Dear Reader,

Welcome to a new stage in undergraduate publication. Thanks to a generous grant from the Coddon Family Foundation, JUIS is expanding its presence not only around campus, but also around the country. With that statement of gratitude, I am pleased to present to you the first nationally distributed issue of JUIS. In this issue, you can look forward to an expanded selection of articles and an enhanced layout. We also have a new, beautifully designed website: http://juis.global.wisc.edu.

As our vision becomes increasingly broader, we are also taking a closer look at our own campus in the hope of bringing more of the scholarship at UW-Madison to the rest of the country. In this issue, you will find two articles by UW-Madison authors, Stephanna Szotkowski and Steve Horn. A special focus on contemporary issues brings you new analysis of grassroots organization, the relationship between poverty and terrorism, and new possibilities for China and its relationship to Mexico.

A record number of submissions meant tough choices for our board, and we extend our thanks to all who submitted. I hope you enjoy this semester’s issue.

Alexander Hoppe
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Media Coverage of the Saffron Revolution: Media Bias in News Coverage of the 2007 Protests in Burma

by NICOLE LORING

INTRODUCTION

Burma (Myanmar) is a country infamous for its hermitic military junta government and strict controls on the state media. In the fall of 2007, small protests against an increase in gas prices quickly morphed into pro-democracy demonstrations across the country, led by Buddhist monks, the revered religious leaders of Burma. These pro-democracy protests were the largest political demonstrations since the ill-fated 1988 pro-democracy student demonstrations, and foreign media heralded the 2007 “Saffron Revolution” as a catalyst that would launch Burma onto the road to democracy. Instead, Burma’s junta cracked down violently on the protests, spurring a flurry of media coverage as Burmese citizens snuck pictures and reports out to foreign journalists. The resulting flood of news coverage in the West as well as in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) member states, of the protests and crackdowns caused international uproar and sudden attention to a political situation that had been mostly ignored by international media before the protests.

The Saffron Revolution contained the most significant political demonstrations in Burma in twenty years; this paper looks at how these protests and the subsequent crackdowns were portrayed by the West, by Southeast Asian countries, and by the Burmese junta itself. Western news sources were suddenly publishing front page stories about a military regime in a faraway country they had previously ignored. Likewise, the Burmese military blamed foreign media for instigating these protests and threatening the national unity of the country. Looking at news coverage of the protests from different countries will show how foreign and domestic actors thought of Burma’s military junta and will give clues about the future of international negotiations for democracy within the country.

This paper looks to measure a number of factors in the news coverage of the Saffron Revolution in Burma, including the favorability towards the military junta of news stories in four publications: two U.S. sources (the New York Times and Washington Post), one ASEAN member source (the Bangkok Post) and one state-run Burmese source (the New Light of Myanmar). It will also examine the favorability of four different types of news stories: hard news stories, editorials and letters, human interest or soft news stories, and effect stories. Finally, this paper will compare the favorability of news stories over time, from August 1, 2007 to November 30, 2007. It will also analyze the percentage of stories in the New Light of Myanmar which blame groups other than the government for the protests and subsequent crackdown, and which groups the government targeted as scapegoats.

HYPOTHESIS

This paper predicts that news stories about the Saffron Revolution will be most favorable towards the junta in the New Light of Myanmar, considering that source is a state-run government mouthpiece and is used to further the junta’s agenda. Favorability should be more neutral in the Bangkok Post because of Thailand’s complicated relationship with Burma – Thailand was directly and negatively impacted by the crackdown on the protests and would be expected to join other world powers in denouncing the junta’s violent actions. However, Thailand is not a democracy, and so it would most likely stop short of calling on the Burmese government to work towards democracy, lest it call negative attention to its own governmental system. The two U.S. sources, the New York Times and the Washington Post, are expected to be the most negative in tone towards the junta, since the West is normally outspoken in favor of democracy and quick to criticize authoritarianism abroad.

Hard news stories should be close to neutral because of journalists’ attempts to present the news in an unbiased manner. Likewise, editorials and letters should be the most negative towards the junta, since they are opinion pieces and thus allowed to be slanted (except in the New Light of Myanmar, which are expected to have editorials with a positive tone towards the junta). Soft news stories and effect stories will most likely be in the middle, since their topics are sympathetic towards the protestors but are still required to be more objective than editorial pieces. This paper also predicts
that the New Light of Myanmar will blame the National League of Democracy and the 88 Generation the most for “inciting” the protests. Finally, the tone of stories is expected to become more favorable over time, due to the hopeful (and eventually incorrect) worldwide expectation that the demonstrations would lead to positive democratic changes in the country, especially with the National Convention on the new state Constitution taking place soon afterwards.

BACKGROUND AND TIME LINE OF THE SAFFRON REVOLUTION

The beginnings of the Saffron Revolution have deep roots in Burma’s history. Burma gained independence from Britain in 1948, and shortly after the assassination of its nationalist leader Aung San (the father of the leader of the National League for Democracy, Aung San Suu Kyi), civil war erupted. The democratically elected government failed to keep control of the civil unrest, and in 1962 a military coup led by General Ne Win overthrew the government and established a new socialist regime. A student-led demonstration in 1988 against Ne Win led to the widespread pro-democracy demonstrations known as the “8888 Uprising” (led by the 88 Generation student group) which were ultimately struck down when the military shot into a peacefully protesting crowd, killing over three thousand demonstrators (Chowdhury). The uprisings in the country continued and Ne Win’s government fell, replaced by the State Law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC) under military dictator General Saw Maung. After elections in 1990 when the National League for Democracy won an overwhelming majority, SLORC refused to give up power and the country remained a military dictatorship, now called the State Peace and Development Council (SPDC) (Chowdhury). Fast forwarding to 2007, the Saffron Revolution became the largest national demonstration since the 8888 Uprising, and many observers were hopeful that it would achieve the democratic change that the 1988 demonstrations failed to do.

The catalyst of the Saffron Revolution occurred on August 15, 2007, when the State Peace and Development Council abruptly cancelled government subsidies on diesel fuel and natural gas, which power the country’s modes of transportation and electricity. The cost of diesel fuel doubled overnight (from 1,500 kyats or $1.16 to 3,000 kyats or $2.33 per gallon); gasoline rose from 1,500 kyats ($1.16) to 2,500 kyats ($1.94); and the cost of natural gas rose as much as 500 percent (from 500 kyats or $0.39 to 2,500 kyats or $1.94) (Thawngghmung and Myoe). The military government raised prices without warning in an attempt to reduce Burma’s growing budget deficit, and some suspected they did it to “bait” pro-democracy “troublemakers” who could then be detained before the upcoming national referendum on the new Constitution (Thawngghmung and Myoe). The government’s new Constitution was pointedly pro-military, and the regime wanted to make sure their changes went through. The ensuing referendum resulted in an obviously falsified voter turnout of 97% and approval rating of 99% (U.S. Campaign for Burma). The rapid hikes in diesel and gas prices created inflationary pressures on commodities such as rice and cooking oil (Chowdhury), as well as caused the prices of transportation and electricity to skyrocket, forcing commuters to camp in city streets because they could not afford to take the bus to work (Clapp).

The response from citizens was rapid. By August 19, hundreds of people were marching through the streets of Yangon (Rangoon), led by activists from the 88 Generation students group and the National League for Democracy. Participants in these marches were harassed and beaten by a government-sponsored and organized mob made up of the Union Solidarity and Development Association (USDA) and a militant group called the Swan Ah Shin (SAS), but protest still spread through the rest of the country (Clapp). By late August, Buddhist monks had joined the protests, which had spread to Mandalay, Sittwe, Monywa, Pakokku, Moulmein, and Pegu (Thawngghmung and Myoe). The situation intensified on September 5th when a group of 600 monks were tied up, beaten and disrobed by the pro-government group SAS. This renewed protests across the country, and the newly formed All Burma Monks Alliance demanded a formal apology from the junta. When the government refused, thousands of monks began marching in the streets, surrounded by citizens (Chowdhury). By mid-September, the monks were leading the protests, which had swelled to 100,000 demonstrators, including 10,000 monks or 2% of the monastic population (Thawngghmung and Myoe).

The military government was hesitant to act against the protestors at first, since any violence against monks would anger the devoutly Buddhist citizens as well as the rest of the world. However, on September 26 and 27th, the military finally suppressed the protests violently, raiding monasteries, preventing monks from leaving, and rounding up demonstrators on the streets (Clapp). Thousands were
arrested, beaten and tortured, and estimates of the death toll from the crackdown range from thirteen from the government to thirty-one from the UN Human Rights Council to several hundred from pro-democracy groups (Chowdhury). Despite the government’s attempts to prevent any information from leaving the country, photographs and videos of the crackdown and violence against the monks were rapidly sent to international media organizations by pro-democracy activists and eyewitnesses through cell phones, text messages, blogs and websites (Thawngmung and Myoe). This allowed foreign media to fully cover the violence against peaceful demonstrators for the first time in Burma’s long history of suppression, led to incredible international attention on a previously secretive regime, and increased foreign diplomatic action against the military government following the crackdown. Despite international pressure, no real political change resulted from these protests, with a new Constitution solidifying military power and undemocratic elections taking place on November 7, 2010.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE RESEARCH
Not only was the Saffron Revolution the greatest challenge to military rule in Burma since the 1988 protests, but it also prompted an unprecedented response from the international community. It is also significant because it sparked major worldwide attention and still failed to lead to any meaningful political change (Chowdhury). Media coverage played a vital role in the spread of the protests throughout the country, starting with citizens smuggling information out to foreign news circuits and back into Burma (Selth). In addition to news coverage allowing the pro-democracy movement to organize and spread, international news coverage during the protests was important for potentially allowing the pro-democracy movement to organize and spread, international news coverage during the protests was important for potentially saving people’s lives. There were far fewer deaths in the 2007 protests than the 1988 ones, and some believe that the junta feared greater international criticism if images were released to foreign media of the military shooting monks and civilians (Chowdhury). The media played a huge role in engaging and informing the international community about what was happening in Burma, and as such, the nature of news coverage was important because it shaped the international response.

News of the crackdowns sparked immediate criticism from the West. The U.S. and EU expanded a travel ban and asset freeze for military members, the EU boycotted logging and mining sectors, and the US banned the import of gems and timber from Myanmar. Human rights organizations in the West put pressure on Burma’s neighbors, especially China. In October and November, the U.N. sent Ibrahim Gambari, a U.N. Special Envoy to Burma, to meet with high ranking government officials, Aung San Suu Kyi, and monks involved in the protests. Efforts by foreign powers to convince the government to meet with opposition groups and release political prisoners initially led to small victories, with the government releasing a number of prisoners and appointing a liaison minister to meet with Daw Suu Kyi. However, these actions made to placate an outraged West eventually fizzled out, along with the hopes that these protests would lead the country to meaningful discussions about democratization (Thawngmung and Myoe). News coverage in the New York Times and the Washington Post shows how the United States went from outraged and action-oriented in August and September to pacified and hopeful about the prospect of democracy by November. This is important in understanding how such a massive worldwide movement could still fail to lead to any political change.

Pressure from the West pushed ASEAN towards taking a strong stance against Burma’s actions against its protestors. ASEAN was founded on the precepts of mutual respect for the sovereignty of the member states as well as “the right of every State to lead its national existence free from external interference, subversion or coercion” (ASEAN Secretariat). However, this practice of non-interference by ASEAN was strained when the domestic policy of Burma led to cross-border implications for the other member states, with refugees streaming into Thailand. After the September 26th crackdown, ASEAN issued a strongly-worded statement denouncing Burma’s violent actions against the peaceful protestors (McCarthy). However, although ASEAN members like Thailand were under pressure to criticize the actions of the junta, they were also hesitant to call too much attention to Burma’s undemocratic political system, due to ASEAN’s founding principle of noninterference. News coverage of the protests in the Bangkok Post may reflect this

**TABLE 1**

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Favorability coding</th>
<th>Very unfavorable</th>
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<th>Neutral</th>
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uncomfortable new relationship between ASEAN and its embarrassing militaristic member (McCarthy). ASEAN’s tentative relationship with Burma continues, with the member states unwilling to outright denounce the sham elections in November of 2010. Southeast Asian news coverage is vital in explaining the international response to Burma, because ASEAN is such an important (albeit sometimes reluctant) ally.

