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Dear Reader,

First of all, this issue would not have been possible without your submissions. We received a large number of well-written, thought-provoking essays and our final decision was very difficult to make. Thank you for sharing your work with us; it is extraordinarily exciting to be able to read what students are thinking about and researching throughout the world.

We would like to thank Jeff Shokler and Mary Czynszak-Lyne of the L&S Honors program, whose advice and dedication to this project have been indispensable. I would also like to thank Aaron Brower, whose insightful suggestions have helped make the journal far more visible. Additionally, I would like to thank Professor Scott Straus for his continued support as our faculty mentor. Without these people, this issue would not have been possible.

It also gives us great pleasure to announce that the Journal of Undergraduate International Studies is officially online. Thanks to the generous support of Aaron Brower and the Office of the Vice Provost for Teaching and Learning, Steve Smith and the Global Studies Program, and the creative skills of Frederick Gibbs, we have a new way to spread the knowledge of the journal. We’ve uploaded our previous issues and are thrilled to explore new possibilities on the web. Please check out the website: www.juis.global.wisc.edu

We also need to thank our editors for their dedication and focus. Without your patience, we would never have gotten this issue off the ground. We wish those of our staff that are graduating the best of luck and I look forward to working with those who remain.

Finally, thank you to the reader for taking the time to read this issue. It is our hope that the essays within will highlight new ways of viewing the international arena and prompt discussions and debates on campus and beyond.

Sincerely,

Maria D. Putzer & Daniel Knudsen, Editor-in-Chief

The Journal of Undergraduate International Studies would like to acknowledge its founder and first editor-in-chief David Coddon. The first two issues of this journal were published with the generous support of the University of Wisconsin Leadership Trust, and continued publication is made possible through the Coddon Family Foundation. Additional funding and support is provided by the University of Wisconsin-Madison College of Letters and Sciences Honors Program, the Office of the Vice Provost for Teaching and Learning, and the Department of Political Science.
Few nations have done as much to lead the transition away from fossil fuels as Brazil. According to the Brazilian Ministry of Mines and Energy, as of 2005, Brazil derived 43.9% of its domestic energy from renewable sources. The world as a whole, however, supplied 13.6% of its energy production from renewables. In other developing countries, that figure stands at 6%. Moreover, Brazil’s adoption of alternative fuels is a fairly recent phenomenon. In less than four decades, the country has transformed itself from a nation that imported approximately 80% of its petroleum from foreign sources in 1973 into one that could declare its own independence from fossil fuels by 2006. Despite significant increases in total energy and petroleum consumption, this move away from imported hydrocarbons was made possible by the rapid expansion of domestically produced renewable fuels, particularly through sugarcane-derived ethanol. As of 2004, Brazil’s sugarcane harvest produced more than 14 billion liters of ethanol, which supplied approximately 45% of the energy demand coming from the country’s fleet of light vehicles.

This shift away from fossil fuels carries with it a number of important implications. One of the most central impacts of Brazil’s transition towards renewable energy sources is its associated hope for phasing out massive oil consumption. Although beyond the scope of this report, it should suffice to say that the use of fossil fuels is responsible for a great deal of geo-political strife and global environmental insecurities. At the very least, because the problems brought about bycombusting petrol seem to be exacerbated by increased consumption, it would be wise to search for alternatives where available. It is also quite significant that this transition has occurred in Brazil, as it highlights the role of the Global South in creatively solving its own problems and in pioneering a trail towards energy independence and greener fuels.

The expansion of biofuels in Brazil also offers very interesting insights on sustainable development. For the sake of this report, I will focus on what the ethanol program means for the larger sustainability debate. I argue that Brazil’s successes in biofuels within the market economy have resulted from prioritizing an economically viable alternative to fossil fuels over the secondary environmental concern and the distantly tertiary interest in social impact. However, if we are to cultivate a sustainable future, planners must affirm the equal importance of social, environmental and economic interests. Due to the way in which ethanol production has evolved in Brazilian sugarcane fields, sustainable development requires that planners elevate the causes of green and red activists and reconcile differences between the two. Doing so would form a comprehensive and unified Brown Agenda that can bargain with capital’s interests.

Before addressing the evolution of Brazil’s biofuel production, I will define sustainability

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so as to create the analytical framework in which to discuss the development of sugarcane. After analyzing the economic, environmental and social impact of sugarcane production for fuel, the report will focus on the conflicts that arise from camps advocating for these three interests. I will conclude by reassessing the role that planners must play in developing a sustainable fuel supply from sugarcane.

What is Sustainable Development?

In 1987 the UN released the World Commission on Environment and Development, one of the earliest reports to define issues of sustainability. This report, also known as the Brundtland Commission or Our Common Future, established sustainable development as that which “meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.” Since then, a number of academics have criticized this definition, offering their own adaptations instead. William Rees, for instance, lamented the Commission’s assumption “that any limits on the environment’s ability to meet human needs were imposed not so much by nature as ‘by the state of technology and social organization’ (p 43),” and argued that this “expansionist perspective” could no longer be supported by the finite resources available. Others have sought to highlight the role that sustainable development must play in creating intragenerational and intergenerational equity. According to Tim O’Riordan, “sustainable development ought to mean the creation of a society and an economy that can come to terms with the life support limits of the planet in a way that enables the most vulnerable peoples to survive with dignity in a self reliant manner.”

As these and numerous other definitions of sustainability emerged, a fairly vague understanding of sustainable development began to form around the principles of distributing social and economic benefits more equally within environmental constraints for sustained improvements through the generations. Despite the abstractness that such a variety of definitions may imply, many experts remained undeterred as to the usefulness of the term. Hemple argues, “The emerging sustainability ethic may be more interesting for what it implies about politics than for what it promises about ecology.” In their introduction to Just Sustainabilities, Agyeman, Bullard and Evans compared sustainability “with other over-arching societal values such as democracy and freedom, [where] there are many interpretations of what sustainability might be and how societies might make progress towards it.”

Numerous scholars of sustainability have tried to juggle exactly how to transform this
politic​al​ imperative into concrete societal changes. Scott Campbell, in his article entitled “Green Cities, Growing Cities, Just Cities?,” claims, “It is one thing to locate sustainability in the abstract, but quite another to reorganize society to get there.” He adds, “In the battle of big public ideas, sustainability has won: the task of the coming years is simply to work out the details, and to narrow the gap between its theory and practice.” To resolve this challenge, Campbell designed “The Planner’s Triangle: Three Priorities, Three Conflicts.”

The crux of Campbell’s argument is that in practice, planners often “represent one particular goal... and serving the narrower interests of their clients, that is, authorities and bureaucracies.” These interests tend to fall under one of three main categories, each of which represents one corner of the planner’s triangle. As such, there arises (1) the economic planner interested in expanding growth and efficiency, (2) the environmental planner concerned with containing production and consumption to levels that natural resources and sinks can absorb, and (3) the social equity planner trying to justly distribute benefits.

Connecting these three corners and interests are three axes of conflicts. Each nexus deals with resolving another competing interest that must address significant inherent contradictions. This paradox is “complicated because each side not only resists the other, but also needs the other for its own survival.”

Thus, the property conflict arises largely from concessions that the proprietor must give to sustain labor. Likewise, just as the businessman or woman requires some social regulation to continue economic gains, the property owner also needs environmental protections to maintain production for present and future generations. According to Campbell, resolving the final nexus, the development conflict, may be the most complex of all as it may require as a prerequisite that the resource and property conflicts are already solved. The hope is that having resolved these three conflicts by negotiating opposing claims and finding room for creative collaboration, planners can move towards the “green, profitable and fair” center of the triangle.

Although Campbell developed this model for sustainability with the city in mind, the planner’s triangle is also applicable to the sugarcane plantation. Still, there are some important critiques to consider when applying Campbell’s theories to the sugarcane fields. Planners can neither allow the economic interests of the proprietor to be resolved first, nor can the development conflict be considered last. Especially when analyzing the strength of those advocating for each corner of the triangle, planners must make every effort to empower the causes of social and environmental activists in the plantation, as they traditionally have been the least influential in planning decisions. As will be discussed later in the text, the greatest challenge facing the sustainable development of sugarcane deals with reconciling labor and environmental interests in the development conflict into a coherent and collaborative plan to leverage the power of the plantation owner.

The Development of Proálcool Under the Military Dictatorship

Within the context of a market economy, Brazil’s substitution of petrol by ethanol can now be seen as a major success. One way to measure this perception is through studying the growing role that biofuels play in Brazilian foreign policy and trade negotiations. President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, has deployed a strong dose of what could be termed Ethanol Diplomacy in recent meetings with a diverse array of top international leaders. A short list of such negotiations would include those with Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez, U.S. President George Bush, Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, and Chinese President Hu Jintao.

Ethanol’s popularity today stems primarily from its economic competitiveness with gasoline as well as the role that such biofuels could play in reducing a number of dangerous emissions, most notably those relating to greenhouse gases. Other environmental or social concerns do not seem to play as central a role in this Ethanol Diplomacy, and with good reason. Ethanol’s environmental and social impacts are far less positive than its economic benefits. A more in-depth analysis of today’s production of ethanol and other sugarcane biofuels will be provided in the following section. For now, it is important to highlight that the development of ethanol has been uneven and unsustainable. However, to understand why ethanol has evolved in the way it has, one has to trace its roots as the brainchild of the Brazilian military dictatorship.

In 1973, when the price of oil quadrupled within four months, economic growth was stunted throughout much of the world. The effects of this first oil shock were particularly devastating for Brazil, as it effectively terminated what was known as the “economic miracle” of the late 1960s and early 1970s when the economy was growing at well over 10% per year. Because the Brazilian economy at the time imported over 80% of its petroleum needs, it may not be surprising that the Brazilian balance of trade shifted quite rapidly. In 1972, a year before the crisis, the economy ran a surplus of $7 million, but by 1974, Brazil was running a deficit of $4.7 billion. Unlike most other nations, the government refused to contract its economy, preferring instead to try and out grow the crisis by making use of the petrodollars available at the time and taking out massive loans. After the 1979 oil embargo, it is safe to say that the oil shocks compounded with poor policy and effectively gutted the economy. As a result, Brazil would have to suffer through the economic stagnation of the 1980s (which quickly became known as the “Lost Decade”), hyper-inflation reaching 2500% during the 1990s, and a rising debt that has been the largest in the developing world since the 1980s and now totals over $200 billion. Not only is the fiasco of the oil shock and the ensuing international debt a favorite case study for many economic development textbooks, but it has also proven to be even more shocking for Brazilians living in an economy that for over a century, from 1870 to 1980, “had grown faster than any other in the world.”

It is important to note that at the time of the oil shocks and for much of the ensuing Lost Decade, Brazil was under a military dictatorship. While the regime justified its 1964 coup along lines of national security, after it had effectively squashed the infantile guerilla movement that one expert called a “Children’s Crusade, at once young, idealistic, naïve—and doomed,”
economically successful. By the late 1980s, well over a third of all Brazilian cars ran exclusively on alcohol. This feat was achieved through an intimate partnership between Proálcool and sugarcane plantation owners. To make ethanol production appealing, the government bought more than the current demand to create a reserve at a favorable price. In addition, the price of gasoline was pegged at its peak value during the second oil shock of 1979, thereby keeping the price of ethanol below that of gasoline at the pump and stimulating Brazilians to buy more alcohol-exclusive cars in the process. Proálcool's offer was particularly appealing for sugarcane plantation owners as it stimulated a domestic and relatively stable market and offered important protections from a highly volatile international sugar market.

This alliance between the military regime and the sugarcane industry is not surprising. By the end of 1974, not only was the economy shaking from the spike in oil, but the international price of sugar also crashed. In the course of a little over three years, sugar would lose approximately three fourths of its value. Sugarcane growers were desperate for a growth in the domestic market.

More importantly, through Proálcool, the conservative military government established even firmer ties to a landed aristocracy. Indeed, according to Peter Winn, because "sugar was the first agricultural crop worth the costs and risks of transporting it through the Atlantic, ... in Brazil, ...colonial society was shaped not by conquest but by the sugar plantation, and the slave labor it required." Since colonization, the sugarcane plantation owner has solidified themselves as permanent members of Brazil’s most exclusive circle of domestic elites.

It would be naïve to assume that Proálcool was not a planned effort to solidify economic relations between a brutal dictatorship that used economic justifications for its regime of terror and Brazil's most traditional aristocracy. Looking at its track history under military rule, environmental and social concerns were ignored, if not actively subjugated. It was, after all, during the military’s rule that Brazil stepped up its efforts to “colonize” the Amazon by paving roads. These massive highways through virgin forests were designed to divert disgruntled and landless migrants away from the megalopolises of southeast and recruiting ranchers, miners, and other corporate investors. However dismal the dictatorship’s position on environmental concerns, its stance on social justice was simply abysmal. The initial years of the regime were marked by a “dirty war in which torture became routine and disappearances common place.”

Most of the dictatorship’s victims had nothing to do with the guerilla movement, but were instead students, priests and labor organizers. In addition to the human rights, the military government’s policies exacerbated income inequality in a country that was already one of the world’s most unequal societies.

