state did have its own paramilitary force and was in control of the rest of the army; and there was a command economy. If it were not for provisions allowing for private ownership of guns, Hussein could be considered a true totalitarian leader; instead, he should only be taken as a brutal dictator.

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The New Face of American Populism

The new face of American Populism has taken plays from old Populists, but has been given a new form by the current political atmosphere

By Jeremy Clement

The rhetoric surrounding Presidential elections and politics in the U.S. has evolved in some ways, devolved in some ways, and stayed the same in other ways as time has gone on. Populist rhetoric, used notably by George Wallace in the 1960s in opposition to the civil rights movement, has taken a new form today. While most candidates in this present election appeal to populist attitudes and use populist arguments in some form, one candidate in particular has a brand of populism that fits traditionally with that of the 19th Century U.S. People’s Party and that of George Wallace in the 1960s. Donald Trump has used familiar techniques to push his way to the top of the Republican field. These techniques are eerily similar to those used in the past, but that have also evolved into something new that is unique to Trump and American politics in this era.

Populism also has underlying principles among them being; a rejection of the rule of law but the belief in the moral preferences of the majority as absolute, a belief in the honest labor of the producers of society and a negative view of those who do not fit this work ethic, and a belief in the revitalization of national ideals (i.e. Making America Great Again).

There are certain dangers associated with this type of speech. Above all is the tendency of populist speech to degrade proper civil discourse. It tends to focus more on becoming in tune with common citizen ideals instead of focusing on what is beneficial for the country as a whole or what is the best policy. Populist rhetoric tends to fuel emotions rather than reason. The populism today of Mr. Trump has these undertones in common with the populism of George Wallace in the 60s, showing a continuing trend of effective populist tactics.

Trump’s and Wallace’s Populism

When discussing policy and political ideas, the constitution is only mentioned by Trump and Wallace when it suits them. To them, the most important staple of democracy is majority rule, the beliefs of the common man. Thought like this tends to favor the views of the majority over the rights of minorities. Take for example Trump’s calls for the surveillance of
the Muslim population, or Wallace’s calls for “segregation forever” despite previous Supreme Court rulings and the rights of those effected by segregation.

The sanctity of the working man, or the producers of society, is held by both leaders. Wallace used the tax system as a means to pit the working class against the poor/lower classes. He explained how the tax system stripped the working class of their hard earned money and was used to feed to poor. Similarly, Trump takes a stand against undocumented immigration on the grounds that American citizens are forced to pay tax dollars to undocumented immigrants and the grounds that immigrants entering the U.S. could burden the welfare system. The claims of both are generally not supported with evidence, but that is not the point. The speech sounds good and feeds into the idea of the common, struggling, working man fighting against an unfair system that does not respect his values.

These two leaders have another more ominous commonality between their rhetoric. As discussed before, populist rhetoric does not usually examine the affects and usefulness of policies, but instead examines how well they fit into the structural model of the populist’s version of how society is doing. This type of thought requires scapegoats to use as a means of transferring blame. When a policy needs to be put in place but has no real function, a scapegoat is needed. For example Trump needed to offer a policy of Muslim surveillance, so the stories of the Muslim community in New Jersey celebrating the fall of the world trade center were invented. Just as when Wallace needed to implement segregationist polices for political purposes myths about the negative effects of integration were circulated. Furthermore both leaders used the threat of violence and the plight of protesters to further their agenda. Wallace rallies contained violence against counter protesters and used the mocking of protesters as a means of communicating with supporters. Today we see the same atmosphere of violence surrounding Trump rallies and the same contempt for protesters, which takes away from the process of true discourse surrounding policies and ideas.

Where Trump Diverges From Traditional Populism

Trump undoubtedly has his own brand of politics. Very few politicians communicate the way he does and his type of campaigning has completely changed the way American political discourse is carried out. Regarding his brand of populism, he differs in some ways from past populists.

Most notably is Trump’s image as a billionaire. Trump not only is a billionaire, but he flaunts this trait while still claiming to be a man of the common people. This is interesting because it breaks with previous tradition. Normally a populist would want to be viewed as one of the people they are representing. However, in Trump’s brand of populism he is able to connect with the common man yet still flaunt his elitism. This is likely due to his pull
you yourself up by your own bootstraps ethic. This means that he is viewed as a common man who just happened to work hard enough to become wealthy.

Trump has changed the intellectual nature of political discourse. Populists in the past although they did not necessary use logic and reason to choose policies, they did lace their rhetoric with pseudo-intellectual talk that glossed over the nature of their speech. With Trump he does not use this tactic. His speeches are filled with one-liners, contradictions, and no clear political philosophy. This could be an anomaly with Trump, or it could be indicating a change in the nature of the American voter. Social media, twitter, and headline news has made us hungry for quick information without regard for analysis of the issues at hand. Perhaps, Trumps rhetoric is just a manifestation of the decline in the public’s desire for proper civil discourse.