There is much to be learned from the news coverage within Burma, especially in contrast to international news coverage. The Burmese government strictly controls the country’s media, censoring out criticism of the government as well as bad news such as natural disasters, and Reporters Without Borders has ranked Burma as one of the worst 10 countries in the world in its press-freedom rankings (BBC News). The state controls print and broadcast publications within the country, and these publications are “dominated by formulaic reports on the daily official and religious ritual activities of the ruling generals, accounts of progress in the implementation of policies, and denunciations of alleged US and UK plots against Burma” (BBC News). Additionally, Internet access is also controlled and monitored by the government. The New Light of Myanmar is the daily English-language propaganda publication of the State Peace and Development Council. Analyzing coverage in the New Light of Myanmar will reveal how the military government portrayed itself as well as how it portrayed its foreign and domestic enemies during a time of national crisis, and perhaps show how the junta managed to hang onto power and avoid any political change in the face of international outrage. It is important to note, however, that the New Light of Myanmar is a blatantly propagandist publication, and thus does not serve as a serious news source for any Burmese citizens. The analysis of this publication serves not to examine the information that Burmese people relied on during the Saffron Revolution, but instead reveals how the Burmese government tried to portray themselves to the outside world.

### DATA AND METHOD

In order to examine the media’s portrayal of the Burmese military junta during the 2007 Saffron Revolution, this paper uses a content analysis of a representative sample of news stories which mentioned Burma or Myanmar in the New York Times, Washington Post, Bangkok Post, and New Light of Myanmar between August 1, 2007 and November 30, 2007. The New York Times and Washington Post were selected because they have high circulation in the United States, and they both have in-depth international sections which led to a lot of coverage of the Saffron Revolution. The Bangkok Post was chosen because Thailand is Burma’s neighbor and a fellow member of ASEAN, so stories and editorials in the Bangkok Post would reflect the viewpoints of ASEAN member states about the Saffron Revolution. Finally, the New Light of Myanmar was analyzed because it is an English-language daily government mouthpiece, so news coverage in this publication would reveal how Burma’s military government tried to combat worldwide coverage of its violent crackdown of the pro-democracy demonstrations.

In order to demonstrate how media coverage affected the Saffron Revolution, each story was coded for its tone towards the Burmese junta, ranging from very unfavorable (a score of one) to very favorable (a score of 5). This made it possible to compare different news sources directly against each other by giving a finite measure of how news sources from the U.S., Thailand and Burma treated the Saffron Revolution.

The coding scheme for determining favorability towards the Burmese junta within each type of story was as follows [Table 1].

A score of 1, or very unfavorable, would contain subjective or opinionated descriptions of the junta beating the protestors, using torture, punishing prisoners, violating human rights, disrobing monks and nuns, etc. Key quotes included “most authoritarian and closed nation,” “gruesome crackdown,” “Orwellian,” “iron-fisted,” and calling Burma an “embarrassment to ASEAN.” A score of 2 was slightly unfavorable. Stories falling in this range described the protests, poor living conditions in Burma and the military

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The media played a huge role in engaging and informing the international community about what was happening in Burma.
crackdown, but contained few subjective descriptions or strong opinions. These stories instead tried to objectively report what was going on, e.g., “violent crackdowns.” A score of 3 meant the story was neutral. A neutral story consisted of straight fact reporting with no favorable or unfavorable tone. Alternatively, a neutral story could provide equal coverage of both “sides” of the conflict with no subjective language, such as quoting a military official’s viewpoint as well as a protestor’s. A score of 4 meant a story was slightly favorable toward the junta. These stories included information or quotes from the junta which defended or explained their position, but did not use very subjective or negative descriptions of the protestors. Finally, a score of 5 meant a story was very favorable towards the Burmese junta. Such stories portrayed the protestors as dissidents who were threatening to harm the “national unity” of the country. Stories with a very favorable tone also used extreme and subjective language towards the protestors, using phrases such as “terrorist,” “subversive,” “destructive elements,” “internal and external destructionists,” “utter devastation,” causing “agitation” or “chaos,” inciting “unrest” or “riots,” “fabricated/malicious news,” “misleading people,” “foreign subjugation,” “neo-colonialism,” “bogus monks,” “saboteurs,” “evil plots,” “intimidation, exhortation, coercion,” etc.

News stories were also coded for story type, in order to compare the tone of different types of stories to see if editorials had a different tone than hard news stories. The coding scheme for determining story type measured four types of stories: hard news stories, editorials or letters to the editor, soft news or human interest stories, and effect stories. Hard news stories were straight, fact-based news stories which discussed specific events occurring in the protests during the time frame. An example of a hard news story is “Monks demonstrate for 2nd day in Myanmar” or “Burma protests draw harsh crackdown.” Editorials or letters to the editor were opinion pieces written about the protests or the political system during the time frame. An example of an editorial or letter to the editor is “Witnessing suffering and doing nothing” or “ASEAN’s failure and Thailand’s shame.”

Soft news or human interest stories were not event-focused, but instead were based on stories of people or groups affected by the protests. An example of a soft news or human interest story is “A Monk’s Tale of Protest and Escape from Myanmar” or “Myanmar Magic: Tell a Joke, and You Disappear.” Since there were no soft news stories in the *New Light of Myanmar*, this paper instead measured “order stories” which included any government announcement, order, or edict which was published in the publication during the time frame.

Finally, effect stories were fact-based stories which discussed the economic or political effects of the protests in Burma. These stories became prevalent during the time frame of the Saffron Revolution because Burma was suddenly of interest to international readers. An example of an effect story is “Report Says Army Buys Boy Soldiers in Myanmar” or “Signs of Slump at Gem Sale in Myanmar.”

In summary, this paper analyzes 200 stories total, 50 each from the *New York Times*, *Washington Post*, *Bangkok Post*, and *New Light of Myanmar*, which were published between August 1, 2007 and November 30, 2007. The stories were coded for story type, the types being hard news, editorials and letters, soft news and human interest (or orders and announcements for the *New Light of Myanmar*), and effect stories. The favorability of the stories was also coded on a scale of 1-5, with 1 being very unfavorable and 5 being very favorable.

**RESULTS**

This analysis showed that the two publications from the United States, the *New York Times* and the *Washington Post*, had the most negative tone on average for all stories, at 1.98 and 1.60 out of 5, respectively. This was in line with the hypothesis that the two U.S. sources would be the most negative because of the United States’ tough stance on Burma following the news of the crackdown, criticizing the junta and calling for negotiations between the government and opposition groups in hopes it would lead to democracy. The 0.38 gap in favorability between the *New York Times* and the *Washington Post* will be explained in the next section, favorability by type of story.

Coverage in the *Bangkok Post* was the closest to neutral at 2.04, with neutral being 3.0. The hypothesis was correct that the *Bangkok Post* would be close to neutral in tone, because of Thailand’s complicated relationship with Burma. As their neighbor and trading partner, Thailand was hesitant to denounce Burma’s actions too harshly, particularly since they might be considered hypocritical for criticizing a country for being undemocratic when Thailand itself is not a democracy. However, ASEAN was under a lot of pressure to agree with Western countries and announce their distaste for Burma’s actions. Additionally, Thailand was directly affected by the crackdown, since large numbers of refugees fled from Burma.
to Thailand. This relationship between the two countries lent itself to news coverage which reflected Thailand’s vacillating stance on its fellow ASEAN member.

Finally, and not unexpectedly, coverage in the *New Light of Myanmar* was the most favorable by far at 4.5. This was consistent with the hypothesis that the government mouthpiece would present the military’s actions during the protests in an extremely favorable manner, since the publication is a propaganda tool for the government.

The next analysis looked at the favorability of tone by each type of story, to see if one type of story was systematically more positive or negative than another. The hypothesis was correct for the two U.S. sources, the *New York Times* and the *Washington Post*. The hard news stories were the most positive (more accurately, the closest to neutral, since they were still negative in tone at 2.147 and 1.905 out of 5) of the four types of stories. This can be explained by the desire of news publications to present the news in an unbiased way. Also consistent with the hypothesis was that editorials in both American sources were the most negative (1.333 for both), since editorials are in nature subjective and would thus reflect the negative viewpoint held by Western countries toward the junta’s actions during the crackdown. Finally, the hypothesis was also correct in that soft news and effect news were in the middle (1.5 and 1.429 for soft, 2.0 and 1.5 for effect), since they are still considered news stories and not opinion, but had subject matter which was more sympathetic towards the pro-democracy protestors. In both the American sources, soft news was more negative than effect news, probably due to the tendency of soft news to be about individuals, whereas the effect news was about the economic or political effects of the crackdown, and thus less emotional. The *Washington Post* was more negative on average than the *New York Times* because its hard news and effect news were more negative (1.905 compared to 2.147 for hard and 1.5 compared to 2.0 for effect).

These results were partially in line with the hypothesis for the *Bangkok Post*. Editorials were the most negative in tone (1.6), reflecting the opinion of many Thai people that Burma was an “embarrassment to ASEAN,” and their frustration with the social and economic effects of the crackdown which directly affected them. However, soft news was the closest to neutral (most positive) at 2.6 followed by hard news at 2.546, which went against the hypothesis that hard news would be the closest to neutral. The reason for this is that the soft news in the *Bangkok Post* included stories about the government and its reasons for raising the prices of fuel, presenting the junta as a sympathetic entity which “has long been committed to keeping diesel prices artificially low.” The hypothesis remained correct about effect stories, which at 2.333 are in the middle.

Grading the favorability of news coverage is vital to understanding the international opinion of the Burmese regime during the Saffron Revolution. The favorability in the *New Light of Myanmar* was unsurprising. Editorials and orders were at the highest possible favorability, 5.0, which was to be expected considering that the newspaper is a government mouthpiece publishing only pro-government opinion pieces. Likewise, orders, announcements and edicts from the government itself would be expected to be favorable in tone. Hard news was slightly lower at 4.294, due to a number of formulaic stories about people marching to “denounce the protests” – these stories contained no strong or opinionated language against the protestors (other than listing what the “demonstrators” supposedly chanted). Interestingly, these “marches against the protests” were also reported in the U.S. news sources, which stated that the government was forcing citizens to march. The effect stories were the lowest in the *New Light of Myanmar* at 4.0, because they were direct responses to accusations from American news sources – for instance, “Myanmar working in cooperation with UN agencies to reveal that accusation concerning child soldiers is totally untrue.” These stories also contained no strong or opinionated language against the protestors.

This graph [Figure 1] shows the percentage of blame which was assigned to different groups based on the number of

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The fact that “foreign media” was the third most common scapegoat for the protests shows how important media coverage was during the Saffron Revolution.
times a story accused one (or more) of these groups of “inciting unrest/riots” or being responsible for the events in any way. It was expected that the government’s hated enemies, the National League for Democracy and the 88 Generation Students, would be blamed the most out of any of these groups – however, many times “monks” were accused of starting the protests. It seemed likely for the government to cite “bogus monks” so as not to make it seem as if the “true” religious leaders of the country would protest against them, but many stories just stated “monks.” Also of interest is the fact that “foreign media” were accused of inciting the protest in 12% of the stories, and “global powers” (i.e. U.S.) were accused in 8%. The fact that “foreign media” was the third most common scapegoat for the protests shows how important media coverage was during the Saffron Revolution – not only did it provide information to Burmese citizens and the outside world, but it was even blamed as a reason for the unrest by the Burmese military. Starting in late September, the front page of the New Light of Myanmar featured text boxes every day denouncing foreign media sources. For instance, the front page on October 6 read: “RFA [Radio Free America], VOA [Voice of America] and BBC airing skyful [sic]of lies. RFA, VOA and BBC saboteurs, watch your step! The public be warned of killers in the air waves – RFA, VOA and BBC. Skyful [sic] liars attempting to destroy nation. BBC lying, VOA deceiving, RFA setting up hostilities. Beware! Don’t be bought be those slickers.” Finally, this study looked at the favorability of tone over time. The hypothesis predicted the tone of news stories would become more favorable over time, because there was a widespread consensus worldwide that the Saffron Revolution would lead to positive changes in the politics of Burma, and might even be a first step down the road to democracy. However, only one publication, the New York Times, had increasing favorability over the given time frame. It is likely the Bangkok Post and Washington Post were both pessimistic about the potential for democratization in Burma, thus reflecting their negative tone in the later months of the analysis. Additionally, the New Light of Myanmar coverage became less positive over time, possibly because the government felt it did not need to defend itself (by denouncing the protestors) after their crackdowns on the protests went unanswered by the international community, so the stories became less fanatically pro-government.