Tracing the development of Brazil’s ethanol program during its initial phases under the military dictatorship, it is important to understand Proálcool as an economic plan to diversify the demand for sugar and petrol. In the process, a political link further connected the regime to Brazil’s landed aristocracy. However, the evolution of ethanol under the dictatorship did little to alter environmental and social relations. The plantation would continue to be characterized by the environmentally detrimental practice of monocropping and the foundations of sugarcane, with its roots firmly grounded in a history of enslavement, were left intact as one of the harshest examples of human exploitation. Returning to Campbell’s Planner’s Triangle, one can begin to understand how far off Proálcool was from achieving sustainability, particularly because the government and sugarcane plantation owners’ concerns emanated almost exclusively from the economic corner of the diagram.
An Analysis of Ethanol and Sugarcane Biofuels at Present

During the 1980s, much of the military’s influence was effectively phased out of Brazilian politics for a number of reasons, not least of which were a series of popular manifestations demanding “direitas já,” or “direct elections now.” In April of 1985, José Sarney was sworn in as the first civilian president in over two decades. By 1989, Brazil had already adopted a new liberal constitution and directly elected president Fernando Collor. While neoliberal rule brought about the end of official state repression, it has yet to fulfill the social and economic hopes that much of the Brazilian masses expected.

However, the fall of the military regime did bring about important changes to the ethanol industry. Along with the rise of the democratic governance came the liberalization and privatization of the Brazilian economy. As such, many of the controls used under the military regime to promote ethanol over gasoline were deregulated. In 1990 control over sugar exports was privatized and in 1995 the government ceased releasing quotas on sugar production. Additionally, subsidies on ethanol production began to be phased out by 1997, and eventually were completely eliminated by 2002. When combined with a series of ethanol shortages and a significant drop in the price of oil by the mid-1980s, it appeared that ethanol could not compete with gasoline in a market economy.

However, by 2002 the government reassessed its position on what appeared to be the failure of the Brazilian biofuels experiment. In June of that year, the Brazilian Minister of Trade, Sergio Amaral, declared that the government “want[ed] to revive the alcohol program.” This time both economic and certain environmental concerns were the primary drivers behind ethanol’s rebirth. As it had during 1970s, the price of petrol was once again rising rapidly and giving the government reason to worry. However, unlike the previous attempt to utilize sugarcane’s energy potential, a substantial number of people were concerned with ethanol’s environmental implications. By then, Brazil had already played host to two major international summits. The 1992 Earth Summit, which was hosted in Rio de Janeiro, spurred a sense of civic duty within communities to adjust their local policies in accordance to global environmental threats. In 2001, Porto Alegre would host the first World Social Forum in an attempt counter the dominant social paradigm advanced at the World Economic Forum in Davos. The forum stressed, among other things, the importance of a healthy environment.

At the same time that Brazilians were becoming more environmentally active, developments in the international arena around issues of global warming would contribute to ethanol’s revival. By 2000, a number of studies had already been released highlighting the role that ethanol could play in actively reducing greenhouse gases. One such report, issued by the Instituto de Economia Agrícola (Institute of the Agricultural Economy), showed that for every 15 billion liters of ethanol used as automotive fuel, 26 million cubic tons of CO2 are sequestered. Based on the principles of carbon trading and the Clean Development Mechanism agreed upon in the Kyoto Protocol, the German government offered to subsidize Brazilians purchasing ethanol-powered cars.

However, the real breakthrough came in March of 2003 with the development of the “flex-fuel” engine. Owners of cars equipped with this engine now had the ability to fill their tanks with gasoline, ethanol, or any mixture of the two. Moreover, the new technology proved to be quite inexpensive. In a side-by-side comparison conducted on Chevrolet’s Brazilian website in September of 2005, replacing the gasoline-exclusive motor of a 2006 Celta with a flex-fuel motor only cost an additional $150. Since its introduction in 2003, the flex-fuel car has been such a success that it has already captured over half of Brazil’s new car market.

An Economic Analysis

Through the expansion of flex-fuel technology, ethanol has proven itself to be a success within the market economy. According to the Folha de São Paulo, as of November 27, 2006, selecting ethanol over gasoline at the pump would correspond to a savings of at least 15% if one adjusts for fuel efficiency and considers that the average ethanol-powered care travels between 65 and 75% the distance of a gasoline-exclusive. Although some critics might note that the price of gasoline at the pump in Brazil is higher than its international commodity value, this tax is at the very least an attempt to internalize environmental externalities. As Lee suggests, it may also be appropriate to consider this move an ecotax, although for the price hike to be an ecotax it must provide for “the redirection of revenue specifically in favor of sustainability objectives.”

Despite the current economic advantages associated with alcohol-powered flex-fuel cars, ethanol’s future is quite uncertain in the long run. In her doctoral dissertation, Scandidio outlined four potential scenarios projecting ethanol’s growth in supply and demand over a twenty-year period. In her first three scenarios (I. Economic Growth at 2% per year, II. Economic Growth at 4% per year, III. Export Oriented Production at 2% growth), Scandidio assumes that the Brazilian automotive industry would adopt a “business as usual” approach to energy consumption. As such, economic growth would be the primary determinant of demand. In other words, as the nation becomes wealthier, there will be an accompanied increase in the number of cars on the road and the amount of fuel they will use. Her work estimates that in none of her first three scenarios could domestic production supply the expanding needs of the Brazilian auto industry. Adjustments to such shortages would appear within two to eleven years. These forecasts seem to mirror a phenomenon described in Limits to Growth as “overshoot,” which “comes from the combination of (1) rapid change, (2) limits to that change, and (3) errors or delays in perceiving the limits and controlling the changes” and may result in a crash, a deliberate turnaround to correct overshoot, or both.

Scandidio does provide an alternative fourth
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scenario, which she deems to be sustainable. In this case, energy consumption would not be driven solely along market demands but would instead be heavily influenced by conservation methods initiated by a proactive government.

In addition to the implantation of a strong environmental education campaign and the financial incentives to purchase a sizable fleet of fuel-efficient alcohol-electric hybrids, Scandiffio sees a central role for urban planning in reducing consumption and developing a far more efficient system of public transport and carpooling. Her studies estimate that this alone could cut demand by approximately 40% in twenty years. In such a situation, Brazil would be capable not only of supplying its domestic demand for hydrous and anhydrous ethanol, but also of exporting significant quantities.47

However, one should always be careful when assessing studies that forecast current trends into the future, and an exception should not be made for Scandiffio’s work. Indeed, a number of studies, including those by Vaclav Smil48 and Hall, House and Scrase,49 assume that ethanol production could far exceed the estimates calculated by Scandiffio with a more aggressive investment in expansion of cultivation into the massive and fertile plains in the cerrado of central-western Brazil. Nevertheless, a lot can be learned from Scandiffio’s work. The caveats issued in Scenarios 1-3 about a market driven growth in demand are well worth considering. More importantly, planners should heed Scandiffio’s imperative to increase the government’s efforts to curb consumption and her attempt, in Scenario 4, to map out a path that could avoid overshoot by backcasting from a future state of sustainability.

Sugarcane and the State of the Environment

As previously noted, part of ethanol’s revival can be attributed to its role in reducing greenhouse gases. Isaias Macedo calculated that the net carbon savings associated with the substitution of gasoline for alcohol reached nearly 13 million tons, or 18% of Brazil’s fossil fuel emissions, by 1996 alone.50 However, the relative benefits of ethanol are not just felt at the global level. Alcohol combustion brings about a number of local improvements as well, particularly when it comes to “abat[ing] pollution in Brazil’s urban areas.”51 Citing studies done at the Campanha de Tecnologia de Saneamento Ambiental (CETESB), Bajay and Ferreira conclude that replacing petrol with ethanol would “lead to improvements in air quality, because of reductions on the emissions of CO, hydrocarbons (HC) and SOx.”52 This focus on localized and urban improvements is of significant importance for nations of the Global South where “the most severe urban environmental health problems are concentrated... [and] contributions to global environmental problems are comparatively small.”53 Moreover, Brazilian cities, such as São Paulo, are famed for its city-level environmental concerns.54

Despite these relative benefits, emissions from ethanol combustion remain as an environmental concern. Carbon monoxide, hydrocarbon and nitrogen oxide emissions are still significant at 16.3, 1.9 and 1.2 g/km, respectively.55 Of particular threat to urban air quality is a relative increase in aldehyde formation, which contributes to tropospheric ozone and smog.56 These emissions already aggravate human health problems. As such, even with its comparative benefits over petrol combustion, ethanol will increasingly contribute to urban air pollution if conservation methods are not put into use soon.

Regardless of the environmental impact that ethanol has on Brazil’s major cities, the viability of sugarcane-derived fuels will be tested at its source on the sugarcane plantation and its associated mills. There, one of the more central questions will revolve around what to do with sugarcane’s byproducts. At present, a great deal of energy potential is lost through the ineffective use of excess bagasse. This dry, fibrous residue that remains after processing the sugarcane stalk represents between 30 and 40% of the plant’s total energy and could be transformed into significant amounts of electricity through cogeneration.57 At present, only 5.8% of bagasse is converted into electricity,58 yet this is enough to allow for 95% of Brazil’s sugarcane plantations to be self-sufficient.59 If current technologies were uniformly applied, the excess supply of bagasse converted into electricity in São Paulo State could increase tremendously from less than 1% of the state’s electric demand to nearly 43%.60

Likewise, the amount of agrotoxics used as fertilizer could be drastically reduced should the sugarcane’s excess leaves and other industrial residues produced in the mills, such as vinasse and filter cake, be applied to the fields. These three residues are natural methods to supply the most vital nutrients (nitrogen, potassium and phosphorous) needed in sugarcane cultivation.61 This practice not only increases productivity, but also helps reduce human exposure to harmful chemicals and water pollution due to the run-off of agrotoxics from the mills and fields. Fortunately, as the recycling of waste products proves to be economically viable, it will continue to be implemented without too much conflict within the dominant expansionist paradigm.

Other environmental concerns also pertaining to land-use practices are far more controversial. The expansion of sugarcane cultivation and the current predominance of plantations practicing monoculture both pose significant threats to biodiversity.62 Such fears may be mitigated if one considers that the cultivation of sugarcane most likely would not expand into virgin forests but into lands currently dedicated to other crops grown for mass export, such as soy, which also is characterized by nearly exclusive cultivation of one plant type. It may also be reassuring to note that over the last two decades there has been a noticeable increase the amount of land reserved for the growth of native forests in Brazil’s plantations.63 Regardless, the preservation of biodiversity remains a major concern. Of even greater worry is that the practice of monoculture in Brazilian sugarcane plantations is so deeply ingrained into the agricultural order that reformulating sugarcane cultivation into an ecologically sound practice would require far more political will than is currently available.

Finally, there is the age-old question of what to do with queimadas – the practice of igniting the sugarcane prior to harvest. While the queimada is believed to be the foundation of Brazilian agriculture since colonization,64 there are a number of environmental concerns with
setting ablaze large expanses of vegetation. Among other things, queimadas represent a tremendous loss of energy potential, threaten biodiversity, decrease soil fertility, increase emissions and air pollution, and aggravate a number of human health concerns, particularly those related to cardiovascular and pulmonary functions in the young, aged and infirmed. In response to these concerns, the State of São Paulo outlawed crop-burnings within a one-kilometer-radius from urban centers in 1988. A decade later the federal government began the phasing out of quemadas in the hope of eliminating the practice by 2018. However, because crop-burnings facilitate the manual harvest by drastically increasing productivity and reducing costs, plantation owners have shifted towards a more mechanized harvest. As a result, some of the most vulnerable members of society, the cane-cutters, increasingly suffer from significant job insecurity.

The Social Impact of Sugarcane

In assessing the social impact of sugarcane cultivation, it is essential to focus on those who labor in the fields. Ultimately, the benefits stemming from the sugarcane industry are derived almost exclusively from their toils. Still, during times of transition, laborers’ concerns are often ignored. These agricultural workers, many of who are also landless and migratory peasants, have historically occupied a marginalized, if not enslaved, position in the negotiating table. Because of this, sugarcane workers are at once a highly valuable and vulnerable population.

Today, more than a million laborers work directly in the sugarcane industry while another 300 thousand workers are employed indirectly. Together these cane-workers generated over $5 billion in 2001 alone, which represented approximately 2.5% of the nation’s GDP at the time. Relatively speaking, workers involved in the sugar and ethanol industry are well paid. For instance, in the state of São Paulo, an unskilled worker hired as a cane-cutter receives an average salary of $140 per month. According to Macedo, this wage is “higher than the average salary of 86% of agricultural workers, 49% of industrial workers, and 56% of workers in the service sectors in Brazil as a whole.” In other words, their labor not only fuels the nation’s energy needs, but it also plays an important role in stimulating Brazil’s rural economy. This link between urban and rural development is an essential component of sustainable development.

In return for a relatively high salary, however, the worker employed in the sugarcane plantations is subject to brutal labor conditions. These conditions are described at great length in a study on Ribeirão Preto’s plantations, but it should suffice to say that Rachel Wiseman found that “in northeast Brazil, sugarcane workers have the lowest life expectancy of any group and their children the highest infant mortality rate.” Health concerns are often exacerbated as workers often fail to perceive the relationship that exists between their symptoms and the hazards that arise in their work environment. In such a situation where sugarcane laborers can neither sustain themselves nor reproduce, it is impossible to consider such an industry sustainable.

As bad as things are, it does not appear as if significant improvements are in sight. In fact, conditions may even be worsening. As queimadas are phased out of practice in accordance to the law and the harvest becomes increasingly mechanized, a large drop in the number of workers employed in the sugarcane industry is expected. It is believed that approximately 70 thousand jobs will be lost in São Paulo alone once half of the state’s harvest is collected mechanically. Moreover, the small number of jobs generated through mechanization does not necessarily represent better quality jobs. Work shifts increase to ten or eleven hours per day, significant health hazards persist and work in the mechanized harvest carries with it a certain loss of control. Unlike the manual cane-cutter, who can alter the pace of his or her work, the mechanized laborer’s actions are dictated by a machine. This shift in the harvest is indicative of a far more significant loss of control. Cane-cutters neither own the land they toil on, nor do they control the means of production. Ultimately, this is the most significant cause for social inequality.