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The U.S. and Legal Pluralism: Reckoning Private Rights with the Public

The complex reconciling of private religious ideologies and secular public tradition in the United States

By Laura Thompson

The United States has found itself on a cultural breaking point. Currently, two major opinions are coexisting—and clashing heavily—in political society. The first is that the U.S. Constitution prohibits the establishment of an official religion, and in larger interpretation the establishment of the U.S. as a “Christian nation;” the second is the prospect of expanding normative and legal pluralism in the U.S. is possible, in favor of legislation determined by Christian values. The issue is more complex than it might initially seem: does the installation of Christian laws make a nation Christian, and did the Founding Fathers want such a thing at all? Although the Fathers forbade an established religion, some politicians argue that this does not negate the presence of Christianity in the government overall. This work argues that expansive legal pluralism in general family law has no place in the United States, not only because of the diverse and non-Christian population of the nation, but also because language in the Constitution and philosophical background of the Founders indicates it was not their intention or desire to found a Christian nation, either officially or informally.

It is important to first determine precisely what legal and normative pluralism mean. Norbert Roulard defines legal pluralism as “the multiplicity of forms of law present within any social field.” In extension, John Griffiths defines the term as

[O]ne in which law and legal institutions are not all subsumable within one “system” but have their sources in the self-regulatory activities which may support, complement, ignore or frustrate one another, so that the law which is actually effective on the “ground floor” of society is the result of enormously complex and usually in practice unpredictable patterns of competition, interaction, negotiation, isolationism and the like.

A functional example of a culture with recognizable legal pluralism is a country with active Sharia Law. An example discussed here will be Jordan. Now, in the most simplistic of terms, Jordan operates with both Sharia and civil courts. Sharia courts have jurisdiction over personal and familial matters such as Diya and matters concerning Islamic Waqfs. The Personal Status Law of 1976, covering issues of marriage, divorce, and other personal matters, is also based on Sharia law. However, the Sharia courts are meant for the Muslim population of Jordan; a non-Muslim party can only be taken to court in the Sharia system if he or she consents to submitting to the jurisdiction. Non-
Muslim Jordanians subscribe strictly to the civil court, unless they choose otherwise.

Normative pluralism simply dictates “a plurality of bearers of value.” The idea is that there is ultimately one primary value; in the case of the U.S., the likely goal of normative pluralism for some lawmakers and citizens is that that value is Christian morality. Although everyone can be Christian in different ways, and to varying degrees, ultimately that single religion or value prevails amongst a plurality. While normative plurality works clearly within demographics, it is not so easily applied to the entire United States.

In October of 2010, Delaware U.S. Senate candidate Christine O’Donnell questioned the presence of a separation of Church and State being mandatory in the U.S. Constitution. Of course, she was not entirely misled in her questioning: the specific language of “separation of Church and State” does not actually appear in the founding document. In fact, the concept wouldn’t be realized for several years later by Jefferson in a letter. What the First Amendment does say is that the government shall make no law “respecting an establishment of religion or prohibiting the free exercise thereof.” So, if one only considers this particular line from the First Amendment as representative of the Founders’ full opinion, then it is reasonable to assume that while the United States cannot declare an official religion, the inclusion of religious principles, Christian in particular, are not by any means forbidden.

However, this singular reading would be a mistake. The First Amendment is essentially a written guarantee that the government may not compel nor prohibit the exercise of religion in its state. It is as important to note this distinction as it is to note that the Founders likely did not intend an atheistic nation. Rather, that men and women would practice their religion of choice in their private lives, without the interference, guidance, support, or opposition of the government. After all, the original Puritans of North America had fled religious persecution of a similar nature in England only a century or two prior.

If the value of private practice is maintained, then, normative and legal pluralism in family law cannot reasonably exist in the United States. For while individual households are free to worship at their leisure, protected by the United States, they cannot also be free to dictate the practices of others by legal declaration. The difficulty is two-fold, of course. First, that the U.S. has become vastly more diversified in culture and religion since the Founding Fathers first wrote down their ideas on the conceptualization of their new nation. The second, that it seems rather unlikely that the Founders, spurred on by hopes of religious and economic freedom, and inspired by the ideology of the Enlightenment, would have encouraged the enforcement of religious policy on others without their free consent, and beyond the purview of private practice.

Attempting to interpret the will of the Founding Fathers is a risky and elusive effort. To guess the wills and opinions of men who cannot be directly asked is a perilous endeavor, but perhaps it is a venture worth pursuing. After all, there is no doubt that the Enlightenment influenced the Fathers—Jefferson alone, in his devotion to the philosophies of John Locke, is evidence enough of it. In one correspondence, John Adams wrote,

Every Species of these Christians would persecute Deists, as soon as either Sect would persecute another, if it had unchecked and unbalanced power. Nay, the Deists would persecute Christians, and Atheists would persecute Deists, with as unrelenting Cruelty, as any Christians would persecute them or one another. Know thyself; Human Nature!
Adams’s letter, then, returns us to the religious and political speculations of Senator O’Donnell. In her turn with Democratic opponent Chris Coons, she likely thought she was being clever—for Coons could not reasonably argue that the Constitution claimed a separation of Church and State. But that was 2010. Today, although the sentiment of the Christian nation remains, the discourse surrounding that ideal has morphed. In Rafael Cruz’s A Time for Action: Empowering the Faithful to Reclaim America, Rafael’s son, Ted Cruz, wrote the following in his epilogue to the work: “What we are really seeing is an increasing hostility to religious liberty, and to Christians in particular.” Given the lack of significant anti-Christian terror in the U.S., it can be largely assumed that this ‘hostility to religious liberty’ may well be the backlash to the assumption that U.S. law should be dictated by Christian religious platforms.