CONCLUSION

The Saffron Revolution cemented the military junta in power after its violent crackdown, but it also “left Burma’s devoutly religious population deeply resentful toward the ruling generals (Clapp),” and gave the people a taste of democracy which they had not experienced in 20 years. As this analysis showed, international news media played a huge role in the dissemination of information during the Saffron Revolution, and the international community can and must help to facilitate a gradual transition to true democracy in Burma. By continuing to pressure the regime to enter negotiations with democratic leaders such as Aung San Suu Kyi and other leaders of the now defunct National League for Democracy, international news media have the potential to encourage political change within Burma. The Saffron Revolution showed the world that Burma’s military government will not simply give up power; “… a successful, nonviolent political transition to democracy in Burma will require full military participation, because it is currently the only institution that can ensure stability while the country grapples with the painful economic and political decisions that transition will require” (Clapp). With sham elections taking place in Burma on November 7, 2010, the world can expect for media coverage to again play a pivotal role in what happens inside Burma and how the international community responds to it.
WORKS CITED


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Grassroots Environmental Mobilization in Argentina (1990-2007)

by KRISTIN SCHULZ

ABSTRACT

Argentina has been a leading nation in international environmental commitments since the early years of the climate debate. Minimal data exists on the involvement of the Argentine public on environmental issues. The research presented here concludes that Argentina is one of the leading nations in number and activity of non-governmental environmental organizations, therefore demonstrating that Argentina does in fact have a high level of domestic public activism on environmental issues. This phenomenon is particularly interesting because there are few economically developing nations that are progressive on environmental preservation. This study looks at the unique factors that probably influenced this trend, focusing on the time period of 1990-2007. The investigation found that the following factors most likely contributed to Argentina’s strong level of grassroots environmentalism: high level of human/social development, increased public awareness of environmental issues, and increased women’s empowerment. The data used in this study comes from the UNDP Human Development Reports, Freedom House research, World Development Indicators database of statistics, newspaper articles from the two leading daily Argentine publications, Clarín and La Nación, and analyses of existing scholarly research.

INTRODUCTION

Argentina’s pollution issues are evident to the naked eye: the brown, murky, trash-laden Rio de la Plata River, the black smoke billowing from the exhausts of trucks and the hazy air, the human waste on sidewalks, and on goes the list. These are serious problems that simply are not prioritized in the country because many more pressing issues take priority (economic stability, health care, justice for the agriculture industry, etc.). Although pro-environmental sentiments are not as vocalized as opinions on other domestic concerns, based on evidence in national newspapers, considerable public support exists for pro-environmental efforts. Preliminary research for this study found that Argentina is comparatively progressive on environmental issues for a developing nation. As early as 1991, Argentines ranked sixth, out of 43 nations polled, for high percentage of people who “strongly approve” the Ecology Movement (Argentina had 77% while the US only had 47%). Currently, numerous private environmental groups throughout the country are encouraging pro-environmental policy changes. The current study aims to explore Argentina’s growing strength in the grassroots environmental movement despite its status as a third-world country.

This case focuses on the time span of 1990 up to 2007. The time period was chosen for multiple reasons. Argentina’s period of authoritarian rule in the 1970s complicated domestic issues on a number of levels and objective measures of grassroots environmentalism within the country during this time would not be possible. Argentina re-democratized in 1983, and by 1990, the government and domestic issues had somewhat stabilized. Furthermore, statistical reporting became more reliable with the return to democracy and scholars began producing more research in the country. All of these factors made access to data most realistic after 1990.

Information on social movements in third-world countries led to the formation of the theory that in order for a movement to take off, two characteristics must exist. These two factors are public knowledge and public empowerment. Without knowledge of the issues, there will be no desire to address them, and without a sense that individual participation is worthwhile, no one will take action.

In any movement, knowledge of the issues at hand is a prerequisite for public participation. This case looks into trends in public information on environmental concerns within Argentina throughout history. The study pays special attention to the past two decades in order to highlight which key factors have motivated the strengthening of public environmentalism. Public awareness usually grows out of media coverage of issues – in this case the environmental concerns affecting Argentina (which this study looks at in depth). Therefore, this study focuses on how the Argentine
public’s knowledge and attitudes on environmental issues has taken shape since 1990.

Scholars and experts on social movements stress that participation and involvement of women is often a major contributing factor in the success of grassroots movements. Furthermore, women's empowerment in general often serves as an indicator of whether a culture is ready to accept progressive ideas. In a region where male chauvinism is the cultural norm, it is interesting to investigate just how significantly women have played a role in Argentina’s grassroots environmental efforts. This study uses the level of completed education by women, female participation in the labor force, and female participation in political roles as indicators of female empowerment as reasons explaining Argentina’s relatively strong pro-environmentalism compared to other third world countries. With greater education, women become more confident in their ability to participate in community efforts. When the country accepts more women in significant leadership roles nationally, females are likely to develop greater confidence in taking on community leadership roles as well.

Another factor that should not be ignored is Argentina’s level of development. While the country is part of the third-world by definition, where exactly it falls on the development spectrum will make a big difference in how involved the public is in a social movement. When a country is more socially developed, regardless of economic standing, it leads to a greater likelihood that the public will devote time to public interest issues. Given that this study is particularly interested in what is happening on the grassroots level, level of development is defined from a social perspective: drawn from statistics on the standard of living, level of inequality, income distribution, education, and the level of freedom and democracy within Argentina.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The Argentine government has been progressive on environmental issues, at least in rhetoric, since the formative years of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the formative years of the Conference of Parties (COP) force. In fact, Buenos Aires was the host location for the fourth international COP meeting in 1997, which saw a significant breakthrough in the role of developing nations. During this meeting Argentina became the first developing nation to sign on to the Kyoto Protocol. Argentina’s president at the time, Carlos Menem, was commended by UN Secretary General Kofi Annan and the US Secretary of State and Vice President Al Gore for this historic step and leadership in environmental commitment.

Many argue that the environmental awakening took place in Argentina much earlier than many currently categorized developed nations, yet was stalled by the effects of the authoritarian regime. The ‘environmental awakening’ could be exemplified by President Juan D. Perón’s creation of a short-lived National Resources Agency in 1974. The first NGO in Argentina to “reach a massive audience through campaigns for the protection of wildlife” was the ‘Fundación Vida Silvestre Argentina’ (founded in 1977). Aguilar explains that the military regime in Argentina during the 1970s largely ignored environmental concerns. It was not until 1980 that environmental education started to be implemented as a tool of environmental policy and not until the 1990s did sustainable use of natural resources re-enter the political debate. Even after the return to democracy, however, national focus and political priority shifted to the major problems with hyperinflation and social unrest instead of environmental justice. Aguilar says that today, Argentine environmentalists are organized and both actively engage and educate the government and the public on environmental issues. These organizations further contribute to the strength of Argentina’s grassroots environmentalism because the public is more likely to trust public interest groups than they are to trust the government. On the other hand, the fact that these organizations do not receive as much media attention as government officials could be one of the major barriers to spreading Argentina’s grassroots environmentalism. Aguilar explains that Argentina’s grassroots environmentalism awakening actually took place almost a score earlier than in Europe. It was the political inactivity from 1976-1983 that significantly set back their progress and not until the mid-1990s did environmental issues achieve serious public discourse once again.

The existing scholarship remains divided on Argentina’s degree of environmentalism. The current study seeks to measure Argentina’s level of environmentalism and factors that contribute to its growth domestically. The research presented here is a unique contribution to the existing literature due to the focus on what is working for a developing country’s public participation in advocating the importance of such issues. The approach of this study is also
distinctive in its collective analysis of socioeconomic level, women's empowerment, and public awareness as possible factors influencing the likelihood of grassroots momentum.

This paper provides an overview of the relevant research to-date and an in-depth presentation of this study's methodology and hypotheses to serve as a viable framework or example for future case studies. The results of the data collection will be highlighted next, followed by an analysis and discussion of the researcher's interpretation of the data. It concludes with a final summary of findings and suggestions for further investigation.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Although Argentina is rather progressive on environmental issues, previous studies present evidence arguing that political instability, the socioeconomic divide, and traditional media coverage on the environment have all weakened pro-environmental efforts within the country. Conversely, social factors such as increased public awareness, Argentina's return to democracy, strengthening women's rights, international trends, and increased presence of non-governmental organizations have helped further environmental preservation efforts.

Political Instability

Scholarly writing presents that the most progressive national conservation projects have occurred in the nations with the most progressive governments; where there is political stability and significant public trust and participation. Given the dramatic changes in political ideology with each change in the Argentine government, particularly the transitions to and from an authoritarian regime, pro-environmental efforts severely suffered. According to Aguilar, one of the major barriers to pro-environmental legislation in Argentina is its culture of closed decision-making, a remnant of authoritarian rule. This tradition limits progressive initiatives from being passed despite the modern government's attempt to separate and grow from that dark past. The post-military government in Argentina did not make environmental policy a priority because they were too busy dealing with the more pressing issues of hyperinflation, military and social unrest, and generally rebuilding the country after authoritarian rule. Argentina is clearly focused on rebuilding its economy and infrastructure, yet environmental considerations have been largely ignored in planning for sustainability of such initiatives. Furthermore, the volatile leadership changes in Argentina's governmental history leads to disfavor and distrust of the political system. This would therefore hinder even pro-environmental legislation from being effectively enforced if the public is not on board with governmental plans. There is a great deal of evidence in the current literature supporting the concept that Argentina's political instability has without a doubt been one of the biggest barriers toward making pro-environmental efforts a reality.

Democracy

The return to democracy has been beneficial for pro-environmental efforts in Argentina. Aguilar describes a strong sense of optimism among environmental groups with the re-democratization of Argentina in 1983. Unfortunately, the movement essentially had to start from scratch after the authoritarian regime and will not make significant headway until more momentum is gained.

Democratic nations facilitate open discussion among individuals at all levels on issues that affect their daily lives. The democratic system allows many issues, no matter how small, to receive attention in public discourse and be effectively addressed in the least controversial way possible. Gallopin, et al. found that democracy is a major contributing factor to promoting pro-environmental initiatives. Aagesen's study on environmental concerns surrounding Patagonian sheep ranching discusses the need for a community-based approach in conservation efforts in which individuals and local producers have more voice in government processes and decision-making on natural resource management. He alludes to the notion that this can only be actualized in a truly democratic political environment. The study by Iaryczower, et al. looked in-depth at the evolution of judicial decisions in Argentina. The results of this study clearly demonstrate that from a judicial perspective, a stable democracy is needed for court judges to be able to make objective decisions. There is evidence of growing independence within Argentine Supreme Court decisions and improving public perception, which are good signs for Argentina both democratically and environmentally. A stronger democracy in Argentina means a stronger likelihood of success in environmental preservation.

Furthermore, with Argentina's redemocratization came a massive revision of the national constitution. Article 41 was created, clearly defining the public right to a healthy...
environment. This provision of the National Constitution states, “All inhabitants are entitled to the right to a healthy and balanced environment fit for human development in order that productive activities shall meet needs without endangering those of future generations and shall have the duty to preserve it. As a first priority, environmental damage shall bring about the obligation to repair it according to law.”

While Argentine policy suggests that the country is committed to pro-environmental efforts, data is lacking on public support for such efforts. Grassroots environmental organizations (GEOs) and Third World environmentalism in general are understudied. To help understand public support for and participation in pro-environmental efforts, this study pays close attention to the strength over time of Argentina’s GEOs.

Socioeconomic Level

Public involvement in pro-environmental initiatives is imperative to their success and this level of engagement is most influenced by socioeconomic status. Disposable wealth, access to education, and influence in the political realm are all determined by where one sits on the wealth-poverty spectrum. It is interesting to note, however, that everyone plays a significant role in environmental degradation, despite socioeconomic level. Many scholars have discussed how different socioeconomic classes contribute to environmental problems in their own ways, yet few look at how one’s placement in society affects their involvement in pro-environmental efforts. The current study will further explore this perspective.

Furthermore, the literature on this subject shows that socioeconomic development and environmental quality go hand in hand. Argentina’s development path to date has had serious negative environmental implications (pollution due to industrialization, etc.). Studies emphasizing Argentine planning models do little to focus on environmental sustainability and environmental quality, which is a key component that should be considered in improving the standard of living in a developing country. It is clear that having the majority of its population living at lower socioeconomic levels is a serious barrier to pro-environmentalism in Argentina.