Now, looking beyond the laborer, it is important to note that sugarcane-derived fuels have done little to alleviate other major social inequities. For instance, the proliferation of ethanol as an automotive fuel has not led to a profound democratization of transport, either in public or private form.

There are also fears that increased sugarcane cultivation could expand into lands already producing food, creating a shortage that would primarily affect the most marginalized members of society. As Lee suggests, this would be a tragic way to resolve the problems associated with petrol, but one should remember that global hunger results primarily from improper distribution and not insufficient production. Furthermore, the prospect of expanding sugarcane-derived ethanol in Brazil expanding in such a way so as to prohibit sufficient production of staple crops of the human diet is unlikely. It is far more likely that an increased demand in ethanol would result in a shift away from sugar production in the mills before it would impact key export crops destined for the more lucrative Global North.

Returning to the Planner’s Triangle

Through this analysis of the social, environmental, and economic impact that sugarcane-derived energy has on Brazil, it may already be possible for the reader to frame the development of ethanol within the Planner’s Triangle. At the moment it appears as if the economic planner is primarily concerned with expanding the production of ethanol to meet the growing demands of both the domestic and more lucrative foreign markets. For the most part, environmental planners are pursuing a green agenda in considering ways to minimize excess consumption, stimulate the more effective use of waste products, increase biodiversity in the fields and mitigate human health hazards. If the environmentalists are pursuing a “green” agenda, than it may be appropriate paint the social equity agenda red. Planners acting to advance this “red” agenda must act to democratize access to the fuel consumption, and increase labor’s influence on the means of production and the number of jobs available, while also improving wages and...
labor conditions. What, then, does this mean for the sustainability planner?

At present, there already is a significant degree of cooperation and reconciliation between competing corners of the triangle. For instance, the resource conflict that arises between capital’s economic interests and environmental concerns has already generated a significant degree of dialogue. A growing number of plantations are recycling sugarcane’s primary residues and allowing natural forests to (re)grow around the plantation’s margins. However, some demands appear to be irreconcilable, making it quite difficult to mobilize a combined effort to decrease excess ethanol consumption and transition the sugarcane plantation away from the practice of monoculture. Thus far, business interests have reigned supreme.

A similar phenomenon appears in the property conflict. Recently, plantation owners have begun to provide protective equipment to their laborers, thereby reconciling important divisions between capital and labor. Commonalities between business and social interests have also been able to stimulate the development of slightly more affordable fuel. Still, when it comes to resolving claims over who controls the means of production, the debate is just as irreconcilable as in the resource conflict. Landless peasants, such as those involved with the MST (Movimento Sem Terra), have often organized themselves to advance an agrarian reform that would imply nothing less than the complete and rapid democratization of capital amongst Brazil’s 4.5 million landless peasants. Although the MST has launched an impressive social movement under its red banner that has successfully occupied large expanses of fallow land and settled over 300 thousand families in the process, it is clear that the landowners have the upper hand.

Given the subordination of social and environmental activists’ most essential demands to business interests in both the resource and property conflicts, one would hope that reds and greens could find common cause. Deplorably, the development conflict has woefully been the least successful at resolving competing claims. This can be most clearly seen in the way that problems arising from the queimadas have been resolved. In short, environmentalists were successfully able to resolve their legitimate concerns by pushing legislation aimed at phasing out the practice of crop-burning. However, the resulting shift towards mechanization has shown a complete disregard of social justice claims while stimulating the mass layoffs of cane-cutters.

Such policies pitting equally legitimate environmental and social concerns against each other have emerged largely because both of these sides have focused on their individual relationship to the economic corner of Campbell’s Planner’s Triangle. Yet, given the immense power that the landowner has in Brazilian society, any hopes of cultivating a sustainable future will rest on the ability of reds and greens to find their natural commonalities and create a solid and unified Brown Agenda. By including social justice concerns, legislation banning queimadas could have been far more sustainable had it contained labor protections stemming the loss of agricultural jobs and demanding economic compensation and job-training programs for those laid-off.

At a more profound level, a coherent Brown Agenda could revolutionize land use practices. For instance, environmentalists have long urged sugarcane plantations to abandon the practice of monoculture in favor of implementing key principles in agroecology and agroforestry. According to Altieri, agroforestry can be defined as “an agricultural system where trees are grown together with annual crops and/or animals, resulting in enhanced complimentary relations between components increasing multiple use of the agroecosystems.” Pictured above is a theoretical example of how sugarcane could be cultivated using such principles “where rows of Rubber are associated with two palm tree species, and strips of sugarcane.” There is no reason why the laborers in such a plantation could not also control the means of production. As such, there are plenty of justifications as to why groups like the MST and others invested in land reform would advance such an initiative. The landless movement has shown a great deal of flexibility in organizing the lands they occupy into cooperatives of varying degrees of complexity.

Should environmentalists and social justice activists coordinate their efforts, it is quite possible to fuse agroecological principles with agrarian reform into a new, productive agricultural order. Of course, this union cannot happen over night, but there is fertile ground for cooperation. The MST takes great pride in its diversity and its ability to incorporate both agricultural workers, those with “rough hands,” and more educated members of society, the “smooth handers,” into their movement. Organized landless peasants and environmentalists must approach each other, democratically develop a set of sustainability indicators, and boldly implement the changes needed to revolutionize land use practices. Such a Brown Agenda and a restructured sugarcane plantation would advance a paradigm shift that, as Gunter suggests, would “rearticulate sustainability’s core concern…as a means to displace the economic imperative from its throne of supremacy over that of social equity and the environment.”

Understanding this, it is essential that sustainability planners reassess their role in society and their position within Campbell’s Planner’s Triangle. In Paulo Freire’s masterpiece, The Politics of Education, the author reveals that “washing one’s hands’ of the conflict between the powerful and the powerless means to side with the powerful, not to be neutral.” As such, planners interested in sustainability cannot simply negotiate between three competing interests when matters of economics trump environmental and social concerns. Instead, planners must actively advance these marginalized issues and empower those actors already advocating for environmental and social justice.

Ultimately, the prospects of developing fuel derived from sugarcane in a sustainable manner requires that planners respect equally all three corners of Campbell’s Planner’s Triangle. However, the successful reconciliation of competing interests first requires that all three pillars are given equal footing. As such, contrary to Campbell’s assumption that the development conflict should be considered only after property and resource disputes are resolved, the sustainable planner must begin by facilitating the creation of a Brown Agenda by reconciling red and green concerns.
End Notes


11. Ibid., p.443.

12. Ibid.

13. Ibid., p.438.


23. Ibid., p.191.


26. Ibid., p.169.


28. Ibid., 38.

29. Ibid., 39.

30. Ibid., 36.


34. Ibid., 173-4.

35. Ibid., 170.

36. Ibid., 171-2.


43. Ibid., p.33.


54. Ibid., p.118.


71. Hardoy, Jorge, Diana Mitlin, and David


Rising Tensions Over Iran's Nuclear Program

International tension over the progression of Iran's reputed nuclear weapons program has been steadily escalating since U.S. President George W. Bush declared the Persian country to be a member of an "axis of evil" in 2003. While most nations are in agreement that a nuclear-equipped Iran would destabilize the already tumultuous Middle East region, the United States has been the most active nation in advocating for stringent United Nations sanctions and pressuring the EU-3 (Britain, France, and Germany) to adopt their own set of economic sanctions against Iran. As discussion has evolved in various international institutions and diplomatic channels there has been increasing frustration over Germany's reluctance to take a more active stance against Iran over its nuclear program. Indeed, Germany is widely agreed to be in the best position to influence the Iranian regime due to their prime diplomatic, domestic, political and economic leverage positions. The current German stance with respect to Iran's nuclear weapons program and the complex intricacies of current German policies help to inform the debate on the best paradigm with which to understand post-unification German foreign policy.

Understandings of Germany's Foreign Policy Paradigm

Prominent political scientists have recently theorized on the optimal conceptual framework for understanding German foreign policy decisions and the prediction of future policies. Of particular prominence in these discussions has been postulation over whether Germany is best analyzed from a policy paradigm dominated by neorealism or post-Westphalian/neoliberalism. The Berlin Republic's membership and active advocacy of NATO, EU and UN, and the voluntary acceptance of containment and restriction implicitly signaled by such, is frequently alluded to in recent literature as an indication that Berlin has moved towards community empowerment through pursuit of milieu goals. To this point Bulmer asserts that “Germany has pursued, in a more strategic sense, broad-based and diffuse milieu goals, directed at shaping wider considerations of inter-state interaction and, above all, cooperation beyond national boundaries.” Indeed Germany has been of prime importance in shaping the policy and institutional infrastructure of the EU, which has in turn actually created a situation where many of the German states (Lander) are demanding a bargaining seat at the EU level – Germany has strengthened the EU to the point where in some ways it has subordinated state policies to supranational interests.

Political scientists such as Harnisch and Maull label Germany a "civilian power" due to the apparent transfer of sovereignty and desired attainment of collective and community-based goals. Immediately following unification, many political scientists expected, as John Mearsheimer did, “a unified and fully sovereign Germany to retreat from its post-war commitments to NATO and the EU, both of which were artifacts of the cold war itself.” This and other neorealist predictions on German policy clearly did not come to fruition, indicating that civilian power is perhaps the most accurate paradigm with which to understand post-unification German policies.

This paper seeks to present a view of Germany as a "civilian power" whose recent foreign policy with regards to the state of Iran can be viewed as consistent with post-Westphalian norms, but is better viewed as being driven by neorealist economic considerations that are conveniently served by tactically appealing to international institutions. Thus the willingness of Chancellor Angela Merkel to work within the
confines of international law and diplomacy in resolving rising Atlantic tensions with Iran must not be seen as naively subordinating national considerations for supranational consensus but rather as a situation of convenience which suits the economic and socio-political interests of Germans.

**German Economic Relations with Iran**

Germany and Iran have a long history as trading partners and economic allies, which today has a significant impact on the German state's seemingly ambivalent diplomatic posture. In the 1970s it was Germany's Kraftwerk Union (a Siemens subsidiary company) that designed and built the Bushehr Nuclear Facility, which is now suspected of being the headquarters of Iran's nuclear weapons program. In 2006 German companies exported $5.7 billion worth of goods to Iran - mainly turbines for power plants, water-treatment systems, monorails, and windmill farms. As Iran's second-largest provider of imported products, Germany stands to wield the greatest influence over the Iranian regime. While Berlin has not cooperated to the full extent its western allies hope for, "Germany's Economics Ministry has scaled back the export credit guarantees it issues for trade with Iran, to $1.2 billion last year from $3.3 billion in 2004. But German companies still exported $5.7 billion worth of goods to Iran in 2006, up from $5 billion in 2004." Angela Merkel and her ministers have indicated that the current changes in credit policies are the extent to which Berlin will accommodate Washington's pressure tactics and that she will "not bend to U.S. pressure to impose extra sanctions."9

While the German government to a certain degree has acquiesced to its allies' pressure with regards to Iran, the German business community has been preoccupied with strengthening economic ties to Tehran. Indeed, running parallel to the UN sanctions on sales of nuclear-related technology to Iran, German exporters held a conference on September 17, 2007, to discuss emerging investment opportunities in Iran.10 Currently there are over 1,700 German companies doing business in Iran (including large conglomerates like Siemens and BASF); it is no surprise that the stance of the Federation of German Industry (BDI), a powerful German union and lobbying group, is "to keep negotiating with Iran."11 Indeed, the opinion of many Germans is that "if the Germans stop exporting… the Chinese will do it – this entire system of embargoes and sanctions will be meaningless."12 Fear of Chinese business incursion is well-founded, as Chinese exports to Iran increased 44 percent in the first quarter of 2007 while some German companies reduced their Iranian business under excessive pressure from the US Treasury Department.13

Critics of the American government's pressure tactics have speculated that the critical business niche recently vacated by Germany's largest banks, Commerzbank and Deutsche Bank,14 could drive Iran closer to nations that are less sympathetic to U.S. efforts to pressure Tehran, specifically China and Russia. Iran has increasingly turned to Beijing's state-controlled Bank of China for international transactions.15 Additionally, the China Petrochemical Corporation, known as Sinopac, signed a $2 billion agreement to develop Iran's Yadavaran oil field.16 Russia already provides substantial business for Iran, particularly with regards to its nuclear program. It has provided significant advanced technology for the Bushehr plant, and bargained for production of Iranian nuclear material on Russian domestic soil. While one cannot criticize German government and industry leaders for being resentful of American pressure to relinquish profitable business ventures to the Chinese and Russians, it is important to note that Angela Merkel's position of preferring UN Security Council-based action rather than EU-3 action ensures that the diplomatic discussions over Iran will receive the input of the very countries that are competing for Iran's business. Thus Iranian ports will remain open for German businesses that do not have substantial American investments (and are not under the sphere of influence of the US Treasury Department).

**German Domestic Socio-Political Environment**

Economic relations alone are not enough to fully explain Germany's reluctance to take a hard-line approach to Iran; there are very real political and social ties between the two domestic populations which, in addition to strong economic interests, account for a German foreign policy towards Iran that is not characteristic of a "civilian power."
Significant political factors serve to further complicate Berlin’s foreign policy posture towards Iran and the American-led effort to derail Tehran’s nuclear program. Indeed the very nature of the diplomatic front as being perceived as one of American belligerence conjures memories of the complex relations between the US and Germany post-World War II. As Andrei Markovitz writes:

For Germany… the United States was a liberator, occupier, role model, protector, ally, rival, and bully all rolled into one. Beneath the surface of German-American relations lay powerful feelings of partnership and submission, gratitude and jealousy, friendship and rivalry. For German youth, the United States represented both the combatant in Vietnam and the bearer of liberal democracy and Western values, both the power behind a stultifying status quo and the underwriter of its blessed political stability.  