Politics aside, the issue here is not one of opinion, religion, or even autonomy. It is an issue of language. Private practice is no longer private when one seeks to eliminate the right to choice of other individuals because of their personal prerogatives.

It is worth noting that many of the issues in the U.S. can be summarized by a lack of precision of language. If violation of religious liberty is defined by an inability to dominate U.S. law with that same religion, then the concept of liberty itself has been deeply misconstrued. Religious liberty in the U.S., after all, is the right of individual and private practice. There is, in fact, an argument to be made that the religious liberty of non-Christians is violated when Christianity dictates the decisions of lawmakers concerning the masses.

A separation of Church and State is not demanded by the Constitution, but it is an implied necessity. As evidenced by lawmakers concerning the legislation surrounding abortion, many find it difficult to disassociate their faith from their authoritative powers. In January of 2016, Ted Cruz attended a pro-life rally, accompanied by many other pro-life leaders, including Iowa conservative leader Bob Vander Plaats. At the event, Vander Plaats said, “I don’t know about you, but I know about me, and 2016, this country hungers and thirsts for a spiritual revival. To turn our hearts back to God, his principle and his precepts.” Cruz himself stated, “Every human life is a precious gift from God and should be protected from the moment of conception until the moment of nature death,” which wouldn’t be such a complicated thing—he is, of course, entitled to hold any given opinion—except that he is also running for one of the most authoritatively powerful positions in the entire world. Cruz and Vander Plaats hold similar opinions to many in the pro-life crowd; their collective voice seek to eliminate Planned Parenthood as an accessible health center for women, and more importantly, to eliminate abortion as a legal medical procedure for those in the U.S. seeking the service.

Politics aside, the issue here is not one of opinion, religion, or even autonomy. It is an issue of language. Private practice is no longer private when one seeks to eliminate the right to choice of other individuals because of their personal prerogatives. An argument exists that the very legality of abortion violates the religious liberty of some Christians—however, this position is not without its fallacies. The primary one of interest here is that this sentiment does not fundamentally align with the nation that the opinion exists in. If the
possession of certain rights violates one's sense of personal liberty, and only nationally enforced laws of religious foundation can right one's sensibilities, then the United States cannot be a nation of contended residential choice.

Legal plurality in the U.S. simply does not align with the language of its foundations, whatever the current interests of contemporary Christians may be. Even if the Fathers did not declare a separation in those precise words, the first Amendment is not vague on its demands concerning a limitation of religious imposition on others. If legal decisions such as abortion and the institution of marriage are determined based predominately on the religious values of a demographic, then those legislators are in violation of the intentions of the Constitution. The religious prerogatives of politicians cannot determine the lives and decisions of the masses, particularly if there is not a normative pluralism amongst the entire population in favor of such a trend.

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About the Magazine

THE WORLD MIND is the online policy magazine for international and public affairs, published by Clocks and Clouds, American University’s undergraduate research journal. Published twice per semester, the World Mind gives American University undergraduate students the opportunity to submit original work to a variety of issue area columns—Human Rights, Peace, and Conflict Resolution; Foreign Policy and Global Security; Government; Political Theory; International Sustainability, Development, and Global Health; Legal Studies; Trade, Business, and Economics, as well as various regionally-focused columns—The Americas, Africa and the Middle East, Europe, and Asia. Our mission is to provide an engaging and stimulating magazine for the AU community, and an outlet for creative, intelligent, and informed minds.

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The World Mind accepts guest submissions in addition to its regular column articles. The World Mind accepts policy papers, critical essays, current events articles, feature articles, and book reviews. Guest writers seeking to be considered for publication in the World Mind are encouraged to send their submissions to worldmindau@gmail.com. Authors are required to specify the type of submission and column for which they would like to be considered in the subject line and body of the email (e.g., “Paper submission: COLUMN TITLE, SUBMISSION TYPE”). Authors must attach their submissions as a Microsoft Word (.doc or .docx) file with the document name according to the following format: LAST NAME_TITLE_YEAR. Submissions must be received by 11:59 pm EST the night before each issue’s deadline announced ahead of time.

The World Mind’s next release will be a special issue focused on the 2016 U.S. presidential elections. Submissions for the special issue must be received by 11:59 pm EST on May 1st, 2016. Articles considered for submission must conform to the official copyright, intellectual property, and academic integrity policies of Clocks and Clouds and American University.

The World Mind is currently accepting applications for staff writers and contributing editors. For information on the qualifications and duties of each position, visit the Clocks and Clouds website: https://edspace.american.edu/clocksandclouds/.