Media Reporting

While one would expect the media to be the public’s key informant on Argentina’s environmental issues, traditional Argentine reporting styles have actually done more to hinder pro-environmental efforts. Beliefs about environmental issues are formed based on the general knowledge of them, and in Argentina the media is relied upon to provide this information. Waisbord and Peruzzotti* found that Argentines are often not fully aware of environmental issues due to the way they are presented in the media. Political issues dominate public discourse on environmental issues. The consequence of this trend, according to previous studies, is that the public lacks sources of expert information and scientific facts. Instead, the public receives a disproportional amount of ideological and/or biased responses to scientific information. Consequently, individuals often automatically take sides on an issue instead of forming their own opinions based on the facts. As long as Argentine media is not properly informing the public on environmental issues, pro-environmental support within the country will continue to lack momentum. There are few existing studies on how environmental issues are portrayed in Argentine media; the current study hopes to add to the scholarly discussion on this topic.

Public Attitude/Awareness

Scholarly research demonstrates that Argentineans’ attitudes and awareness of environmental issues is a major barrier to pro-environmental efforts in the country. Previous studies reveal the greatly differing viewpoints of Argentines on environmentalism. Del Acebo Ibañéz and Costa* concluded that the Argentine public tends to recognize individual activism as a necessity in pushing for environmental preservation when there is an increased acknowledgement that the issue personally affects him/her. They also found that younger populations who place lower value on material consumption are more likely to be sympathetic of environmental issues. Del Acebo Ibañéz and Costa concluded that although environmental issues are made reference to quite frequently in Argentina, the public lacks a keen awareness of what the issues actually are and how they are personally affected. Quantitative data shows that there is a relatively high level of indifference on environmental issues from the young Argentine population. A sense of being affected and directly involved in environmental concerns is vital in promoting environmentalism on any level. What these studies fail to identify is whether or not
the people who have a pro-environmental attitude have in fact contributed to preservation or conservation efforts. The current study aims to further explore this connection.

Women’s Roles

Bretherton discusses how gender is a “fundamental organizing principle of social life” and therefore gives great potential to the organization of women’s grassroots environmental groups. Many scholars allude to the fact that pro-environmental efforts are strengthened by the presence of women. Data on women’s participation in climate decision-making on the local level is lacking, but it is nonetheless evident that women’s participation, when present, boosts grassroots environmental efforts across the board.

Scholars around the world are considering environmentalism as a new social movement and many parallel the strategies of the “green movement” to that of the feminist movement. Women’s influence in “neighborhood-based-grassroots” movements has translated to greater support of pro-environmental efforts. Furthermore, women’s protests against Argentina’s military dictatorship significantly influenced what it means to “do politics” in the country. For example, the efforts of women’s groups to hold the government accountable has both legitimized the voice of conservationists and given them clout in the political discussion of environmental issues. It has also ensured that the government follows through with their pro-environmental action plans.

The current study will investigate how women’s political roles have specifically boosted the grassroots environmental movement in Argentina.

Non-governmental Organizations

Visibility of the public or grassroots environmental movement is lacking in Argentina compared to other national movements. Yet there is evidence that Argentina’s grassroots environmentalism is in reality quite strong based on information provided in previous studies. One scholar argues that a reason for this movement’s lack of visibility is because even though “Argentina’s civil society is fairly vigorous [and] many groups with ecological interests are quite vocal, they generally are non-political and shy away from theoretical analysis. Of the local affiliates, Greenpeace, the National Ecological Movement, and the National Network for Ecological Action are the most salient groups.”

Argentina’s government has made some progress in influencing the political process of environmental reform. The 1996 reform of Argentina’s national constitution gave NGOs greater political influence. The additions of Article 41 and 43 allowed NGOs (and individuals) to bring environmental concerns to courts without having to prove direct relationship or property right to the area in question.

Throughout the twentieth century a number of Argentinean naturalist organizations were founded, and in the twenty-first century coalitions formed among the various groups, which helped strengthen their voice and capacity to tackle environmental issues. Despite struggling to receive political recognition throughout Argentina’s history, non-governmental organizations have had a strong positive influence on the country’s pro-environmental action. The existing scholarship does not identify the growth in number and level of activity of Argentine environmental NGOs over time. The current study seeks to bridge this gap in the literature.

International Trends

In the past few decades, Argentina’s legal and institutional environmental progress, or lack thereof, has been influenced by standards adopted in other countries. Domestic pressures were spurred based on conclusions in multinational climate conferences, such as the Stockholm Conference in 1972 and the 1992 Earth Summit in Rio de Janiero. One successful strategy in pro-environmentalism was the support of Argentina by international NGOs, governments in the northern hemisphere, and pressure from MERCOSUR’s regulation standards. International progress on tackling environmental issues has influenced Argentina to adopt stricter domestic environmental policies by pressuring the government to accept similar environmental norms to other countries. The current study will attempt to do what the existing studies do not; clearly identify how international and domestic environmental policies have influenced grassroots environmental efforts.

RESEARCH DESIGN

This study harnesses both qualitative and quantitative research methods to investigate factors that promote pro-environmental grassroots mobilization in a developing nation. The study investigates the case of grassroots environmentalism in Argentina from 1990 until 2007.
The dependent variable is the strength of activity of domestic non-governmental organizations and coalitions of environmental groups in the country. This is measured by the involvement of relevant groups in the first Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil in 1992 (formally known as the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development), and the UNFCCC’s 4th and 10th Conventions on Climate Change and Conference of the Parties held in Buenos Aires in 1998 and 2004, respectively. The two primary hypotheses are:

1. If a developing nation has a relatively high socioeconomic level and increased public awareness on environmental degradation, then the country will experience a greater level of participation in its grassroots environmental movement.

2. If women’s empowerment in a country increases, then a country will experience increased participation in its grassroots environmental movement.

**Independent Variables**

**A: Socioeconomic Level (SEL)** is measured by the United Nation Development Program’s Human Development Index (HDI), which includes measures of educational attainment, longevity, and GDP per capita; Freedomhouse.org for measures of inequality, democracy and freedom; and Argentine Government statistics. The United Nations Human Development Reports from 2000 and 2007 are used to compare HDI on a scale of 0 (low) to 1 (high).

**B: Public Awareness** is measured based upon presence of environmental issues in major sources of media. Information on this variable is gathered from existing studies and from a keyword search for “medio ambiente” (environment, referring to the natural world) in a total of 48 archived articles from Argentina’s highest esteemed newspapers La Nación and Clarín.

**C: Women’s Empowerment** is measured by women in the labor force, women in positions of political power and women completing tertiary education.

**ANALYSIS OF DEPENDENT VARIABLE**

**Status of Argentinian Grassroots Environmentalism**

According to the National Capital Institute, Argentina ranks 7th internationally for number of environmentally progressive non-profit organizations, even above Germany and Brazil. This is perhaps the most noteworthy evidence demonstrating that Argentina is in fact a world leader in grassroots environmental mobilization. It is interesting to note the roles of these groups at past UN international conferences on the environment.

**1992 Rio Earth Summit**

This was the largest gathering of Heads of States meeting to discuss contemporary environmental policy. “Incentives for local groups to become organized were high. With foreign attention focused on [the region], money and media attention were available as never before.” This was GEOs greatest opportunity to date to prove themselves as worthy organizations, spread awareness of their cause and gain respect and reputation in hopes to strengthen their membership and efforts in the future.

Conflicting information exists for NGO participation at the 1992 Rio Conference, with intended NGO participation estimates ranging from 1,400 to 2,400. According to one study, during the Rio Earth Summit, Latin American NGOs were more interested in networking amongst themselves than lobbying. Concerted efforts to integrate representatives of Southern [hemispheric] NGOs in lobbying strategies were also evident; however, their participation over the course of the conference diminished. Furthermore, NGOs were not even allowed into the final lobbying preparation meeting at Rio, which left many frustrated. Despite limitations experienced by these groups, they did earn a higher level of respect from policy makers who later referred to environmental NGOs as critical audience members for the five-year review at Rio.

**4th COP(1998)**

At this conference, Argentina had representatives from 15 non-governmental organizations and a larger combined attendance than even powerful and environmentally progressive countries such as the US, Japan, and Germany. It is significant that Argentina, as a developing nation, had such a strong participation by NGO groups at an international convention of this magnitude.
10th COP (2004)

During the 2004 UNFCCC 10th COP in Buenos Aires, 167 states and organizations participated with 2 observing; there were 2219 registered participants. 226 parties (2888 individuals) were representing non-governmental organizations and Argentina had 64 state representatives present. Argentina had 20 NGOs actively represented. Foro del Buen Ayre had the largest representation of a single organization, with 552 participating members. Argentine NGO involvement was definitely higher than during the Rio Earth Summit and there was also a marked increase in participation from the 4th COP six years earlier.

COP 10 marked the 10th anniversary of the UNFCCC membership force. Discussions included past accomplishments, impacts of climate change, technology strategies, mitigation policies, and analysis of the Kyoto Protocol. Argentina also led a panel of experts on the work of least developed countries. Argentina’s leadership during this conference is at the very least emblematic of a high public interest behind pro-environmental efforts and domestic NGO participation is indicative of strength on the grassroots level.

Summary

According to the 1989 UN Resolution, during world conferences NGOs were only allowed to distribute proposals and/or speak at conference sessions when first permitted by governmental delegates. The fact that Argentina was the host nation for the 4th and 10th COP automatically gave their domestic organizations more clout and a chance to make public claims. While this was an obvious start-up advantage for Argentine environmentally-focused organizations, the rate of growth of NGO participation suggests that these organizations experienced tremendous grassroots momentum unrelated to government support of the organizations’ efforts. This data clearly shows Argentina currently has a strong level of grassroots environmental mobilization not only among developing nations but when compared to countries worldwide, regardless of economic development status. Argentina’s NGO involvement began at an average level and quickly and steadily increased to the point it is at today.

DATA ANALYSIS OF INDEPENDENT VARIABLES

Socioeconomic Level – results

Feijóo and Momo (1991) determined through their research in a small town in Argentina that there was a strong correlation between socio-economic level and environmental activism. Their conclusion encouraged the current study to apply this concept on a national level.

Since at least 1998, Argentina has been the leading developing nation in Latin America for Human Development and remained well above the worldwide average. In the UNDP ranking of 177 countries, Argentina falls consistently around rank number 37 for the time period between 1990 and 2007. Considering Argentina’s status as a developing country remained unchanged; it is significant to note that its HDI level is in the same category as many developed nations. Argentina’s HDI trend almost parallels that of the United States.

Socioeconomic Level - discussion

Argentina holds an exceptionally high ranking despite its status as an economically developing nation. Its level of human and social development is comparative to developed nations. Both grassroots environmental mobilization and human development in Argentina increased from the 1990s until present day. These results support this study’s hypothesis that a developing country experiencing a high level of human development will be correlated with stronger grassroots environmental mobilization in that country.

Another aspect of human/social development which is not taken into account in the UNDP’s Human Development Index is national freedom. Scholars recognize that participation in civil society generally is dependent upon maintenance of a formal, open, and stable political (arguably democratic) system. According to Freedom House’s research and reporting, Argentina was only considered a partially free country until 2004 when the country’s electoral democracy stabilized. There were innovations in fighting corruption and military and police impunity ended. Comparatively, every other country listed in the top 15 for most environmentally-focused non-profit organizations has been considered completely free since 2002. This research tentatively concludes that full freedom is a pre-requisite to becoming an environmentally progressive country at the grassroots level.
Public Awareness – results

From 1995 to 2007, both Clarin and La Nacion newspapers had many articles that mentioned the environment. Most focused on presenting scientific facts and expressed both concern for the state of the environment and support for pro-environmental efforts. The prevalence of environmental issues in Argentina’s two most popular and widely-read newspapers during the past decades is evidence that media support for pro-environmental efforts has translated to the public perceiving this as a normal perspective. Once environmentalism is perceived as normal and rational, individuals will be more likely to sympathize and then take part in activism themselves. This data supports my hypothesis that increased media presence of environmental issues translates to increased public involvement in pro-environmental mobilization.

Clarín

“Environmental” articles most often appear in the Opinion section of the newspaper. Concern for environmental degradation was expressed in 63% of the environmentally focused articles. Other themes that were represented in Clarín were: economic concerns of environmental degradation, global comparisons of environmental policies and efforts, human/moral responsibility to the environment, change in public perspectives on environmental issues over time, setting action goals towards preserving the environment, and governmental support for environmental efforts.

La Nación

In analyzing articles from this newspaper, environmental concerns were often present with general news and articles were less likely to question the science on environmental issues. Environmental ideas were reported in a more neutral manner in more recent years. Other themes that surfaced included; government support, comparing/looking to the examples being set by the US and EU, simply educating or presenting information, supporting public participation, and focusing on economic benefits of pro-environmental efforts.