While this complex relationship still informs the current perception of American policies, the post-unification German government has made a staunch effort to determine its own domestic and foreign policy initiatives as it sees fit, which very often results in the distancing of Berlin from America, and strengthening of partnerships within the European Union. Perhaps most illustrative is the fact that in the 2002 German Chancellor elections the Iraq War dominated the debates and inevitably led to the election of the anti-war candidate Gerhardt Schroeder. The overwhelming German opposition to the American-led Iraq War in 2002 was influenced by many characteristics, including the political maturity of the 1968 generation that opposed the Vietnam War, and the chauvinistic bypassing of the United Nations by the United States.  

Post-invasion discoveries of a complete lack of a functioning nuclear weapons program would inevitably seem to vindicate the German opposition to the Iraq War and influence the current decision to rely on UN diplomacy with Iran, a situation with many parallels to Iraq in 2002.  

While the German public’s antagonism towards American belligerence is understandable due to past relations, on the surface it seems counterintuitive that Germany should sympathize with a Muslim country given the country’s problems with its own large and increasing Muslim immigrant minority. And the sympathy is not relegated to the Muslim minority, it is actually the case that Iran’s radical Muslim leader Ahmadinejad enjoys a considerable support base among white Germans. Germany’s fascist NPD party enthusiastically supports Ahmadinejad and the Tehran regime for their Holocaust denial and their calls for Israel’s destruction…NPD’s office in Leipzig announced its members’ intentions to rally in support of Iran during Iran’s game against Angola….”

While the overwhelming majority of Germans do not support the National Democratic Party of Germany (NPD) or other radical right political parties, it is not surprising that the warm business relations between Tehran and Berlin finds a parallel in the socio-political environment. If Germans voted in 2002 largely based on opposition to the Iraq War, it is possible to conclude that they now acknowledge their prime negotiating position over Iran and wish to preserve the status quo by maintaining solid relations with Iran on all fronts. This hypothesis, while logical, cannot entirely account for the warm feelings that Germans feel towards an Iranian regime that has made many of the same declarations as Adolf Hitler 70 years ago.

The legacy of collective guilt creates very strong reactions to the questioning of Germany’s reluctance to fully support action against the anti-Zionist Iranian regime. Many have asserted that “Germany’s behavior towards Iran is a clear sign that for all its Holocaust memorializing, for all its anti-Nazi legislation and for all its protestations of friendship with Israel and the Jewish people Germany has not learned the lessons of the Holocaust.” Several possible reasons for German reluctance on the Iran question have already been discussed. However, understanding the impact that statements such as this have on the collective German psyche will serve to further bolster the argument made in this paper. Lars Rennsman has stated that “since reunification, a strongly polarized political climate on the issue of collective identity and guilt” has emerged, and that “because most social groups initially react defensively to questions of collective guilt” it is likely that Germans will react to questions about Iranian policies that hearken back to the Nazi era by “tending to project identity problems related to national guilt onto others.” Thus it is logical to conclude that the multitude of public statements made which imply continuity between current Berlin policies towards Iran and Nazi policies actually has served to further polarize German domestic sentiment away from empathy for America’s belligerent policies.

**Conclusion**

The central argument explored in this analysis is that while the majority of Germany’s most recent foreign policy movements have been motivated by post-Westphalian considerations which seek to strengthen international law and the promulgation of milieu-driven policies (particularly the development of the EU institution), the Federal Republic’s foreign relations with regards to the state of Iran are driven by purely economic calculations which are strengthened by domestic political and social ties. The stance of Angela Merkel to insist on UN-based diplomatic action reflects the desire to see international law determine future collective decisions, but it must also be seen as a move to ensure that Iran’s ports remain open for German business. The choice of using one international institution over another raises an interesting implication: If Berlin chooses to strategically appeal to certain international diplomatic organizations at times because the outcome will be more favorable than other organizations, is this behavior of a civilian power or a neorealist power?

**Endnotes**

1. Neorealism is a political paradigm in which states seek their own interest and will not subordinate their interest to another’s. Conversely, neoliberalism is a political paradigm where transfer of sovereignty to international institutions
and adherence to international law are of paramount importance and often take primacy over a state’s short-term (material) interests.


3. Ibid.

4. A Civilian Power is commonly understood as being guided by “the transfer of sovereignty to international or supranational institutions, a policy of abnegation when faced with conflict between norm-compliant behavior and the maximization of some material interest, and the pursuit of “civilized” international relations.” Ibid.

5. Ibid.


8. Ibid.


15. Ibid.


19. Ibid.

Many nation-states rest on the foundations of illegitimate seizure and protracted colonization. While colonialism as traditionally conceived was mostly dismantled after World War II, another form of colonialism still thrives today. The victims of this colonialism—the indigenous peoples of the world— are currently in an international battle to reclaim their dignity and right to self-determination. The three most viable options currently open to these peoples are the international courts, international declarations and domestic agreements. To understand the strengths and weaknesses of these three possibilities, this paper will specifically focus on claims to self-determination by the First Nations of Canada. By looking at these peoples’ successes and failures in the three arenas, it is possible to better understand the viability of each path. A major problem within the international arena is that it has not yet successfully recognized the plurality of indigenous peoples’ claims. The UN Human Rights Committee has generalized indigenous peoples and forced them to conform to archaic terms that are no longer applicable. The Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, on the other hand, has begun to dismantle these old generalizations, but it is not legally binding and has little efficacy. For these reasons, the domestic arena tends to be the most fruitful for the indigenous peoples of Canada—it is not hindered by rigid international terms, and it can conform to the specific needs and goals of both the nation-state and the indigenous peoples. But The First Nations’ success with domestic negotiations is not applicable to all groups—since many governments continue to be unaccommodating to compromises with their indigenous groups, international law is still necessary to ensure the nation-states’ compliance and fairness. From the following examination, it will become evident that the domestic arena is successful where the international arena fails—namely in its recognition of diverse contexts—and that international institutions must shed their obsolete terminology and generalizations in order to become more effective and just.

The Indigenous Claim to Self-Determination

Indigenous peoples often describe self-determination as central in their battle for human rights, but the concept is complex, and can take on extremely different meanings.

Youngblood Henderson’s statement that indigenous peoples view sovereignty as “a matter of heart”, aptly illustrates this conundrum. Indeed, many indigenous people have not yet fully explicated or fully clarified a precise definition of self-determination. The vagueness of many of these plans can be seen in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. Article 4 reads,

Indigenous peoples have the right to maintain and strengthen their distinct political, economic, social and cultural characteristics, as well as their legal systems, while retaining their rights to participate fully, if they so choose in the political, economic, social and cultural life of the State. [emphasis added]

It is important not to imagine indigenous self-determination simply as secession from the dominant polity (as in post-WWII decolonization), rather, it is a complex process, in which different indigenous peoples desire different balances between state citizenship and indigenous membership. A few tribes advocate complete secession, but many more envision something more ambiguous. The First Nations of Canada are almost entirely of the latter opinion: “A Declaration of the First Nations”, which was written by the Joint Council of the National Indian Brotherhood in 1981, requested that the Canadian government declare “that Indian Governmental powers and responsibilities exist as a permanent, integral fact in the Canadian Polity.” Note that this council did not request to secede from the Canadian government, or to create a distinct state—rather, it actively requested to be even closer to the Canadian government in order to have greater influence. Self-determination, in the context of Canadian indigenous rights, should generally be understood as a complex balance between special indigenous privileges and Canadian citizenship.

Having some form of self-determination is integral in protecting indigenous peoples’ cultural integrity. Even without any malevolent intent on behalf of the government, the destruction of indigenous culture is often inescapable. Indeed, latent prejudices within the dominant discourse and political system often pose serious threats. A good example of this is O’Connor’s decision in Lyng v. Northwest Indian Cemetery Protection Association. In this case, an American Indian challenged the development of a road in the Chimney Rock...
area, which, with loud traffic and the constant flow of people, would incorrigibly destroy a sacred area. Justice O'Connor attempted to treat everyone fairly; as she writes, “The First Amendment must apply to all citizens alike, and it can give to none of them a veto over public programs that do not prohibit the free exercise of religion.” O’Connor held that First Amendment rights must apply equally to all people and none of them can control the public domain. But, as Benedict Kingsbury astutely notes, this articulation of the First Amendment does bias some religions by “privileging understandings of religion that depend not on exponents that since colonization have become ‘public’ lands, but on private buildings protected by a property rights regime…” This case perfectly illustrates how the dominant legal discourse, no matter how “equal” it purports to be, can inherently favor the dominant culture at the expense of the minority if it does not create special protections for them.6

Many might object to this argument, claiming that any law that actively privileges one specific group over another is de facto illegitimate because it contradicts the egalitarian principles of liberalism. As Will Kymlicka astutely points out, however, privileging one group over another can actually buttress an egalitarian system. His argument is based on the belief that since liberalism allows people the freedom to choose their own conception of the good, and people can be mistaken, “it is of fundamental importance that we be able to rationally assess our conceptions of the good in the light of new information or experiences…” If this statement is true, then it is important to protect and preserve cultures; cultures allow people a lens through which to access different conceptions of the good. Or, as Kymlicka writes, “cultures are valuable… because it is only through having access to a societal culture that people have access to a range of meaningful options.” This line of reasoning has, to some extent, been accepted within the international legal realm. For instance, in her opinion on South West Africa Cases (second Phase) for the International Court of Justice, Judge Tanaka wrote that “The principle of equality before the law does not mean the absolute equality… but it means the relative equality, namely the principle to treat equally what are equal and unequally what are unequal…” This line of argument, while certainly contentious, offers a theoretical reconciliation between egalitarian values and some group privileges.

But this argument conflates indigenous peoples with other minority groups, such as religious sects or immigrants. This conflation is problematic because indigenous people go to great lengths to distinguish themselves from other minorities.10 Indeed, some indigenous groups have adamantly refused to ask for the rights under Article 27 of the UN Covenant (which refers to minorities) in lieu of those rights under Article 1 (which refer to peoples). The Mikmaq tribe of Canada, for instance, when asked by the United Nations Human Rights Commission if their rights as minorities have been infringed upon, insistently responded in the negative:

As to Article 27, to the European mind, I guess we could be considered a minority. But that is not the objective; we are a Catholic state, not a racial minority; we are families, not individuals; and we are united by an intense kinship and elementary spiritual consensus. We are few in number in Canada but that makes us a small state or polity, not a minority. No, Article 27 does not describe us at all; it describes the shadows of the Canadian mind.11

This passage clarifies their reasons for rejecting minority status: first, it conflates them with all other minorities, and ignores their distinctive traits; second, Article 27 does not guarantee the right to self-determination, unlike Article 1; and third, the conception of “minority” is, according to the Mikmaq, a distinctly European conception. In this binary system, in which they must either choose minority status or status as peoples, the Mikmaq, as well as almost all other tribes that are seeking self-determination, must choose the latter.12 Indeed, due to the lack of benefits offered to minorities, qualifying as “peoples” appears to be the only viable solution.

In order to distinguish themselves as peoples vis-à-vis minorities, indigenous peoples often point to their unique historical situation. Indeed, indigenous peoples who are currently fighting for their right to self-determination are unified in their history of colonization and coercion. James Tully distinguishes this type of colonization (what he calls ‘internal colonization’) with imperialist colonization (‘external colonization’). Internal colonization is defined by “the appropriation of the land, resources and jurisdiction of the indigenous people, not only for the sake of resettlement and exploitation (which is also true in external colonization), but for the territorial foundation of the dominant society.”13 It is easier to accept that internal colonization is a reality when one considers the colonizers’ coercive techniques and contractual infractions. Furthermore, some treaties, even when upheld, are oftentimes based on misunderstandings. For instance, the Dene people, who live in the Arctic region of Canada, understood their treaties in a fundamentally different way than did the Western colonizers; they viewed them “as treaties of peace and friendship, not documents terminating their rights.”14 It must be understood that, even when these treaties are legitimate, the indigenous people may not have entirely understood the gravity and “meaning” of these agreements. This combination of misunderstandings and illegal infringements coincide to distinguish indigenous peoples from other minorities. Indeed, they are not simply a less represented group, rather, they are historically dominated and oppressed peoples who have, in many cases, endured the illegitimate seizure of their land.

While indigenous people are largely united in their claim to self-determination, their respective definitions of this term are vague and conflicting. These conflicts pose an obvious challenge to indigenous peoples’ rights to secure their right to self-determination. With this complex and nebulous claim, what method has proven most successful? As mentioned earlier, the indigenous peoples of Canada have three primary approaches to securing these rights: through international courts, through international declarations and through domestic agreements. Since it can be argued that nation-states have an incentive to preserve their domination and territorial stability, it is easy to assume that the international courts would be the ideal forum to address this oppression. But unfortunately, as shown in
Mikmaq v. Canada, the international court system has proven wholly impotent in this issue.

The Mikmaq Claim to Self-Determination at the Human Rights Committee

For the purpose of this paper, only one of the Mikmaq's official complaints against Canada to the United Nations Human Rights Committee will be examined: that Canada infringed on their fundamental right to self-determination. Their condemnation of Canada was scathing—the Mikmaq claimed that Canada had “seize[d] our ancient lands, substitute[d], supervise[d], or abolish[ed] our government, remove[d] our children to schools of its choosing... prevent[ed] us from farming and fishing... and scatter[ed] our homes and families.”

Because Article 1 of the Optional Protocol dictates that only individuals can bring claims to the committee, only one Mikmaq filed this complaint as a representative of his tribe. In arguing for his tribe's right to self-determination, the Mikmaq representative referred to Article 1 of the UN Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, which proudly proclaims, “All peoples have the right of self-determination. By virtue of that right they freely determine their political status and freely pursue their economic, social and cultural development.”

The Mikmaq argued that they should be included within this category, since they were a distinct people, possessing a unique culture, religion, political body, set of laws and territory.

The Mikmaq condemned the Canadian government, claiming that it had infringed on the their rights as self-determining peoples through unlawful confiscation of their territory and involuntary supervision over the use of their remaining territory. The Mikmaq had initially signed a treaty with Britain, the Mikmaq Treaty of 1752, which was later transferred to the Canadian government. This treaty proclaims:

“Saving unto [the Mikmaq]... and their natural Descendants respectively all their lands, Liberties and properties not by them convey’d or sold to or possessed by any of the English Subjects as aforesaid. As also the privilege of fishing, hunting, and fowling as formerly.”

Indeed, the treaty specifically grants the Mikmaq their territory, fishing and hunting rights, and the preservation of their liberties. Nowhere in the document do the Mikmaq cede their right to self-determination. As their initial complaint to the UNHRC notes, “the Mikmaq Nationimow sold no land, and ceded no sovereignty over its domestic affairs [in the Mikmaq Treaty of 1752].” There is no part of the treaty which would suggest that the Canadian government had the right to take Mikmaq land and ignore their right to self-determination.

Canada’s rejection of these claims is intriguing; the government does not dispute the facts, rather, it claims that this treaty does not have the right to form internationally recognized contracts that concern their independence. This claim is well illustrated in their initial response to the Human Rights Committee:

International, American and Canadian law do not recognize treaties with North American Native People as international documents confirming the existence of these tribal societies as independent and sovereign States. These treaties are merely considered to be nothing more than contracts between a sovereign and a group of its subjects.

In this line of reasoning, the indigenous peoples, by their very nature, are incapable of forming treaties as sovereign entities. The last sentence of the previous quote makes clear that the Canadian government does not believe the Mikmaq signed their sovereignty away, but rather, that the Mikmaqs simply (and inevitably) lost their sovereignty. Indeed, the moment that the indigenous people could form contracts, when the European settlers arrived, was the same moment that their contracts became worthless.

In response, the Human Rights Committee did not explicitly agree with either the Mikmaq tribe or the Canadian government, rather, they focused on a bureaucratic problem, successfully sidestepping the question. A quotation from the ruling will suffice to illustrate the absurd reasoning that informed their final decision:

While article 1 of the Covenant recognizes and protects in the most resolute terms a people's right of self-determination… this provision can neither be invoked by individuals, nor by peoples under the Optional Protocol.

In other words, individuals can't invoke the right to self-determination, but only individuals will be heard at the Human Rights Committee. This requirement blocks any claim from internally colonized peoples; they can neither petition the HRC as a group nor as individuals. This ruling is made worse by the fact that the Human Rights Committee is the only UN group that will hear indigenous claims and can legally compel nations to follow their ruling. As Turpel notes, “Self-determination claims are virtually impossible to advance concretely in any other United Nations fora [excluding the Human Rights Committee] because states – not peoples – have access to and shape United Nations institutions.”

Indigenous tribes, caught in a situation entirely inimical to their freedom, have little chance even to air their grievances before the courts of the United Nations.

But why has the United Nations failed to take other actions to protect the fundamental right of indigenous peoples to self-determination? It would certainly be possible for the UN to declare that nations are illegally breaking their commitment to the Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. Indeed, the logistical problems involved in the Optional Protocol are not the only problem: the United Nation's conception of self-determination, as articulated in Article 1 of the Covenant, was shaped by the post-WWII decolonization process, and has thus become inherently biased against internally colonized peoples.
The Biases within the United Nations’ Understanding of Self-Determination

The UN’s conception of self-determination rejects the legitimacy of indigenous self-determination. The concept was perhaps first manifested in the American and French Revolution, and later found ardent vocalization from Woodrow Wilson. Self-determination did not, however, become an international standard until the post-World War II dismantling of colonization, when it became “fastened to decolonization.” This shift can be understood when looking at the UN’s Resolution 1514, the “Declaration on the granting of independence to colonial countries and peoples.” Paragraph 6 states:

Any attempt aimed at the partial or total disruption of the national unity and the territorial integrity of a country is incompatible with the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations.

The logic behind paragraph 6 is obvious: during the decolonization process, it was important to promote stability and to prevent a plethora of “peoples” within greater nations from demanding self-determination. But this logic created a larger tension between self-determination and preexisting territorial boundaries. On the one hand, the UN recognizes peoples’ right to self-government, but on the other hand, it also cherishes the right of nation-states to protect their territorial integrity. Richard Falk pessimistically argues that “the notion of self-determination itself is subordinated to an overriding conception of the unity and integrity of the State.”

This crystallization of the right to self-determination can be understood in two different ways. First, it can be understood in the traditional sense: namely, that self-determination is legitimate insofar as it does not threaten the territorial unity and integrity of a nation-state. But it can also be understood in a different way, which distinguishes normative beliefs from the historical application of those beliefs. One can simultaneously hold that “all peoples have the right of self-determination” and that, during the historical context of decolonization, it was necessary to enact paragraph 6 of resolution 1514 in order to ensure political stability at that particular time. In other words, the ideal can be distinguished from its application in specific historical contexts. Methods meant to redress external colonization need not be grouped with methods for deconstructing internal colonization.

Indeed, the two processes – abolishing external colonization and abolishing internal colonization – are fundamentally different. Whereas the former was based on returning complete sovereignty (both political and territorial) to the indigenous peoples, it is usually recognized that such an agreement would be much more difficult with the latter. In the case of internal colonization, a new hegemonic political system has actually eradicated the older one and as such, it would be ridiculous to abolish the new system and nearly impossible to secede. Indeed, as has been mentioned earlier, most indigenous groups in Canada advocate specific rights within the hegemonic government, rather than outside it. As the National Coalition of Aboriginal Organizations told the Working Group on Indigenous Populations (who were working to draft the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples):

“We define our rights in terms of self-determination. We are not looking to dismember your States and you know it. But we do insist on the right to control our territory, our resources, the organization of our societies, our own decision-making institutions, and the maintenance of our own culture and ways of life.”

Indeed, self-determination, as envisioned by many in the indigenous community, does not entail the disruption of the territorial integrity of a nation-state, but rather argues for greater privileges – land titles, resources, political institutions, etc – within the nation-state itself.

Viewed in this light, the failure of the Human Rights Committee to recognize the Mi’kmaq claim to self-determination is indicative of a greater problem within this international court. In short, the court does not offer terms, categories and rights that are applicable to the indigenous peoples’ claim to self-determination. The indigenous people cannot claim the right to self-determination under minority status, because minorities are not granted the right to self-determination, and they cannot claim this right as peoples, because their conception of self-determination does not conform to the international court’s conception (which, as mentioned earlier, is still based on WWII decolonization). The language of this international court does not allow for a more nuanced conception of self-determination, which would balance special rights with the existing political government.

But while this path may have not proven conducive to indigenous self-determination, there is another international source to draw from: international declarations. While these, unlike the Covenant, are not binding on countries, they do help to codify international aspirations and place pressure on countries to work towards fulfilling them. The most important international declaration in regards to indigenous peoples is the United Nations Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. This declaration, while propounding a worthy ideal, was not adopted by the Canadian government. The reasons for its failure in this regard are due to its mixture of ambiguity, generalizations, idealism and avoidance of pragmatic concerns.

United Nations Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples

The Working Group on Indigenous Populations (WGIP), which was created to draft the Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, was composed not just of nation-states, but also of NGOs and tribal bodies. While the UN formally accredits NGOs, the acceptance of tribal groups is a new addition. As the International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs accurately observes, “No other United Nations document has ever been elaborated with such full and democratic participation of all parties concerned.” Furthermore, the indigenous people at the WGIP did not simply watch from the sidelines; rather, the “working group provided an important means for indigenous peoples to promote their own
Indigenous Claims to Self-Determination

conceptions about their rights within the international arena.”53 This working group is perhaps one of the only times that the UN has treated indigenous peoples and nation-states as equals. Anaya notes that the “first complete draft of the declaration... substantially reflected proposals submitted by indigenous peoples’ representatives.”54 These proposals were an ideal beginning to the declaration that could possibly shape international ideals on indigenous self-determination. Indeed, the simple facts that the WGIP was democratically composed and the indigenous peoples’ voices were actually heard, make this working group a success.

Above all, the indigenous people wanted to collapse the difference between “peoples” who deserve self-determination, and “peoples” who do not. The North American Indigenous Caucus most clearly explicates this intent when they told the WGIP, “The International Covenants were drafted to protect peoples, all peoples without exception. There is no provision whereby these protections must be applied selectively to certain peoples…”55 The actual declaration perfectly reflects this desire: Article 3 of the final version of the Declaration reads, “Indigenous peoples have the right of self-determination. By virtue of that right they freely determine their political status and freely pursue their economic, social and cultural development.”56 This Article should not be taken lightly—with the substitution of “indigenous” in place of “all”, this phrase uses exactly the same wording as the UN Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. This phrasing successfully highlights an unjust inconsistency with the United Nations’ application of this Article.

The declaration not only incorporates indigenous peoples in the term “peoples”, but it also expands the conception of self-determination and allows for more variation in its application. In the preamble, the declaration proclaims, “Recognizing also that indigenous peoples have the right freely to determine their relationships with States in a spirit of coexistence, mutual benefits and full respect.”57 In this phrase, the archaic conception of self-determination based on the post-WWII conception is rejected; it is not about entirely transforming the government in power, but rather is focused on the “relationship” between the two groups. This new conception is sensitive to the varieties of approaches that indigenous people may take in creating a more just relationship to the state. The new approach to self-determination is most explicit in Article 5, which reads,

Indigenous peoples have the right to maintain and strengthen their distinct political, legal, economic, social and cultural institutions, while retaining their rights to participate fully, if they so choose, in the political, economic, social and cultural life of the State.58

Article 5 offers a new conception of self-determination, which more accurately reflects the needs and desires of indigenous peoples. Self-determination is not, as the international community has traditionally believed, a simple right that corresponds to the process of decolonization, but rather, it is complex and specific to each unique locale. Indeed, if this declaration was accepted within the international community, it could eradicate the obsolete conception of self-determination that is based on external colonization and introduce a more nuanced approach.

But aspirations and pragmatism rarely go hand-in-hand, and this case is no exception. While the declaration embodies a noble ideal – and one that theoretically remedies much of the biases against indigenous peoples – its efficacy is lacking. Because it is constructed as a declaration of ideals, rather than a list of suggested alterations, it does not offer a definite plan of action for specific countries. This ambiguity worried the Canadian government who complained that, “In relation to self-government provisions, the text does not provide effective guidance about how indigenous governments might work with other levels of government, including laws of overriding national importance and matters of financing.”59 Without a clearly established plan, Canada worried that their agreement could manifest in demands for “excessive” claims. As the government further clarifies, some of the provisions in the document, “could be interpreted as giving a veto to indigenous peoples over many administrative matters, legislation, development proposals and national defense activities which concern the broader population...”60 The vagueness and breadth of the declaration takes on a sinister nature to the Canadian government, who fear that such ambiguity could allow for claims far beyond the means of the government, and potentially catalyze territorial and political instability within the nation-state.

Canada criticized the declaration for its sweeping claims and dearth of concrete solutions, but, although the document’s ambiguity is problematic, it is exactly how the declaration had to be composed. It is important to remember that it is a declaration; just as the UN Declaration on Human Rights has sweeping claims, so too does this declaration. Neither document offers practical solutions but rather, normative beliefs that each nation-state should strive to embody. Furthermore, practical enumerations and specific guidelines cannot work—the variety of indigenous peoples, and the diversity of their plights, are too numerous to be included within a declaration. Additionally, because a list of suggestions for each country was not feasible, the declaration needed to include drastic provisions for horribly oppressed peoples, i.e. while most groups do not require such serious action as secession, some do, and it is important that the declaration leave this open as a possibility. Indeed, as the National Congress of American Indians made clear, “The right of secession is a dormant right that may be triggered by extremes of political disenfranchisement, ruthless exploitation, or material dispossession. On the other hand the right may be neutralized by access to meaningful political participation.” 61 The declaration must have ambiguity in order to pertain to the myriad indigenous peoples in vastly different political environments. The declaration cannot be written for one or the other group; it must include even the most drastic measures within its sweeping affirmations of indigenous peoples’ rights.

With this apparently incommensurable tension between the indigenous peoples’ need to affirm all indigenous peoples’ rights the world over, and the nation-states’ desire to discuss concrete dictates rather than sweeping proclamations, it appears as though the declaration’s efficacy will dwindle. While there was some success in the signing of the
declaration (both Brazil and Peru, along with many other South American countries, signed it), many of the thirty nation-states that signed the declaration, such as Britain, Switzerland, and the Republic of Korea, have insignificant domestic indigenous populations. Indeed, two countries with some of the largest indigenous populations, Canada and Russia, both refused to sign the treaty. Furthermore, because declarations create no legal commitment, countries need not actually follow it. Furthermore, the ambiguity of the document, while in part necessary for the indigenous peoples, could actually hurt them; since particular situations are not detailed, the countries can interpret the document any way that they please. There is certainly the possibility that this declaration, with all its idealism, will fail to have any concrete manifestations.