Women’s Empowerment - results

1. Gender Related Development

Smith (2001) says that there is inadequate research on links between women’s empowerment and grassroots environmental mobilization efforts. We have already determined that the strength of Argentina’s grassroots environmental efforts is unusually high for a developing country. This study inspects the UNDP’s Gender Development Index to see if there is a correlation between strong grassroots environmentalism and level of gender development.

In 1998, Argentina was the leading Latin American developing nation in Gender Related Development at a level of 0.824. The country experienced a greater increase in GDI between 1998 and 2005 than that of the United States; however, a slight decline occurred in 2007.

Female Economic Activity Rate

Bretherton’s (1998) and Mohi’s (1991) research concluded that the positive effects of women’s presence in grassroots environmental organizations are positively correlated with higher proportions of women in the national work force. Based on UNDP’s Human Development Report, in 1998, Argentine women comprised 34.3% of economic activity in the country. This was lower than what was reported within the region of Latin America and the worldwide average. However, according to the World Development Indicators, women’s participation in Argentina’s labor force has increased significantly since then and, particularly in more recent years, has been increasing at an above average rate.

Percentage of Women in Government

This study analyzes the reciprocal relation of the public power of Argentine women and women’s strength in grassroots pro-environmental mobilization. Ivone Gebara (2002) explains that public power is central in the success of a social movement and says that male dominated public power continues to be a major struggle for the ecofeminist movement in Latin America. Gaining presence and clout in positions of public power would in turn validate and equate female perspectives in environmental debates and preservation efforts.

In 1998, Argentina had more women in Parliamentary positions than many developed nations, including the United States. Furthermore, Argentina’s female representation in Parliament increased tremendously between 1998 and 2009.

However, Argentine women only made up 9.1% of total governmental positions in 1998 which is a significantly
lower female representation than is indicated by the number of parliamentary seats held by women. Although Argentina ranked lower than the US on this scale in 1998, it experienced a radical (and above average) increase in percentage of female participation in governmental position by 2006.

It is interesting to note that “the [Argentinean] Secretariat of Natural Resources and the Environment [is] a lady and close friend of the President.” This is a symbolic role for women’s involvement in Argentina’s pro-environmental efforts on all levels and no doubt encouraged growth in female participation in advocating environmentalism.

Females Completing Tertiary Education

The positive effects of women’s presence in grassroots environmental organizations are positively correlated with addressing illiteracy among women and reducing fertility rates. These factors occur in Argentina with increased female enrollment in tertiary education. Argentina’s rate of female tertiary enrollment is actually growing quicker than the world’s average and even quicker than the rate in the US.

Women’s Empowerment – discussion

The figures gathered from the World Development Indicators statistical database and the UNDP Human Development Reports (for GDI, economic activity, participation in government, and tertiary education) clearly show that the level of gender development and female empowerment in general is in the high range for any country, particularly for a developing nation. Argentina has an unusually high level of women’s empowerment, particularly within Latin America, and Argentina has a disproportionately high level of grassroots environmental mobilization, particularly compared to the rest of Latin America. This parallel suggests a positive correlation between the two factors. The strengthening of women’s roles in the public sector has most likely been a positive contribution to pro-environmental action in Argentina. This data supports the study’s hypothesis that grassroots environmentalism will increase with increasing women’s empowerment. Scholars have also written in support of this conclusion. Smith (2001) found a relationship between gender and politically active environmentalism, even though women have been found less likely to favor direct political action in general.

These studies reinforce the concept that when women are civically engaged (a product of empowerment), pro-environmental action is strengthened.

Latin American culture in general, including Argentina, is known for its “machismo,” or prevalence of male chauvinism. Therefore, it is particularly encouraging to see the evidence of increased Argentine women’s empowerment over the past 20 years. Perhaps it was partially due to the suppression of women’s rights that women are motivated even more so to try and make their voices heard in the public sphere. They found themselves able to do so not via advocacy of “classic” feminist issues, but rather by using the environmental movement as a neutral issue around which to organize and which became a vehicle for public empowerment. This study provisionally suggests that women’s empowerment was not necessarily the prerequisite to strengthened grassroots environmentalism in Argentina, but rather that they could have arisen together, mutually supporting one another.

Gender equality is considered a major contributing factor in aiding the mitigation of climate change and the adaptation to its impacts because women tend to be especially successful in their advocacy of environmental issues. Hemmati’s research supports the hypothesis that when gender equality increases, women’s involvement in pro-environmental mobilization also increases. Villagrasa further argues that women’s involvement is a major contributing factor to a strong environmental movement “based on their networking and interpersonal skills, and their ability to think and plan for the long-term,” yet they are still generally underrepresented in decision-making positions.

Female GEO participation during the COP meetings was consistently below 50%, yet there was an 8% increase in female participation from the third meeting to the 4th meeting held in Buenos Aires. This indicates that Argentina probably had a high level of support and is generally more inclusive of women’s involvement on environmental issues. Multiple scholars say there needs to be stronger representation of female environmental experts in the UNFCCC and greater participation by females on official levels in the annual COPs. While Argentine women appear to be domestically strengthening grassroots pro-environmental mobilization, they are still lacking presence and involvement at higher decision-making levels.
CONCLUSION

Summary of Findings

The current study reveals strong data demonstrating the current strength of Argentina’s grassroots pro-environmental efforts. As early as the Rio Earth Summit in 1992, there was evidence of Argentina's national support for environmental protection, yet participation by domestic, environmentally-focused, non-governmental organizations was weaker at the Rio Conference compared to their level of participation at the 4th and 10th UNFCCC Conferences in 1998 and 2004 respectively. Scholarship suggests that Argentina prioritized environmental issues from very early on in the climate debates. The government support for environmental issues most likely facilitated the growth in public support for pro-environmental efforts, but this is another area to explore entirely.

Although there is conclusive data lacking on the grassroots activity of Argentine GEOs for the beginning of this case study (1990), based on the national stance on environmental concerns it can be assumed that Argentina's grassroots environmental mobilization was already quite high relative to other developing nations in the region. It is also relevant to note that Argentine GEOs continued to strengthen and grow at an exceptional rate throughout this time span (especially despite a national economic meltdown in 2001). The efforts of Argentine grassroots environmental organizations are progressive examples for not only developing nations, but also for strong, influential, developed nations such as the United States. Despite Argentina’s economic status, the activity of these groups shows no sign of slowing and the visibility of their cause domestically and internationally will likely improve with their surmounting momentum.

The originally presented hypotheses are both supported by the findings of this study. For the variables from the first hypothesis, we conclude the following: From 1990-2007, Argentina’s socioeconomic level (HDI) remained high (particularly for a developing nation), and this newspaper analysis reveals a relatively high level of public awareness on environmental degradation. For the variables from the second hypothesis, the following was found: From 1990-2007, Argentina had a high GDI, a rapidly growing ratio of women in the labor force, a strong presence of women in positions of political power, and the ratio of women completing tertiary education steadily increased. Since the trends of these variables coincide with a greater level of participation in grassroots environmental mobilization, this study concludes that these variables did in fact (and continue to) have a positive impact on the strength of Argentina’s environmental movement during this time period.

Study Limitations

This study yielded strong data, significant results, and is a positive contribution to the scholarly discussion on this topic. There are, however, a number of weaknesses in the data collection such as the chance that these variables simply have a spurious relationship, the gaps in the data from the UN and World Development Indicator, and the lack of a thorough, qualitative newspaper article analysis with a larger sample size.

Suggestions for Future Research

This study’s findings imply that government prioritization may have led to an increase in public support for the issues; this cannot be assumed, however. There should first be further investigation into formation of public opinion on environmentalism. Even if further evidence suggests this was the case in Argentina, it is not necessarily a universal tendency. It is possible that pressure from the public is first necessary before government prioritization and action takes place. There are some existing studies regarding public views on the environment, but this study finds there are serious weaknesses and gaps in the scholarship and urges further investigation of the topic.

The UN Human Development Index data is easily accessible and this study was able to work with the data with little difficulty. The reliability of this information is its greatest strength and based on the trends suggested in the results of the current study, it would be interesting and valuable to explore this further. Future studies could perhaps compare this case with other nations’ histories to determine if the human development and environmental movement correlation is universally applicable.

Furthermore, this study indicated a potential relationship between national freedom and grassroots environmentalism. Since the Freedom House data does not provide a clearly differentiated spectrum from “not free” to “completely free,” it would be beneficial for future studies to use information that can better define the currently vague progression along the freedom scale. This study suggests an interesting
correlation and encourages future studies to delve deeper into the connection between domestic freedom and environmental activism.

This study’s newspaper analysis merely serves as an introduction to the potential of further research into the Argentine media’s portrayal of environmental issues and how this has helped shape public awareness and motivation for taking part in grassroots environmental activism. As stated in Gardner’s (1995) study, “However useful media support may be in redressing ecological problems, it is seldom sufficient by itself. As only one news feature among many, environmental issues easily may be forgotten without the continuous coverage that media reserve for more sensational stories.” Obviously, this study was unable to address this nuance and therefore recommends a future study that focuses only on media analysis. It would be beneficial to take a more comprehensive look at the various forms of media, the subtle and obvious biases, how the media compares Argentine efforts to that of other nations, and public reaction to this information.

The 1992 Rio ‘Earth Summit’ saw a significant change in environmental attitude and language due to the inclusion of women in the debate. Nevertheless, their contributions to policy were (at the time) still considered subordinate. This trend has shifted in recent years. Today, there is significant evidence demonstrating that the UNFCCC and other international policy decision-makers are eagerly listening to women’s environmental expertise, yet women’s participation in these debates is still limited and will hopefully rapidly increase in coming years.

This study came across discussion in the existing literature on how to improve women’s involvement in grassroots environmentalism. Hemmati concludes that future progress for women’s environmental organization could be aided by providing citizens with further information about gender specific climate issues. Hemmati and Bretherton suggest providing capacity development opportunities and training materials for women who are prepared to raise their voices in [this] arena and that more funds should be raised to make these opportunities more readily available and easily accessible. The current study supports these previous recommendations and encourages further investigation to determine the best methods for doing so.

Another question regarding women’s involvement in promoting healthy natural environments still remains.

The data supports that Argentine women are in fact empowered to the level that promotes their contributions to grassroots environmental mobilization in the country and that their involvement has probably been a significant reason for why Argentina’s grassroots efforts are so much stronger than other nations (Latin American, developing, and in general). It is curious, then, that their involvement and Argentine grassroots environmentalism in general is still lacking the public visibility that is expected based on these results. Some scholars explain that female environmentalists in Latin American are less likely to engage themselves in the political sphere because the way they organizes makes them more likely to focus on community-level concerns. While this could at least partially explain women’s lack of presence in the international conferences, this author is disillusioned with the fact that women’s empowerment does not seem to translate into involvement in the international spectrum. This could be evidence of the limitations still existing on women’s empowerment, especially based on its current definition and measurement. This study implores further investigation of this variable.

Overall, the findings of the current study are encouraging, but require deeper analysis before the conclusions can be considered anything more than provisional. The findings suggested here will hopefully prompt researchers to delve further into understanding factors that promote grassroots environmental mobilization in Argentina and in the developing world in general.
WORKS CITED


ENDNOTES

1. Inglehart 1995
2. (Inglehart 1995)
3. (UNDP)
4. “The Conference of the Parties (COP) is the “supreme body” of the Convention, that is, its highest decision-making authority. It is an association of all the countries that are Parties to the Convention. The COP is responsible for keeping international efforts to address climate change on track. It reviews the implementation of the Convention and examines the commitments of Parties in light of the Convention’s objective, new scientific findings and experience gained in implementing climate change policies. The COP meets every year, unless the Parties decide otherwise” (unfccc.int 2010).
5. (Foreign Policy Bulletin 1999)
6. (Agular 2002)
7. 2002
8. Agular 2002
9. Agular 2002
12. Agular 2002
13. 2002
15. (Chisari et al.1996)
17. 2002
19. Aagesen’s study (2000)
21. (Senado.go.ar)
22. For the purposes of this study, the terms “environmental non-governmental organizations” and “grassroots environmental organizations” are used interchangeably.
23. (Gardner 1995)
24. (Sawers 2000; Chisari 1996; Del Acebo Ibañez & Costa 2009)
25. (Sawers 2000; Chisari 1996; Gallopin, Gutman, & Maletta 1989; Del Acebo Ibañez & Costa 2009)
26. (Sawers 2000; Gallopin et. al.1989)
27. (Waisbord & Peruzzotti 2009)
28. (Waisbord & Peruzzotti 2009)
29. (Waisbord & Peruzzotti 2009)
32. Del Acebo Ibañez & Costa (2009)
34. Bretherton (1998)
35. (Hemmati 2008)
36. (Ibanéz & Costa 2009; Agular 2002; Borland 2008; Calderón 1992; Chincilla 1992; Hochstetter 2002; Chávez 2006; Bretherton)
37. (Chinchilla 1992)
38. (Chinchilla 1992; Sternbach et.al.1992)
39. (Bretherton 1992; Chinchilla 1992)
40. (Inglehart 1995)
41. (Carlos 1992)
42. (Galopin et.al.1989)
43. (Aguilar 2002)
44. (Aguilar 2002; Hochsterler 2002; Nelson 1996)
45. (Hochsterler 2002)
46. (Aguilar 2002)
47. (Hochsterler; Aguilar 2002)
48. (Hochsterler 2002)
49. (indec.org)
50. This data is gathered from the United Nation’s World Development Indicators database and the United Nations Human Development Reports from 2007 and 2000 are used in comparison with the Gender-related Development Index (GDI) (high=1, low = 0).
51. (Brazil is considered the Latin American country with the most visible environmental movement).
52. (UNFCCC.int)
53. (Keck & Sikkink 1998)
54. (Clark et. al)
55. (Clark et. al 1998)
56. (Clark et. al. 1998)
57. (Clark et. al. 1998)
58. (UNFCCC 2004)
59. (unfccc.int)
60. (unfccc.int)
61. Feijoó and Momo (1991)
62. (Garcia 1992)
63. Freedom House 2010
64. Media’s promotion of environmental awareness and support can also lead to a positive reinforcing cycle for membership and support behind domestic GEOs; a trend which has likely been in effect in Argentina for a number of years.
65. “Ecofeminism is a philosophy that connects the patriarchal domination of women with the patriarchal domination of nature” (Smith 2001).
66. This index was not developed until 1995; therefore this is the earliest possible data that could be obtained for Argentina.
68. Ivone Gebara (2002)
69. Carlos 1992
70. Bretherton 1998
71. Smith (2001)
72. (Mohi 1991)
73. “Some of the biggest GEOs have been led by women” (Hemmati 2008).
74. Villagrasa (2002)
75. (Bretherton 1998; Hemmati 2008)
76. (Bretherton 1998)
77. (Wellin 1996)
78. (Bretherton 1998; Hemmati 2008)
79. (Garcia 1992; Mohi 1991)

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"Hope is an Answer to Terror": How Poverty Contributes to Terrorism

by SHANNA EDBERG

INTRODUCTION
On March 22, 2002, United States President George W. Bush gave a speech at the United Nations Financing for Development Conference in Monterrey, Mexico. In it, he called for greater quantities and greater effectiveness of aid programs, reasoning that “we fight against poverty because hope is an answer to terror” and that “poverty and hopelessness and lack of education and failed governments...too often allow conditions that terrorists can seize.” Later that year, on the anniversary of the attacks, President Bush offered a slightly different view on poverty and terror, writing in an op-ed piece that “poverty does not transform poor people into terrorists and murderers.” Yet poverty, corruption and repression are a toxic combination in many societies, leading to weak governments that are unable to enforce order or patrol their borders and are vulnerable to terrorist network and drug cartels.” Since the attacks of September 11, 2001, academics and policymakers have debated the links between poverty and terrorism, questioning the significance of developmental aid, impoverishment, and inequality among states that foster terrorists. This paper will examine the links between poverty and terror, acknowledging that while poverty does not directly instigate terrorism, nor does it cause people to become terrorists, poverty engenders an environment that nourishes terrorist groups and allows terror to proliferate. To demonstrate this, I will first note the characteristics of socio-economic and educational levels among terrorist groups and nations that produce terrorists. Second, I will describe the enormous and fast-paced increase in immiseration and urban slums and identify some of the ramifications of this phenomenon, including social dislocation, the growth of informal and illicit economies, and the lessening of policing and state penetration. Third, I will discuss how informal and illicit networks, which have evolved worldwide but are especially endemic to conflict-stricken and impoverished areas, support and supply terrorist groups and create what may be called a “terrorist network.” Finally, I will sum up the evidence that poverty constructs a favorable environment for terrorism and tie together the connections between poverty, inequality, insecurity, social alienation, and extremism, all of which create incentives to commit, tolerate, or support the use of terror. I will then conclude briefly with suggestions for social policy that will alleviate the circumstances that sustain terrorists.

THE EDUCATIONAL AND ECONOMIC POSITIONS OF TERRORISTS
Terrorist groups across the world draw their leadership, fighters, and general members from the educated middle and upper classes. Alan Krueger and Jitka Maleckova (2003) examined Hezbollah, Palestinian terrorists and suicide bombers, and terrorists in the Israeli Jewish Underground, finding in the weakest cases no correlation between poverty, lack of education, and terrorist activities. In the strongest cases, there was even a positive correlation between more advanced education, a higher socio-economic status, and participation in terrorist groups. Fighters in Hezbollah were more likely to have gone to secondary school than the general population of Lebanon; education was positively associated with the likelihood of someone becoming a fighter in Hezbollah. Poverty was inversely related to that likelihood; according to their model, a thirty percent increase in the poverty rate was correlated with a ten percent reduction in participation in Hezbollah. The results were similar for the terrorists among the Palestinian population. Even suicide bombers, normally judged to be the most economically dispossessed of all terrorists, were more likely to have finished high school and attended college then the general population, and were less likely to come from poor families. An informal survey of Palestinian suicide bombers revealed that “none of them were uneducated, desperately poor, simple minded or depressed.” Indeed, two of them were the sons of millionaires. Furthermore, the two intifadas in 1988 and 2000 occurred at very different points along the economic business cycle, showing that violence and terror are not symptomatic of economic downturns, but also occur when conditions appear to be improving. Israeli terrorists in the early 1980s included “teachers, writers,
university students, geographers, engineers, entrepreneurs, a combat pilot, a chemist and a computer programmer,” which reveals their high level of education and occupation. Similarly, activists in al Qaeda for the most part were highly educated in scientific or technical fields (Azam and Thelen 2007). Krueger and Maleckova cite other studies revealing the same outcomes for terrorist groups in Latin America, Europe, and Asia, showing that the generally high education and socio-economic status of terrorists was not unique to the Middle East.

The authors deduced several other intriguing results at the country level, including that nationwide rates of illiteracy, school enrollment, and low income were unrelated to participation in terrorist groups. Moreover, there was no difference between poor and rich countries in the amount of terrorists that originate from within, once state differences in civil liberties are accounted for. Rather, deficiencies in civil liberties (which are more likely to be present in impoverished countries) were correlated with higher participation in terror groups. This finding is supported by Alberto Abadie (2006), who discovered that political regimes that allowed an intermediate amount of political freedom, or were in transition between oppressive authoritarianism and democracy, caused an increase in the terrorism present in that country.

It is important to note that the above analysis is primarily concerned with those who actually end up joining an organization and becoming terrorist operatives. Because terrorist associations actively screen and choose certain individuals to join them, it is possible that the socio-economic features of individuals who are recruited into organizations are not the same as the features of individuals who desire to be recruited, but are instead rejected (Krueger and Laitin 2007). The supply of potential terrorists may not be the same as the demand for them, and organizations may only choose the most elite applicants. In other words, it is possible that poverty induces a desire to join and assist terrorist groups, but only the educated and relatively well-off are selected to enlist. In this case, it is possible that the data on terrorists’ economic circumstances conceals the actual role that poverty plays in the supply of terrorists. Still, there is no apparent association between income, low education, and terrorism at either the individual or state level. It is clear that poverty and a lack of education do not contribute to terrorism, at least in the sense that poverty and low education levels do not convert people into terrorists.

BEYOND POVERTY: OTHER ECONOMIC REASONS BEHIND COMMITTING TERROR

While poverty may not bear a direct relationship to numbers of terrorists, economic reasons and inequality still play a role in determining terrorist attacks. For one, there may exist a relationship between individuals losing socio-economic advantage and increasing their support for terrorism. Before the first Palestinian Intifada, the percentage of people holding college diplomas increased, but wages and employment both dropped for college graduates (Atran 2003). This hypothesis is supported by the finding that high unemployment has a significant correlation with terrorist risk (Goldstein 2006). Unemployment may increase the supply of potential terrorists; in the case of al Qaeda and its allies in the Arabian Peninsula, Atran states that underemployment plays a role in recruitment of activists. Still, this does not refute the fact that poverty and poor education do not create terrorists. Both terrorists and suicide terrorists have the same distribution as the general population in terms of education and socio-economic status, and they are sometimes skewed toward higher education and income levels. Thus, terrorist origins are not based on an economic foundation.

Furthermore, Alan Krueger and Daniel Laitin (2007) disaggregated the origins and targets of terrorism, determining that the origins of terrorism were in countries that suffer from political oppression and low civil liberties rather than poverty, which is consistent with earlier studies. However, they also revealed that the targets of terrorism were countries that were successful economically. Therefore, while poverty may not directly cause individuals to become terrorists, income differences are significant: “Those who are repressed politically tend to terrorize the rich, giving international terrorist events the feel of economic warfare.”

An analysis by Carlos Pestana Barros, Joao Ricardo Faria, and Luis A. Gil-Alana (2008) of terrorist attacks against United States citizens in Africa during the period from 1978 to 2002 was consistent with the findings of Krueger and Laitin, showing a relationship between low income countries and terrorism against U.S. citizens. The highest number of attacks took place in 1993. Somalia was the country with the highest proportion of attacks, followed by Egypt, Kenya, Niger and Sudan. Their investigation revealed a negative correlation between the standard of living in the countries affected by terrorism and the number of U.S. victims, which implies a positive relationship.
between relative state income differences, poverty, and terrorism. Beyond poverty, a lack of economic freedom and a prevalent ideology of Islamism were also associated positively with a higher risk of terrorism.

**THE WORLDWIDE GROWTH IN POVERTY AND SLUMS**

A historically unprecedented and unpredicted urbanization is taking place throughout the world, which has vast implications for the spread of terrorism. This growth is not taking place in a context of modernization and development; instead, the world’s poorest people are migrating to cities with stagnant growth figures, becoming packed into overcrowded slums without access to sanitation, safe water, and other basic services, and living in unstable and dangerous conditions. The impact of what has been called over-urbanization, or the growth of urban populations in conjunction with stationary or negative economic growth in the cities, is significant. Beyond issues such as urban hazards and environmental devastation, the effect of this slumification is relevant to terrorism studies in that it increases visible inequality, insecurity of housing and subsistence, the risk of extremism, and informal and illegal trafficking of goods and services.

Mike Davis (2004) ominously demonstrates the scope of this growth in his work *Planet of Slums.* A total of one-third of the worldwide urban population is composed of slum dwellers, a number that reaches 78.2 percent when observing the urban populations of the least-developed countries. By 2035, slums will contain the majority of the world’s impoverished; it is possible that as many as two billion people could live in slums by the year 2030. In addition, urban poverty (which additionally includes poor people living outside of slums) could reach half of the population of city dwellers by 2020. Historically, during the fifty years between 1950 and 2000, the amount of cities with a population of over one million mushroomed from eighty-six to four hundred, and that number is expected to swell in the future. Also multiplying are ‘megacities’ of over eight million people and, staggering, hypercities with a population of twenty million or more. Smaller urban areas and towns are not excluded from this trend, and many have been multiplying and expanding into cities larger than San Francisco. The inexorable advancement of urbanization has been largely occurring in the developing countries of Asia, Africa, and Latin America.

Davis traces the roots of over-urbanization to globalization and the Washington Consensus policies of U.S. President Ronald Reagan, the International Monetary Fund (IMF), and the World Trade Organization (WTO). Agricultural de-regulation, competition with large-scale agribusiness, loss of food subsidies due to the IMF’s structural-adjustment programs, and policies of “de-peasantization” all have pushed rural inhabitants to the cities even when cities were no longer generating jobs for them to seek or hold. In addition, the IMF used the debt of developing nations to restructure their economies, enforcing devaluation, privatization, removal of import controls, cutbacks in health and education services, and trimming down the public sector. The effects of structural adjustment led to capital flight, a collapse in manufacturing, export incomes that stagnated or decreased, curtailed public services, mounting prices, and drops in real wages. This displaced not only people living in rural communities, but also middle-class city dwellers who became immiserated and forced out of their housing into slums. This process was intensified by an inhospitable world economic climate, which included drought, rising oil prices, rising interest rates, and falling commodity prices. Border enforcement and immigration restrictions blocked surplus populations from migrating elsewhere, leaving slums as the only response to the problem of housing an excess of people. Davis claims that this noxious combination had consequences “more severe and long-lasting than the Great Depression.”