But the declaration should not be viewed as a failure. While it does not legally bind any country, it does succeed in some ways: First, as mentioned earlier, it collapses the distinction between peoples and indigenous peoples, and expands the definition of self-determination. Just as the Declaration on Human Rights has slowly changed the international community’s approach to human rights violations, this declaration may change international norms, ushering in a new understanding of indigenous peoples’ right to self-determination. If these terms do significantly change, it is feasible that institutions like the Human Rights Committee may correct their errors and become more receptive to cases brought by indigenous peoples. Another important success, as Falk points out, is that this process has supported “network-building”, and through the drafting of the declaration, has connected disparate indigenous groups. These factors – the possibility of changing international norms and connecting indigenous peoples – promise to have some impact on the issues. While it might not cause an immediate change, and may never have a drastic impact, it will certainly aid the indigenous peoples’ fight to self-determination and give them some support from the international community.

Both the Human Rights Committee and the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples have offered little assistance; the former has proven to be entrenched within obsolete beliefs, while the latter will likely take decades to have any impact. But the declaration has corrected serious errors within the Human Rights Committee’s ruling. It has insisted on including indigenous people with all other people, and most importantly, it has transformed “self-determination” into a more open-ended and capacious term. But even with all of its success, it still has had little impact. For this reason, domestic action in Canada may prove superior to both other avenues; unlike the other two, it does not have the problem of generalizations. Indeed, not only can the concept of self-determination be tailored to the specific political and tribal systems, but it can also be based on immediate actions rather than aspirations. Because the goals and policies involved with indigenous self-determination are a complex interaction between specific indigenous peoples and a particular nation-state, domestic political action may prove most effective.

Nunavut: An Ideal Compromise

Nunavut, which means “our land” in Inuktitut, is a territory that was recently created in Northern Canada. It is also an example of a legitimate compromise between a large indigenous group and the colonizing nation-state. This agreement succeeded for several reasons. First, the physical area granted to the Inuit had certain features that made it easier to govern; it was sparsely populated and few non-indigenous people resided there. Second, the Inuits were willing to make certain concessions – namely, that their self-determination would exist within the confines of Canadian law – in order to form the final compromise. Finally, Canada’s highly decentralized federalist government was responsive to the possibility of indigenous self-determination. Unlike the international realm, which has failed in many instances, a domestic agreement succeeded in this case because the solution was tailored to Canada’s specific characteristics.

Nunavut’s geography and demographic features had a major impact on the final agreement. Much of mainstream Canadian culture views northern Canada as desolate and uninhabitable. John Amagoalik, who lived in what was previously delineated as the Northern Territory, recalled that journalists would often visit to write on the Arctic and “would return to their homes in the south and write their stories. Somewhere in their article a familiar line usually appeared. They almost never failed to refer to the Arctic as a ‘wasteland where nobody lives.’” Indeed, even for much of the second half of the twentieth century, the Arctic was considered a “wasteland.” In addition to this characteristic, the Inuits comprise 85% of the inhabitants of Nunavut. Thus the new territorial demarcations would not predominately affect non-indigenous citizens. Gurston Dacks, writing in the early 80’s before the Nunavut Agreement had succeeded, realized how important the demographics were to the success of the plan, noting that “Only in the North do these claims have much hope of being realized. North of sixty degrees, native people comprise a much larger proportion of the total population than in any of the provinces.” Since the final agreement did not actually give the Inuits complete political power but rather divided the territory to ensure that they would have it, the population make-up of the territory was an integral consideration. Indeed, the combination of Canada’s general aversion towards the “cold wasteland” and the percentage of Inuit citizens were certainly critical for this agreement’s success.

Also important to the success of the final agreement was the Inuits’ willingness to sacrifice complete autonomy in order to achieve several aspects of self-determination. Their acquired form of self-determination is defined by Charles J. Marecic as “public government” in that the indigenous government is incorporated within the Canadian government, not outside of it. Indeed, while Nunavut controls various political decisions – e.g. the use of Inuktitut insofar as it does not stifle French and English, school policies, mineral and agricultural control, the imposition of fines and taxes – the Canadian government holds ultimate authority. As the Nunavut Act proclaims, it is no different from other territories within Canada:

(2) Nothing in subsection (1) shall be construed as giving the Legislature greater powers with respect to any class of
subjects described in that section than are given to the legislatures of the provinces by sections 92 and 95 of the Constitution Act, 1867 with respect to similar subjects described in those sections.\textsuperscript{50}

It is apparent that the Canadian government is not yet generous enough to offer complete autonomy to indigenous groups and any indigenous group in Canada that is intractable enough not to compromise would promise very little. Indeed, the fact that the land eventually allotted to the Inuits was smaller than the traditional Inuit territory is another example of compromise.\textsuperscript{51}

But a “public government” could only flourish in a nation-state that is as decentralized as Canada. Canada allows its various provinces and territories considerable leeway in forming their own laws and cultures. For example, Quebec has control not only over issues like education, health care and welfare, but also the protection of the French language. As Jack Hicks and Graham White note, “It is fair to add that Canada is one of the most decentralized federations in the world and its sub-national units – provinces and territories – exercise a remarkable degree of political and policy-making autonomy from the central government in Ottawa.”\textsuperscript{52} This highly decentralized country makes it easier to create a new fiction for a specific group; very few nation-states have the political foundations for such a decentralized and locale-specific style of government. The Canadian Federalist system is “the kind of society in which different nations could live within the same state...”\textsuperscript{53} which is exactly why the Nunavut plan was so successful. Several writers, including Randy Ames and John Merritt, when writing on the potential of the Nunavut government, explicitly note that the agreement is “designed to fit into the intergovernmental framework of Canadian federalism, wholly and without exception.”\textsuperscript{54} Indeed, unlike other nation-states, Canada’s specific political atmosphere allows it to incorporate the indigenous claim to self-determination within the state where there is no fear of compromising the state’s territorial integrity.

This compromise is a product of its environment; it could not have worked without the propitious combination of certain factors. Nunavut would never have succeeded if the Inuits had wanted territorial rights in downtown Montreal. Furthermore, the Inuits not only needed to be willing to compromise, the Canadian political system also needed to have room for this type of incorporation. In this sense, the domestic fight for self-determination in Canada is more effective than the international—domestic action can be tailored to the specifics of the area, whereas international organizations are forced to generalize and play it safe.

Conclusion

For the First Nations of Canada, domestic compromises have proven to be the most effective means of achieving their goals. In the case of Nunavut, the unique characteristics of both the nation-state and Inuit goals were used to reach a specific compromise. Thus, for the time being, it appears as though these peoples will find the domestic agreements the most successful and fruitful. However, Canada is unique in its acceptance of its indigenous peoples; many countries are far less accommodating and open for discussion. It is for this reason that international law cannot be totally ignored.

For the international arena to prove useful, it must greatly shift its approach. The two major bulwarks that currently block indigenous peoples’ claims to self-determination – namely, an over-generalized conception of indigenous peoples and a stark conception of self-determination – must be altered. The Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples has made the first steps in demolishing these boundaries, but much more work is needed. It is important for international institutions to move away from declarations and towards a more specific approach that focuses on the unique attributes of each tribe’s context. Instead of broad declarations or courts that are bound by historical precedent, international organizations should begin to act as mediators between nation-states and the tribes that reside within them. This new method would have two benefits: first, it would exploit the strengths of domestic compromises (i.e. specific agreements tailored to both the tribe and the state), and second, it would ensure that the nation-state acted fairly and didn’t abuse its overarching power. International law, in this conception, would act as an international ombudsman, supporting and guiding the two parties towards a fair and mutually acceptable decision. Perhaps with this type of support from the international community, more nation-states could come to fair agreements with their indigenous population. Perhaps this new international order could create other successes like Nunavut, and form new modes of coexistence that are accepted by both the colonizers and the colonized. ■

Endnotes


6. Similar problems often appear in hunting and fishing regulations. These regulations
are often centered on the commercial and leisure aspects, and fail to recognize that indigenous people view these activities as integral to their culture. For an informative example of a court adequately addressing this problem, see R v Sparrow [(1990), 46 B.C.L.R. (2d) 1].


12. In elaboration of the Mikmaq’s claim that “minority” is a western conception, it is also true that the minorities/peoples binary is also a European development. Unfortunately, in order to engage with the international discourse, indigenous peoples must adopt this language. As will be discussed briefly later in the paper, both the terms “peoples” and “minorities”, as they are conceived in traditional international discourse, have proven to be ineffective in securing indigenous peoples’ right to self-determination.


14. See Tully, particularly 44-45 for discussion on colonial illegalities. This will also be discussed later in the paper.


35. Anaya, 64.
36. Anaya, 63.

37. Morgan, 485.


43. Morgan, 489.


45. Falk, 19.


48. Dacks, 252.


52. Jack Hicks and Graham White, 31.


Nationalist Men and the Nation’s Women
Nationalism as a Masculine Phenomenon
by Elizabeth Aronson

Introduction
The language of nationalism hints at the vital role that understandings of gender play in nationalist movements. Terms such as “mother tongue” and “father land” invite the gendered analysis of nationalist movements, and yet scholars have only recently begun to debate nationalism through a gendered lens. Feminist analyses of nationalist movements have opened the door to the concept of gender as central to nationalism. This paper agrees with that assessment, but contends that the importance of gender to nationalist mobilization requires that more significant attention is paid to the role of masculinity. Though nationalism varies contextually based on the historical and situational components of each movement, the concept of masculinity consistently emerges as a cross-cultural component of nationalist movements. This paper argues that although women have played active roles within nationalist movements, nationalism is primarily a masculine phenomenon that (1) relies on a prevailing masculine conception of the nation-state, (2) appropriates cultural conceptions of masculinity in order to recruit adherents, and (3) benefits men more than women.

Male States, Female Nations: Gendering the Nation-State
The concepts “nation,” “state,” and “nationalism” cannot be fully explained without introducing gender as a tool of analysis. The implications of these terms outline the masculine discourse concept of the nation-state and provide a framework for understanding the relationship between nationalism and gender. Cynthia Enloe offers operational definitions for the state and nation, classifying the state as a vertical creature of authority and the nation as a horizontal creature of identity, such that the state retains power to protect the primarily symbolic value of the nation. Enloe further describes the nation as a “collection of people who have come to believe that they have been shaped by a common past and are destined to share a common future…nurtured by common language and sense of otherness from groups around them.” Building on this, nationalism constitutes a “commitment to fostering those beliefs and promoting policies which permit the nation to control its own destiny.” Enloe’s definitions broadly illuminate the relationship between nation and state, but

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further analysis also requires an understanding of masculinity, a problematic term. Joane Nagel argues that, though the cultural characteristics of masculinity vary contextually with time and place, some identifiable understanding of masculinity consistently exists. In other words, societies conceive of “what it means to be a man” and—though the specifics differ across time and place—men are socialized toward this ideal. With these definitions in mind, this paper will first consider both the state and nation as masculine constructions that ascribe gender to each in order to facilitate nationalism as the purview of men.

The masculine construction of nation and state imagines the nation as female and the state as male; in this image, outside forces pose a threat to the vulnerable nation, while the state asserts responsibility for protecting the nation from foreign invasion. By proposing the nation as dependent on the state’s protection, this model justifies state intervention on behalf of the nation and ensures the survival of the state by underscoring national vulnerability. In other words, the nation—or ‘woman’—safeguards identity, while the state—or ‘man’—protects that identity through authority. Women are symbols of the nation, while men are its agents. Though the concepts of nation and state incorporate both women and men, the state (men) retains the authority to ascribe meaning to the roles of men and women. Within nationalist discourse, the state assigns women no agency to elect their own roles within the nation or state, but rather gives men the power to delineate the roles of both men and women.

Understanding the nation-state’s masculine construction extends beyond terminological considerations to the structural underpinnings of the nation-state. Just as political institutions are primarily guided by men and grounded in masculinity, so too is nationalism. In particular, the historical primacy of men in state institutions has ensured a masculine understanding of nationalism that is reinforced by the reality of the continued exclusion of women from formal institutions. This exclusion perpetuates masculinity as the definitive element in nationalist visions, leading to a conception of the nation-state based on masculine understandings and socialization.

Enloe highlights the similarly exclusive character of collective history: she argues that the community recognition of a shared public past and shared imagined future signals the beginning of nationalist identification, but that these facets of identity rarely incorporate the historical experiences and imagined futures of women. In this way, nationalism affirms a male historical narrative and imagines a masculine future, denying women’s representation within nationalist movements as well as preempting future opportunities for women’s inclusion.

**Masculinity, Militarism and Nationalism**

Though the essentialist images of ‘woman as caretaker’ and ‘man as protector’ find little empirical evidence as biological imperatives, nationalisms nevertheless consistently use these gendered portrayals to recruit men to nationalist causes. Nationalist responses to colonialism have historically characterized women as vulnerable and thus in need of men’s protection from foreign influences, drawing on socially constructed notions of masculinity. In addition, the cultural linkage between masculinity and militarism reinforces an understanding of masculinity easily co-opted to satisfy nationalist goals. Although nationalism appropriates women as the symbolic reproducers of the nation, viewing women as the “critical reproductive element within the family unit,” its primary preoccupation lies in recruiting men. While women’s reproductive symbolism affirms the high value that nationalist ideology places on women, this valuation stems from a masculine conception of women as a nation’s most valuable possessions rather than political actors in their own right.