Inhabitants of slums live and work in appalling conditions. Infrastructure-building has not kept pace with the explosion in the size and population of cities, leaving slums and areas on the periphery with zero utilities or sanitation. For example, in Mumbai’s poorer areas, there is only one toilet seat for every five hundred inhabitants. The conditions of many African cities are considered by the United Nations to be literally life-threatening.

Mass exclusion, impoverishment, and gross inequalities have been results of this trend. The World Bank estimated that the world’s inequality had risen to a Gini coefficient of .67 by the end of the twentieth century. Also, what Davis calls “extreme poverty” increased astronomically from 14 to 168 million within what the UN has deemed to be transitional countries. Formal urban wages in Africa are below subsistence level, leaving economists to wonder how many workers survive. People in these conditions lack even the existential security of subsistence.
In this state of affairs, surplus populations of workers have no choice but to abandon a formal economy that offers them nothing and instead work in informal industries, services, and trade. In many cities, both state and private-sector employees have declined and formal job creation has essentially halted, creating an inflating informal sector. Today, informal workers comprise about two-fifths of the developing world’s economically active population, and the total informal working class contains about one billion people, extending into and beyond slum inhabitants. Informal economic activity accounts for greater than thirty percent of urban employment in Asia and greater than sixty percent of urban employment in Central America and Africa; it may currently be the principal form of livelihood in many cities of the developing world. The informal working class is at a high risk of exploitation without the protection of labor laws and without contact with the philosophy of collective labor or class struggle.

Largely as a result of these conditions, apocalyptic religions including populist Islam, Pentecostalism, the cult of Shivaji in Bombay, and followers of Santa Muerte in Mexico have proliferated among the slums’ poor. According to an Islamist leader, “Confronted with the neglect of the state and faced with the brutality of daily life, people discover, thanks to us, solidarity, self-help, fraternity. They understand that Islam is humanism.” Pentecostal Christianity, with an appeal toward immiserated slum women and with a reputation for being color-blind, has evolved into “the largest self-organized movement of urban poor people on the planet,” according to Davis. Religion acts as a salve for the violence and misery of daily life in the slums.

Wacquant (2008) scrutinizes the interconnected roles of the state, the informal economy, and violence in the slums of Brazil and the United States. Criminal violence is fed by radical social disparities, unemployment and underemployment, and a void in social services. Without a social safety net or prospects for employment, people look to “the ‘booty capitalism’ of the street” to survive, acquire goods and services, and escape from a life of destitution. Decreases in welfare are directly correlated with increases in crime, and as social insecurity and the informal economy become entrenched, the ensuing criminality invites a repressive police apparatus. Yet criminality brings regular work and income in the absence of a functional formal economy, albeit via drug trafficking and other illicit activities. So illegal activities not only become essential for the livelihoods of people in the slums, but they also give the state a vested interest in allowing their continued operation in marginal areas. At the same time, police and judicial repression add to urban dislocation and marginality by imprisoning participants in the illicit economy, which weakens stability and the social order and induces violence against the state without addressing the cause of criminality.

In sum, urbanization and slumification have far-reaching negative outcomes. One of the most important of these for the study of terror is the inception and expansion of informal economies, which can grow into networks that span the entire globe. In addition, people are more vulnerable in many aspects in dense, fragile slums, and discontent is easily fomented. States that implemented IMF structural-adjustment programs face a loss of legitimacy, and often the blame for popular misery turns toward the state as well as toward the apparatuses that endorsed and applied the programs, including the United States. Slums and illicit economies also cause problems for the state, as policing and order become more difficult to maintain. The mixing of intensely deprived people with nothing left to lose, which is sometimes combined with state repression and sometimes with religious consciousness or both, has the potential to mobilize extremism and violence in the world’s cities.

Acknowledging that while poverty does not directly instigate terrorism, nor does it cause people to become terrorists, poverty engenders an environment that nourishes terrorist groups and allows terror to proliferate.
POVERTY AND THE "TERROR NETWORK"

The extra-state "shadow" economies that materialize in slums and other areas can form global linkages and potentially become the source of survival, funding, and materiel resources for terrorist groups. Carolyn Nordstrom (2000) has performed ethnographic studies of extra-state shadow networks, which are called shadows because they include more than criminal or illicit dealings, but also gray markets, informal markets like the ones described above that emerge in slums and cities, and other quasi-legal activities. These networks involve vast numbers of people moving and trading goods and services throughout the world, and they can be both local and international in scope. Although they are situated outside of formal, state, and legal institutions, they are not necessarily constantly in opposition to states nor entirely distinct from them. Shadow networks and states coexist simultaneously, with networks flowing both in and around states.

Nordstrom describes the immense scale and influence of shadow networks. Rather than existing on the margins of the world's power relations, extra-state networks form a central and critical portion of the global economy. Extra-state global exchanges generate up to trillions of dollars and comprise one-third of global transactions. Shadow networks flourish in every country, not solely in war-torn or failed or impoverished states; fifty percent of Italy's economy, sixty percent of Russia's economy, and thirty percent of the United States economy is non-formal. The amount of people, revenues, and power of the leaders involved in these networks rival that of many states. These networks are not self-contained; the informal economy affects the prices of goods, stock markets, interest rates, and exchange rates everywhere in the formal economy. Shadow networks form one of the world's "power grids"; if the shadow transactions and industries were to collapse, the world would be in chaos.

Nordstrom's fieldwork in Angola, where ninety percent of the economy is non-formal, demonstrates the implications of shadow economies wherein ordinary people must trade outside of state channels in order to survive, as they also do in immiserated slum communities. Critically, trade in illicit and dangerous products such as weapons and drugs is also tied to informal trade in food, clothing, medicine, and other supplies. All of these products, both the illicit and the mundane, often flow along the same extra-state routes. For instance, a hungry Angolan woman might trade an AK-47 for a chicken to feed her family. Moreover, extra-state and illegal trade is often coupled with progress on development, because trade in drugs and other illicit goods gives people the currency to buy necessities for industry, agriculture, and development. For example, in the war zones that Nordstrom monitored, people would rely on the same goods and services and the same channels of extra-state networks that they had before, but this time in order to rebuild their economies and households following a transition to peace. Shadow networks provide weapons and funding to criminals, gangs, insurgencies, terrorists, and other threats to the state and society. Yet these same networks also move food, medicine, and other goods along the same lines as illicit products, allowing impoverished areas to have a supply of these necessities that the formal economy would not provide. Extra-state transactions are shaped by demand, like their formal counterparts. If demand is unfulfilled by the licit economy, consumers will turn to non-formal businesses and networks to obtain the goods and services that they need. Shadow networks for goods and services form not only because certain goods are illegal, but also because extra-state networks are sometimes the only method of obtaining necessities for basic survival.

Shadow networks are currently developing links and alliances between organized crime groups in multiple parts of the world. Integration between networks works to their own benefit, because global associations are more productive and powerful than isolated coalitions. For instance, drug smugglers in Latin America may route drugs to Europe via Africa instead of moving them more directly, in order to muster the resources of each continent. But many networks are not all inclusive, and many networks have no relations with others. All the same, it is important to remember that, for example, a college student who deals drugs to help pay for his or her tuition is as much a part of the network as are the infamous growers, transporters, and drug lords. Each transaction takes place for a specific reason. Gems, weapons, and drugs don't flow in a vacuum, but along lines used for multiple purposes, including those for illegal immigration, official diplomacy, and other legal and non-legal processes. For example, Osama bin Laden built al Qaeda's financial base "on a foundation of charities, non-governmental organizations, mosques, websites, fund-raisers, intermediaries, facilitators, and banks and other financial institutions that helped finance the mujiheddin throughout the 1980s. This network extended to all corners of the Muslim world" (Abuza 2003).
The opium trade in Afghanistan is an example of a mixed shadow network. It has been called a terrorist network in the media, which is erroneous because it is impossible to distinguish discrete networks on the basis of one specific purpose. Opium sales indeed provide terrorists and insurgent groups with funding, but the farmers who cultivate it are neither the Taliban nor al Qaeda, and they need the proceeds from selling opium to feed themselves and their families. Because shadow networks serve multiple purposes, the problems that they pose will not be solved by targeting and shutting them down. Attempting to do so is likely to be ineffective, creating a void for another shadow network to replace the one demolished, as well as creating a backlash among the people who used the network for basic subsistence. Rather than burning opium fields and alienating poor farmers, it would be more effective to change incentive structures so that individuals choose to buy and sell in the formal economy rather than the illicit one. Providing a licit food market for food and other goods and services would ameliorate the situation by giving opium farmers a secure, legal, and available market for exchange—a market that does not reach the hands of terrorists and insurgents.

The various motives for participants in the network are crucial for understanding its operation and for formulating a response to it. There are multiple incentives for people to participate in the extra-state economy. In impoverished slum districts, shadow networks provide employment and products that the formal economy does not. In war-torn or unstable regions, these networks also provide more stability, safety, and economic opportunities than the state does. Furthermore, informal networks lower the overhead costs of doing business by ignoring state-imposed restrictions and fees, such as tariffs, licenses, and regulation. They are also less visible than formal transactions. Since networks have a tendency to feed off of each other, poverty and a lack of aid and economic opportunities have the potential to create permanent non-formal networks feeding off of the destitution of the people and causing not only an increase in violence and warfare, but also a prospective source of funds and materiel for terrorists. Therefore, in the interest of security and terrorism prevention, states should remain aware of the causal connections between poverty, deficiencies in the formal economy, and informal shadow markets that route to larger international networks and are used by terrorists.

CONCLUSION AND APPROACHES FOR MITIGATION

Poverty plays at most an indirect role in the production of terrorists on both a micro and a macro scale. Terrorists are no less educated or wealthy than the general population, and in many cases are more so. Terrorists arise equally from countries of different economic standings, as measured by GDP. However, economic factors aside from poverty, such as inequality and unemployment, both affect the supply of terrorists and the chosen target for a terrorist attack.

Poverty’s crucial function in terrorism lies in its effect on the environment and supply networks for terrorist groups. We are in a period of mounting inequalities and immiseration in the midst of a global transition from rural living to massive urbanization and slumification. The legacy of IMF structural-adjustment programs that contributed to this transformation includes anger towards the United States and the internal loss of legitimacy of states that suffered through economic restructuring, creating a political agenda for potential terrorists or even inviting in groups such as the Taliban in Afghanistan (Burgoon 2006). Pauperization and fragile and unstable living easily provoke discontent and popular grievances, which can turn into extremism and violence when mixed with state repression or apocalyptic religions. Regular policing and keeping order is made unmanageable by the conditions of urban slums. Finally, impoverishment causes people to turn away from the formal economy, which offers them nothing in the way of jobs or income, and instead employ themselves in the non-formal or criminal sectors.

It is important to remember that, for example, a college student who deals drugs to help pay for his or her tuition is as much a part of the network as are the infamous growers, transporters, and drug lords.
Extra-state informal and illicit markets that spring up in slums and other areas are often connected worldwide, forming shadow networks that encompass a significant portion of the global economy. These networks cannot be split apart into separate categories such as terror or weapons networks, since multiple categories of goods and services are exchanged for countless different reasons, all flowing along the same routes. In many cases, poverty and the failure of the formal market economy are the causes of these networks, and individuals participate in them because they could not survive otherwise. The effects of these networks include providing illicit funding and materiel sources for terrorist groups.

Uncovering the relationships between poverty and terrorism reveals possible solutions for combating terrorism. Since networks supply each other and have integrated markets for food, medicine, and other everyday goods in addition to illegal goods such as drugs and weapons, then as explained above, undertaking the destruction of the network or the arms dealers themselves will be ineffective and will likely wreak more harm than good. A more effective option would be the establishment of alternative, formal networks that can penetrate into areas where shadow networks proliferate and provide the goods that many lack, offering a secure and available market for exchange. This would produce incentives for dealing with the formal economy instead of the shadow ones, which would increase visibility, decrease traffic in illegal and criminal goods such as drugs and weapons, and turn off sources of material support to terrorists.