Just as the relationship between the state and the nation posits the state as the protector of the vulnerable nation, so too does nationalism call on men to protect women vulnerable to foreign manipulation. This element is particularly visible in nationalist movements fostered by colonialism in which for a man “becoming a nationalist requires a man to resist the foreigner’s use and abuse of his women.” Enloe illustrates this dynamic with an example from French colonization in Algeria and Algeria’s subsequent nationalist war for independence. During the colonial period, male French colonists sent home postcards depicting Algerian women in generally standardized and often eroticized poses that appealed to French citizens at home while simultaneously underscoring the need for colonial rule. These images connected the appropriation of Algerian women to French domination over the area, and Enloe suggests that Algerian nationalists have perpetuated this understanding of power, conceptualizing colonialism as foreign domination over Algerian women. Hence, to be nationalist is to resist colonialism by re-appropriating the nation’s women. Though postcards seem trivial, the example highlights the continuity of women’s treatment within nationalism and colonialism; in both cases, the men are actors who see women as a territory to be defended—successful defense requires the control of women, which symbolizes both masculinity and political power. This nationalism shows no concern with women’s experience of being conquered, relying instead on co-opting men’s feelings of emasculation resulting from the exploitation of ‘their’ women.

The socialization of men for war overlaps with strategies that breed nationalism in men: discourses of “honor, patriotism, cowardice, bravery and duty” manifest themselves in both militarist and nationalist dialogue. Joshua Goldstein’s exploration of the reciprocal relationship between the war system and gender hypothesizes that men are socialized into gender roles that prepare them to be warriors from birth. This socialization feeds easily into nationalist tendencies; in particular, the imperative placed on men to conform to patriotic enthusiasm during wartime echoes the burden on men to support nationalist ideology. The socialization of men for war does not suggest the socialization of women for peace; in fact, women usually support men in militaristic endeavors, even if these women are not on the front lines. The important argument here is that while women are socialized alongside men, the manipulation of men in order to create a warrior class overshadows any similarly targeted development of women. Though nationalism designates women as critical to its cause, this valuation is principally a
symbolic one that contrasts sharply with men’s roles as the actors in nationalist movements.

Notwithstanding the few women who have garnered attention within nationalist movements, nationalism most often treats women as symbols rather than active participants. Feminist analyses of nationalist movements have highlighted women’s participation within those movements in order to script women into a history in which they have otherwise been excluded; however, these interpretations overestimate women’s agency within nationalist movements. Women in these movements have been relegated to “supportive, symbolic often suppressed and traditional roles,” and though in some cases women have used patriarchal roles to their advantage, their position in nationalist movements has remained largely peripheral in comparison to that of men. Further, even when women actively participate in nationalist military endeavors, they are usually relegated to traditional roles after this involvement. Understanding women’s involvement in nationalist movements thus requires acknowledging that their positions tend to be peripheral, and that the number of women playing active roles in nationalist movements is few.

**Battle of the (Nationalist) Sexes: Who Benefits from Nationalism?**

Historically, many nationalist movements have been predicated on the subordination of women, or at a minimum have required women to subvert feminist goals in pursuit of nationalist goals. Women have reacted to this deferral of equality in diverse ways; though seemingly counterintuitive to their self-interest, many women have indeed delayed—or even denounced—seeking a Western conception of gender equality in deference to “more significant” nationalist goals. However, these efforts are generally met with little recompense from nationalist leaders, and often once nationalist goals are achieved (as in the case of anti-colonial struggles) women are consigned to the status they held prior to nationalist agitation. In addition, when nationalism becomes militarized, mobilization enforces unity in the name of “national survival,” which can silence women critical of patriarchal privileges and attitudes, thereby privileging men. Although military mobilization also presents new opportunities for women when men are mobilized to fight, women generally remain peripheral and the image of militarized men overshadows images of political women.

Scholars offer two main reasons for women’s willingness to subvert feminist goals to nationalist ones: first, that nationalist women are responding not to their roles within the movements, but rather to the broader goals of the movement; and second, that some women prefer the traditional roles ascribed to them by nationalist movements. Men’s motivations for nationalism can be categorized similarly; the likely reality is that each hypothesis explains nationalist sentiment among different groups of people, or that nationalist adherents see the ideological and practical goals of nationalism as coinciding with each other. Nationalism provides no outlet, however, for women who subscribe to its “broader goals” but actively oppose its marginalization of women into traditional roles: Enloe describes the woman who attends nationalist political meetings and subsequently faces accusations from her husband of neglecting her family duties, having an affair, and undermining him in the minds of other men. Though this example likely oversimplifies individual relationships between men and women, it nevertheless reflects the experience of feminist nationalists who envisage active roles within nationalist movements.

When feminist nationalist women do agree to subvert their aspirations of gender equality, fulfilling peripheral roles within nationalist movements in order to advocate for the broader goals of a community, they rarely see rewards for that participation. Returning to the case of colonial Algeria, this disconnect becomes clear: more than 11,000 women were active participants in the national resistance movement against France, including 2,000 active in the armed wing. This extensive involvement, while noteworthy, nevertheless resulted in a reversion to tradition upon Algerian independence in 1962: the new, independent government mandated Islamic dress and the veil for women and sent them back into the home. While content to utilize women during critical times of militarization, Algerian nationalism clearly did not imagine a new role for women, seizing instead upon a traditional conception of women.

**Conclusion and Implications**

Gendered interpretations of nationalism attempt to center both men and women within the historical and political processes of nationalist movements; however, the incorporation of women into these analyses has tended to overstate their agency within nationalist movements. For the most part, women have been largely peripheral to nationalist movements; though nationalist men often appropriate the image of women as symbolic of the nation, nationalism’s primary interest lies in recruiting men through existing political structures, the conflation of nationalism with masculinity and the benefits offered to men by nationalist ideology. With this in mind, nationalism can be understood as a highly masculine concept that builds on the existing structure of the nation-state by co-opting the cultural socialization of men in order to use masculinity as a strategy for recruiting nationalist adherents. Despite women’s efforts to participate in nationalist movements, nationalism relegated women to the periphery and results in benefits for men at the expense of women. Understanding the complex relationship between gender and nationalism entails a risk of essentialist assumptions that are easily disproved through contextual evidence; however, these generalizations are useful for understanding the broad processes at work in nationalist movements. Furthermore, by establishing the link between masculinity and nationalism, we can consider an imagined nation in which nationalism is built on women’s experiences and ideas. Whether a feminist nationalism can exist—and if it can, whether its methods and goals would be significantly different from the masculine nationalism outlined above—remains to be seen.
Endnotes


2. Ibid., 45.

3. Ibid.


6. Pettman, 158.


8. Enloe, 46.


10. Enloe, 54.

11. Ibid., 44.

12. Ibid.

13. Enloe, 43.


17. Enloe, 42


19. Ibid.

20. Henderson & Jeydel, 62

21. Enloe, 58

22. Ibid.


24. Enloe, 55

25. Ibid.


27. Ibid.
China’s Evolution in Peacekeeping

By Jackson Woods

On August 31st 2006, the United Nations Security Council passed Resolution 1706, calling for the expansion of the existing United Nations Mission in the Sudan to the devastated Darfur region.1 A notable achievement for the international community in its efforts to address the ongoing genocide within Darfur, this resolution also revealed a concurrent shift in China’s views towards UN peacekeeping. The People’s Republic did not vote in support of the resolution, but after two years of obstruction, the Chinese delegation chose to abstain - rather than block - the resolution’s passage. This single instance illustrates multiple trends influencing China’s evolving views of such matters, including the increasing benefits to China of participation and the increasing costs of opposition. In short, China has moved from a strongly skeptical opinion of international intervention to a more pragmatic outlook, by balancing the traditional focus on state sovereignty with the need for stabilization abroad, domestic military development and international reputational benefits. This change in both doctrine and practice has important implications as China rises to great power status.

The People’s Republic of China was founded in 1949, during the formative years for United Nations peacekeeping operations and doctrine. Here a distinction should be drawn between peacekeeping, defined as “military and civilian efforts to establish a secure environment in which to carry out peacebuilding activities,” and peace enforcement, which is “enforcement aimed at guaranteeing the implementation of a peace agreement or arrangement, including compliance, through judicious application of incentives and disincentives including military force.”2 Only peace enforcement is explicitly outlined under Chapter 7 of the United Nations Charter.3 With the advent of the Cold War and the demise of any envisaged standing United Nations forces, the legal and practical conditions under which peacekeeping and peace enforcement might be undertaken had not yet been defined; in fact, the term “peacekeeping” itself did not come into use until 1956.4,5 Thus, it is important to remember that China’s first direct experience with a United Nations military operation was the wholly atypical Korean War, in which a Soviet boycott of the Security Council allowed an American-led, United Nations-sanctioned force to enter the war in direct opposition to North Korea and, eventually, China itself.6 While most certainly not a peacekeeping operation in the current sense, this intervention strongly colored Chinese views of United Nations operations for decades. The experience in Korea combined with several other features of modern Chinese history, including foreign aggression in the 19th century, PRC exclusion from the United Nations in favor of the Republic of China and the Sino-Soviet split to create a deep mistrust of external powers and a belief that international interventions were simply covers for action taken by those strong enough to impose their will.7

However, the seating of the PRC on the Security Council in 1971 began a process of expanding engagement. After the launch of Deng’s economic reforms in 1978, and subsequent growth in China’s ties with the general international community, Chinese perceptions of peacekeeping became increasingly positive. The year 1981 saw China’s first vote in favor of a peacekeeping action, and 1990 saw the country’s first participation in a United Nations peacekeeping effort when Chinese military observers were sent to serve with the UN Truce Supervision Organization (UNTSO) in the Middle East.8 Within the last decade, China became steadily more involved in such actions, sending observers to locales such as Mozambique and Liberia and even providing troops for the UN Transitional
Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC). Part of the credit for this development may be due to the overall explosion in UN peacekeeping operations in the post-Cold War period, but it is also clear that China made a strategic decision to involve itself in operations when feasible and low-risk, abandoning its earlier policies of strict non-involvement along with the command economy.

During the past ten years, China has continued and expanded upon this course. In its stated doctrine, China has taken on the role of a country that actively supports peacekeeping efforts. Materially, the PRC is the largest contributor to peacekeeping among the permanent Security Council members, although it still lags far behind the largest contributors to peacekeeping overall. A State Council white paper declares that, “The United Nations’ status and role in world affairs are being upheld and strengthened,” and “China observes the purposes and principles of the UN Charter, honors its international obligations, and participates in UN peacekeeping operations.”

Of course, China has its own view of peacekeeping beyond simply participating, and remains decidedly cool to more interventionist approaches. Today, as in the past, China supports the application of Chapter I, Article 2 (4) of the UN Charter to peacekeeping doctrine: “All Members shall refrain in their international relations from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any state, or in any other manner inconsistent with the Purposes of the United Nations.” In practice, this means that China requires the full consent of any country before participating in peacekeeping operations of any kind. “China has all along attached importance and rendered support to peacekeeping activities in accordance with the spirit of the UN Charter,” said Chinese Major General Liu Pei, who added that “the leading role of the Security Council must be strengthened and that peacekeeping activities can only be implemented when the conditions are right.”

While this doctrine has been in place since China began to participate in peacekeeping efforts, the breathing room which it gives the PRC leadership in decision-making is important to recognize. Beijing has taken full advantage of this leeway over the past ten years. As long as peacekeepers enter into a state with the consent of that nation and do not become parties to the conflict, China has the ability to pick and choose which efforts it would like to support. To date, these have included such diverse countries as Haiti, Bosnia and Afghanistan in addition to those already mentioned above. A common motivating factor is lacking, however, and sheer benevolence is unlikely to provide a satisfactory explanation for Chinese choices. Instead, one must look to the general reasons for which the PRC backs peacekeeping operations to explain the connection between a permissive but non-interventionist Chinese doctrine and the nation’s growing practical support.

First, and most clearly, China’s international reputation is both increasingly important and increasing at stake. Pang writes that, “China’s reputation as a major power in the UN has become an important national goal. Since the Asian financial crisis of 1997-1998, China has been pursuing its new role as a ‘responsible power’ with increasing confidence.” In 1997, China still strongly identified as a developing nation with little involvement in international diplomacy beyond its own borders. Since then, China has helped stabilize its region during the financial crisis, joined the World Trade Organization, become a founding member of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization and taken on the role of a major player in the six-party talks aimed at defusing the North Korean nuclear issue. Chinese GNP has risen from $620 to $1,740 per capita from 1998 to 2005, and coastal cities and provinces are attaining levels of development approaching or even equaling the West. This increased involvement abroad and domestic development have combined with China’s ballooning economic stature to put the country in the world spotlight, for good and for ill.

As a nation embarking on a self-proclaimed “peaceful rise” in economic, diplomatic and military terms, the PRC faces a constant struggle to convince others of its own benign intentions. Absent this goodwill on the part of the world community and especially the United States, China could certainly face larger barriers to trade, strengthening of the American system of bilateral alliances along its borders, or even a concerted and ongoing effort to contain the expansion of Chinese prosperity and power. In 2005, Deputy Secretary of State Robert Zoellick stated that, “As it becomes a major global player, we are now encouraging China to become a ‘responsible stakeholder’ that will work with the United States and others to sustain, adapt, and advance the peaceful international system that has enabled its success.” The PRC government has taken up the “responsible stakeholder” phrase as a desirable description of China and its developmental path. With increased pressure to support international standards of behavior and to promote conformity within the current system, leaders know that China must act in a way which strongly projects an image of benign influence.

To that end, China has indeed moved to become a “responsible stakeholder” in the field of UN peacekeeping over the last decade. This shift is easily observed in the pattern of Chinese deployments. Before 1997, China’s major peacekeeping experience consisted of the deployment of 800 total troops and 97 observers as part of UNTAC. China undertook the mission politically and financially in addition to its military contributions, but “The involvement was not repeated in subsequent missions.” China’s next mission contribution of more than 40 personnel did not occur until the UN Mission of Support in East Timor in 2000, but since that time, the UN has witnessed still greater Chinese involvement in its missions in the Congo, Liberia and now the Sudan. Whereas earlier major involvement was clearly focused on China’s local neighborhood, support for recent interventions in Africa now takes center stage among Chinese operations. While hard to measure, this support may have plausibly brought some of the sought-after reputational benefits among local populations: as Thompson notes, “Images of Chinese police officers and People’s Liberation Army (PLA) soldiers wearing blue helmets and Chinese national flags project a positive image that dispels fears of a rising China.” Indeed, Chinese officials and government releases highlight these reputational aspects: “Chinese peacekeeping forces have earned praise from the United
Nations and from the government and people of host nations for their courage, perseverance, professionalism and discipline ...,” said Major General Liu. More importantly, practical support for peacekeeping has played into the U.S. hopes for China as a “stakeholder” described above, demonstrating visible financial and military support for collective actions taken in support of peace.

More recently, China’s involvement in the Sudan has given even greater weight to the argument that international reputational benefits are China’s largest concern in increasing its peacekeeping involvement. Since 2003, conflict and admitted genocide have been decimating the Darfur region, addressed on the ground only through an ill-equipped 7,000 member African Union Mission in Sudan. Initially, Chinese, Russian and French interests all worked against Security Council action on the issue, but as pressure mounted, attention focused on persistent Chinese opposition to intervention. Most of the criticism has centered on China’s oil ties to Sudan and the assumed link between energy supplies and its support for the Sudanese government on the Security Council. Finally, the pressure began to generate calls for an association between China’s “abetting genocide” and the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games, an intended showpiece for China’s modernization and development. Fearing permanent damage to the image of the Games, the PRC ultimately ratcheted down its support for Khartoum and abstained from the eventual vote on UN Security Council Resolution 1706, which allows any eventual peacekeepers the mandate to “use all necessary means ... to prevent attacks and threats against civilians,” as well as expanding their deployment specifically to the Darfur region pending Sudan’s consent.

While the Chinese leadership may well have had other legitimate reasons for softening its stance, international censure and the threat of a major blow to prestige certainly had some effect. Since the Resolution’s passage, China has committed to send a detachment of 315 engineers to Darfur, and the initially reluctant authorization of Resolution 1706 has already been appropriated by the leadership as an example of positive action on the part of the PRC. Again according to Liu, “The Chinese government’s active participation in peacekeeping in the Darfur region has won commendation and appreciation from relevant departments of the United Nations and from the international community.”

Besides reputational concerns, the second major reason for China’s changing actions over the last ten years is the PRC concern with stability, both in its own “near abroad” and in more distant areas of strategic importance. This stability has become intrinsically linked to China’s development and CCP legitimacy, which is predicated on globalization and reliable institutions in order to provide an environment for continued Chinese growth. As Lieberthal writes, “China’s grand strategy is designed both to sustain high speed economic development and to blunt any concerns that other countries may have about rapidly growing PRC capabilities. This strategy seeks to reduce to a minimum the chances that conflict abroad will disrupt the path to development at home; assure access to the raw materials, parts and components, and technology necessary to sustain China’s unprecedented economic growth; and prevent developments in Taiwan from provoking either cross-Strait military conflict or a domestic political crisis in the PRC.” In order to “reduce to a minimum” chances for disruptive conflict abroad and “assure access to raw materials,” China has come to view United Nations peacekeeping as a useful tool. Access to raw materials often depends on the domestic stability of other nations, and this same stability helps ensure favorable conditions for international trade and investment. Admittedly, opportunities for peacekeeping may occur in smaller, resource-poor states. Overall stability in such states, however, can produce positive externalities among states around them and eliminate the potentially massive negative externalities associated with war in any state. For instance, China’s current assistance (182 engineers) to the UN Interim Force in Lebanon helps build peace and security in the most energy-critical region of the world, even if only in a limited fashion. The eventual acceptance of action in Sudan also falls into this category, as long-term stability in that country can only benefit Chinese access to Sudanese natural resources.

Finally, China has used peacekeeping not only as a carrot to induce cooperation but also as a stick, actively withdrawing support for peacekeeping as punishment for actions which violate core Communist Party interests such as the Taiwan issue. Two major cases outline this type of approach to peacekeeping. First, in Liberia, “China’s deployment of troops to Liberia shortly after it switched recognition from Taiwan to China was quickly followed up with aid packages that included food aid, motorcycles for the Liberian police force, a rebuilt sports complex, and even a US $2 million grant to help restructure the Liberian army and provide pensions and pay-outs for demobilizing troops.” This type of incentive to go along with Beijing’s principles is highly visible to any of the other remaining countries which recognize the Republic of China. Second, in the case of the United Nations Preventative Deployment to Macedonia, China used its position on the Security Council to prematurely end “one of the two most successful missions in Southeast Europe” in 1999. This action came on the heels of Macedonian recognition of the Republic of China, which was subsequently switched to the People’s Republic in 2001. In both of the above cases, Beijing has been able to use peacekeeping as a means to the end of securing diplomatic support for its own viewpoints and further isolating the Republic of China, arguably shifting Macedonia’s behavior decisively simply through its power over peacekeeping and aid in the United Nations.

In a more minor case, Chinese involvement in Haiti may also have been related to Haiti’s ongoing recognition of the ROC, but this is less clear. Thompson asserts that, “China has recently [2004] provided over 100 riot police from the People’s Armed Police (PAP) to the UN mission in Haiti [MINUSTAH], their only deployment in the Western hemisphere, and a nation that still recognizes Taiwan. While Haiti has not switched recognition from Taiwan to China, it can be assumed that this goal factored into China’s decision to deploy police on that mission.” This assumption seems contradictory to China’s earlier willingness to deny a country aid and peacekeeping involvement based on the Taiwan question as witnessed in Macedonia, as well as the positive feedback from Macedonia’s subsequent
compliance. Either Beijing’s policy on the issue shifted between 1999 and 2004, or else Haiti possessed some outside set of factors inviting Chinese participation that outweighed any concerns over ROC recognition. Regardless, Haiti appears to be something of an outlier in Beijing’s peacekeeping policy. Ideologically, China’s involvement in MINUSTAH may represent an early example of Chinese peacekeeping for the sake of keeping the peace rather than a shrewdly calculated geopolitical maneuver. Realistically, the PRC support for this mission appears to be a miscalculation of potential benefits.

Each of the above justifications for expanding Chinese involvement in peacekeeping is important, but a final domestic matter both contributes to and feeds off this change. At the same time that China has found new reasons to support deployments diplomatically, it has been increasing its military capability to participate as needed and using UN operations as learning labs for the People’s Liberation Army. Because China has not had occasion to deploy its armed forces externally since the Sino-Vietnamese War of 1979, very few of its current personnel and equipment have field experience. This makes United Nations deployments especially attractive means to gain such experience in a diplomatically safe way. By 2002, the PLA was able to field “One UN-standard engineering battalion, one UN-standard medical team and two UN-standard transport companies.” Since that time, China also made its largest deployment ever of peacekeepers: 550 to Liberia.

These increased capabilities have come during a period of unprecedented Chinese military expansion and modernization, an expansion that is coincident with China’s growth into a legitimate international power over the past decade. From 2000 to 2005, even the PRC’s own conservative numbers show Chinese defense expenditures as doubling, from $14.6 billion to $30.6 billion. While individual contributions to UN missions have been modest in military terms, they have helped the PLA to gain invaluable experience in coordinating with other militaries, to field-test equipment and to undergo rigorous and specialized UN training programs required for peacekeeping personnel. All of this has served to assist in China’s drive to move the PLA from a primarily continental, numbers-based force to one that is more mobile, technologically advanced and able to respond rapidly throughout China’s immediate region. At the same time, China’s ongoing military transformation further increases its ability to participate in and even lead intensive UN peacekeeping operations.

Looking over the actions enumerated above, one clearly sees the trend of expansion in peacekeeping participation by China, a trend made possible by doctrinal changes of the 1980’s but which only began in earnest during the mid-1990s. As China carries its military development and growing stature in international relations forward, a few different possibilities for longer-term peacekeeping policy present themselves. Based on the trajectory of the past ten years, some may seem more likely than others, but all appear plausible.

First, Beijing may simply continue as it is now, offering peacekeeping support where a clear national benefit exists and occasionally using its position on the Security Council to enforce unique Chinese perspectives. In this case, China would continue to maintain a lower overall profile than its economy and status as a veto-wielder might suggest. This outcome would play primarily off of acknowledgement that the United States will remain the dominant world power for the foreseeable future and that Beijing must therefore make pragmatic use of the tools available. Such a course would see China continue to support actions in nations with obvious impact on Chinese diplomatic, economic or energy interests.

Alternatively, China might expand its use of peacekeeping to help bring about closer contacts with other Asian nations and the West in addition to further bolstering its international reputation as a responsible power. Attaining such a characterization in the world community might prove especially valuable in light of the present period of American unilateralism. Like other developing nations such as Pakistan and India, China could find that the relatively low cost of engaging as part of a multi-national force is outweighed by respect gained among fellow nations. Moreover, peacekeeping activities present an opportunity for the PLA to forge greater trust and understanding between the Chinese and foreign military establishments, as well as potentially bringing Chinese and foreign non-governmental relief organizations together with the central government on specific issues.

Finally, one can envision a future in which Chinese attitudes towards peacekeeping tend towards those exhibited by the United States as a great power. As China rises, Beijing may increasingly find itself wary of material involvement in external affairs in which it does not command exclusive control. Such an outcome would of course be generally negative for peacekeeping efforts, with the two largest economies and militaries in the world refusing much more than financial aid in this respect. Unfortunately, skepticism regarding multilateral security initiatives may be a corollary of growing individual state power.

Regardless of Beijing’s ultimate views on peacekeeping, China’s clout in the decision-making process surrounding future interventions and missions will only increase. Along with this power will come expectations from the world community that China exercise its influence and capabilities in a responsible, constructive manner, preferably different from the interests which have too often characterized UN peacekeeping policy during the past 60 years. On this, the world community is likely to be disappointed. Even as China has engaged more closely with the outside world since 1997 through the mechanism of peacekeeping, it has continued to promote its own interests and principles even above material requirements for peace. However, such behavior is nothing new to the exercise of collective security. The ultimate significance of China’s role in the process will be to bring to bear additional resources, new perspectives and, with some luck, a firm commitment to safeguarding peace and stability in an ever-volatile world.

To conclude, the People’s Republic of China has undertaken a concerted effort to expand its involvement in UN peacekeeping operations over the past ten years as made evident by its recent behavior. Though little has changed in official PRC doctrine since the
1980s, the willingness of Beijing to take action and the attendant benefits of doing so have significantly changed the decision-making calculus. For China, these benefits come in the form of reputational gains, stability which complements Chinese economic growth, fulfilled diplomatic objectives and enhanced military experience for the PLA. Chinese actions have already produced tangible results in countries such as Liberia, the Congo and the Sudan, while perceived failure of China to act constructively now provokes worldwide comment and criticism. Although the ultimate results of pursuing greater involvement in peacekeeping operations may yet be unclear, even to the Chinese themselves, none should doubt that China can and will remain a significant player in the world’s most visible collective security arrangement.

Endnotes


4. Stephen Hill and Shahin Malik, Peacekeeping and the United Nations (Brookfield: Dartmouth Publishing, 1996), 11. The idea of standing UN forces was a legitimate, if impractical, strand of thought during the founding of the UN. “The whole question of providing the Security Council with strength was dealt with by Article 47 which established the MSC (Military Staff Committee). … It was anticipated, therefore, that the MSC would command land, air, and sea forces in order to maintain international peace and security. … The failure of the MSC to assume any responsibility and the ultimate failure to realize the grandiose designs of the Security Council, were less to do with the provisions in the Charter and more to do with the emergence of the Cold war.”

5. Slomanson, 453. The term “peacekeeping” was first applied to the UN Emergency Force deployed during the Suez Canal crisis.

6. Stanley Meisler, United Nations: The First Fifty Years (New York: Atlantic Monthly Press, 1995), 63. Korea was the first instance of the United States seeking UN legitimacy for an intended military intervention. Meisler writes, “Truman told the nation that that the unified U.N. command represented a ‘landmark in mankind’s long search for a rule of law among nations’. But, despite such rhetoric and the unfurling of the U.N. flag, the war remained mainly an American crusade against Communist aggression.”


9. Thompson, 7-10.


12. As of January 2007, China had deployed 5,915 personnel over its history, the most of any permanent member. On the other hand, Pakistan has over 9,900 personnel deployed currently.


17. Pang, 73.


21. Robert Zoellick, “Statement on Conclusion of the Second U.S.-China Senior Di-
22. Thompson, 10.
23. Pang, 76.
24. Thompson, 10.
25. Thompson, 8.
31. Pan.
33. China’s current deployments include states normally considered less important to any Chinese grand strategy, such as Haiti and Kosovo.
34. Thompson, 10.
35. Thompson, 8.
36. Pang, 84
37. Thompson, 8.
38. Pang, 77.
42. Thompson, 8.
43. “Military Power of the People’s Republic of China,” Washington: Office of the Secretary of Defense, (2007): 1. The Department of Defense describes this transformation succinctly: “The People’s Liberation Army (PLA) is pursuing comprehensive transformation from a mass army designed for protracted wars of attrition on its territory to one capable of fighting and winning short-duration, high-intensity conflicts against high-tech adversaries – which China refers to as ‘local wars under conditions of informatization.’”
44. Pang, 85.