This strategy requires large investments in social policy. Brian Burgoon (2006) posited that increasing the generosity of social welfare provisions would on the whole reduce terrorism. Social policies, especially in education and health care, have been shown to lower poverty levels and promote growth and development in the developing world. Investment in social transfers and a welfare safety net on the whole reduce poverty, inequality, politico-religious extremism, and general economic insecurity. One the one hand, this reduces discontent and increases the life chances and capacity of individuals, thereby lessening partiality to terrorist goals; on the other, it could increase the capacity for terrorism to be organized and executed. On balance, Burgoon argues, terrorism should diminish. His evidence confirms that redistributive social policies and safety nets correlate with less terrorism within the country’s borders and less international terrorism committed by its citizens. Hence, social policies that combat poverty correspondingly combat terrorism.

BIBLIOGRAPHY


ENDNOTES

1. This paper assumes the U.S. Department of State definition of terrorism, which reads: “The term ‘terrorism’ means premeditated, politically motivated violence perpetrated against noncombatant targets by subnational groups or clandestine agents, usually intended to influence an audience. The term ‘international terrorism’ means terrorism involving citizens or the territory of more than one country.” Additionally, “the term noncombatant is interpreted to include, in addition to civilians, military personnel who at the time of the incident are unarmed and/or not on duty. We also consider as acts of terrorism attacks on military installations or on armed military personnel when a state of military hostilities does not exist at the site.”

2. These results are not necessarily contrary to the conclusion of Krueger and Maleckova that low income countries do not produce more terrorists, since the two articles studied different variables, the number of terrorists versus the amount of terrorist attacks.

3. The “classical” definition of a slum used by Mike Davis is: “Overcrowding, poor or informal housing, inadequate access to safe water and sanitation, and insecurity of tenure.”

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Speaking Nuyorico:
Reconstructing Spaces of Solidarity and Urban Boricua Identity

by KATHRYN JOHNSTONE

SPEAKING NYORICO:
CONSTRUCTING SPACES OF SOLIDARITY
AND URBAN BORICUA IDENTITY

Nestled in New York City’s Lower East Side, performances at the Nuyorican Poets Café reveal the centrality of linguistic expression to the survival and empowerment of its people. As New York poet and Puerto Rican activist Miguel Algarín postulates in his introduction to Nuyorican Poetry: An Anthology of Puerto Rican Words and Feelings, “There is at the edge of every empire a linguistic explosion that results from the many multilingual tribes that collect around wealth and power. The Nuyorican [New York Puerto Rican] is a slave class that trades hours for dollars at the lowest rung of the earning scale. The poems in this anthology document the conditions of survival…”

Home to the vanguard artist population of New York City, and more specifically its Puerto Rican performers and patrons, the Nuyorican Poets Café was founded by ex-convict and gang member Miguel Piñero in the late 1980s to further the poetry and songwriting he had undertaken while in jail. Events at the Café include music, alternative performance, literary readings, and poetry slams. Performances take many forms, from present-day social commentaries to romanticized bilingual histories; collectively, however, Puerto Rican artists reveal their struggle to reconcile a fragmented Puerto Rican identity within the Nuyorican experience. As a powerful forum of cultural engagement, the crux of the Nuyorican Poets Café lies in its capacity to empower its artists and activists to the forefront of cultural debate and simultaneously promote their explorations of individual and communal identity through performance.

However, determinants of this identity are themselves fragmented. In what is referred to as “the diasporic dimension of the Puerto Rican experience,” at present nearly half of self-identified Puerto Ricans live outside of the island in urban locations such as New York. Furthermore, Puerto Rican culture has emerged from a past of colonial subjugation to contemporary issues such as the island’s U.S. commonwealth status. Additionally, immigrants in the U.S. face urban poverty and xenophobia associated with migration to and from the island; as such, there is an attempt to create this continuity between their “Boricua” identity, or Puerto Rican islander origins, and the urban exile of the New York Diaspora. Here, discourse becomes central to the investigation of this connection, such that “the Puerto Rican literature written in the United States reflects the Diaspora experienced as ‘the doubled relationship or dual loyalty that migrants, exiles, and refugees have to places – their connections to the space they currently occupy and their continuing involvement with ‘back home.’”

It is through common narrative that Nuyorican poets dissect this duality; in the exploration of past and present conceptualizations of race and nationality, ties between the island and the Diaspora, and the sources of power within a marginalized community, Nuyoricans find a voice and construct cohesion out of fragmentation.

POSTCOLONIAL HEGEMONY: LIVING NYORICO

Despite its definition as a United States commonwealth in 1952, Puerto Ricans have sought to define a more autonomous politics of national identity within Hispanic-American history. This is partially due to ongoing socioeconomic repression dating back to its colonization in the 15th century, from early Spanish conquest to its occupation by the United States in the late 19th century. As such, the cultural and political discontinuity of the island makes difficult its reconciliation into a cohesive and independent Puerto Rican identity. Reflected in the words of its second and third-generation Nuyorican poets in the New York City Diaspora, the residual effects of these multiple competing historical forces reveal a deeply-engrained presence in Puerto Rican identity that seeks to reinvestigate its past of colonialism, present fragmentation, and where power actually lies within the community.

Upon the conclusion of the Spanish-American war in 1898, the Spanish territory of Puerto Rico was ceded to
the United States. Under the title of protectorate, which neither incorporated the Puerto Rican people as American citizens nor granted them autonomy, the island underwent a process of structural transition to accommodate budding U.S. interests in the region. When American forces claimed executive control over the local government and market control over exports, the additional enforcement of English as the administrative language solidified Puerto Rican resentment of U.S. presence, creating “tensions and misunderstanding” between nationals and military officials. Accordingly, there began to emerge a dichotomy of the powerless Spanish-speaking colonial and the powerful English-speaking colonizer. As such, this “intensive Americanization agenda” created backlash from islanders who rejected the notion “that it was the duty of the United States to instruct them in how to conduct themselves like citizens of a progressive, civilized nation.”

This sentiment strengthened Puerto Rican hostility toward its U.S. occupiers, producing a greater push for autonomy. Even when, in an interim politics to statehood, the island finally instated its first self-elected governor and attained commonwealth status in 1948, the remains of U.S. political and economic control still governed the “Estado Libre Asociado” [Free Associated State]. By now, the language barrier had solidified a linguistic schism between first and second-generation Puerto Rican colonials, and migration from the island to the mainland United States began to solidify the island’s social fragmentation and colonial dependence.

The conditions of the Diaspora, however, are those most directly affecting Nuyorican poets. The source of current marginalization traces back to colonial exploitation; in its colonization, the Puerto Rican experience endured drastic social transformation as a result of the superstructure and affected political landscape. In one instance, post-war Puerto Rico was torn by U.S.-led industrialization efforts as “the island was transformed from a largely agricultural district into an export-oriented manufacturing platform with decaying agricultural activity.” The devaluation of the traditionally-strong agricultural sector triggered the diffusion of the working population across the island in suburban sprawl, with it eradicating a large segment of subsistence for laborers. The subsequent rapid economic transformation, in addition to the volatile labor needs of U.S. manufacturers and the island’s heavy political and economic dependence upon U.S. markets, was such that unemployment rates on the island consistently remained above 10%. As such, large populations of unemployed male Puerto Rican workers migrated en masse to the United States, namely New York, and there established the roots of a large “Nuyorican” community. By the mid-1970s, Puerto Rican immigrants formed 12% of the New York population and large communities began to crystallize in neighborhoods such as the Bronx, Brooklyn, and Manhattan. Especially in the new Puerto Rican Diaspora, the post-war schism between newly urban-based Nuyorican populations was such that “the lived experience of the younger generations felt a world apart from that of their grandparents and even their parents.”

It is here where poets in the Nuyorican Poets Café find fodder for protest. References made to the island as a symbol of political oppression by U.S. forces are mirrored in the struggle of urban immigrant communities translocated “from the colony to the metropolis where colonial conditions are reproduced.” Once again, in their new setting immigrants were subject to postcolonial linguistic, economic, and socio-political domination. According to Nuyorican poets, this oppression is founded upon ethnic discrimination. As a result of its multiple settlements, the root of Puerto Rican racial identity, termed “Boricua,” resides in the “triad” of Spanish, African, and indigenous Taíno islander origin. Furthermore, on the island there exist at least nineteen distinct racial categorizations based on a combination of these ethnicities along a spectrum. Immigrants to the U.S., however, often confront misinterpretations of their race by outsiders; there is a “constant dissonance between the way they are perceived and the way they perceive themselves racially… [in the U.S.] they are identified as White or Black, whereas in Puerto Rico racial differences are seen as a continuum between the two polarities.” It is therefore only natural that this confusion associated with racial complexity, and its residual postcolonial discrimination, would further become ambiguous upon displacement in the Diaspora.

In the context of contemporary New York, second and third generation Puerto Rican immigrants’ attempts to understand their own racial classification vis-à-vis New York’s large immigrant population often result in the classification of their constituency as either purely African American or Hispanic, or on the “Other” side of the white-non-white spectrum. Furthermore, acceptance into this dichotomy often requires that Nuyoricians analyze and explain their salient racial characteristics for outsiders. As Harlem author
Willie Perdomo reveals in his poem performed at the Nuyorican Poets Café in the late 1990s, “Nigger-Reecan Blues” is the result of existential crisis and racialization as he comes to find his Boricua identity impossible to negotiate. In his juxtaposition of self-questioning and social dialogue with other New Yorkers, Perdomo constructs the daily investigation of racially-ambiguous Boricua identity. His dialogue opens with a profoundly simple question:

  - I am.

When prompted to identify his race, Perdomo both acknowledges all races named yet asserts the futility of the question by universally and unwittingly responding, “I am.” In this simple existential statement he affirms his existence in New York and the world, but further presents that Boricua and black are equally a part of his identity, and are therefore nonexclusive categorizations of race. Additionally, his confirmatory response to “que” [what?], in essence admitting to the question “what are you?”, establishes his own difficulties in self-classifying his racial identity.

The dialogue does not stop there; the poem continues as Perdomo recounts others’ continual incredulity of his Boricua identity:

But you said you was a Porta Reecan?  
  - Tú no eres Puerto Riqueño, brother. [You’re not Puerto Rican, brother.]  
  - Maybe Indian like Gandhi Indian.  
  - I thought you was a Black man.  
  - Is one of your parents white?  
  - You sure you ain’t a mix of something like -Portuguese and Chinese?  
  - Naaahhh…You ain’t no Porta Reecan.  
  - I keep telling you: The boy is a Black man with an accent.

By indexing his conversation partners as respectively African American and Hispanic through destandardization of their vernacular English, evident in the direct transliteration of “Porta Reecan” and the Spanish line that follows, Perdomo locates himself between their arguments as being identified with neither, yet among both. Of himself, he negotiates: “Yo soy Boricua! Yo soy Africano! I ain’t lyin’. Pero mi pelo es kinky y kurly y mi skin no es negra pero it can pass…” [I am Boricua! I am African! I ain’t lyin’. But my hair is kinky and kurly and my skin isn’t black but it can pass].

By speaking in Spanish and simultaneously indexing his own blackness, in this passage Perdomo identifies Puerto Rican and African categories of race as mutually non-exclusive. Despite this conclusion, the speakers in his poem continue to construct a separate identity out of his perceived racial ambiguity: they assert that to be Puerto Rican is to be a “Black man with an accent,” or an African American Spanish-speaker. They further alienate Perdomo by attributing to him, from mere physical appearances, various unrelated ethnicities: to them, he may be some combination of Indian, black, half-white, Portuguese or Chinese. Ultimately, however, the potency of this perception does not lie in their satisfactory conception of his race. Rather, the existence of this debate itself and not its irreconcilable conclusion constructs Perdomo’s “otherness” as an urban social actor. It is the process of racial debate, the resulting placement as either “Other” or white, and the individual’s identity crisis, says Perdomo, that are enmeshed with the Nuyorican condition.

Perdomo’s argument further reveals the salience of colonialism in Nuyorican life. As postcolonial theorist Frantz Fanon conceptualizes, colonial power relations are not merely an outside force on the colonized people; instead, they present a much more deep-seated and even constitutive fragmentation of a people’s identity. As colonials begin to see their identity and power only in respect to their colonizers, these power relations socialize the colonized within a disempowering framework of self-understanding such that there is only an “‘otherness of the self inscribed in the perverse palimpsest of colonial identity.’”

Rhetorical scholars Sloop and Ono similarly describe restrictive “essentialization” of a people’s identity and the processes by which existing power structures can be stabilized as a superstructure that shapes their vernacular communities’ self-conception. Based upon this analysis, not only does Perdomo have no chance of defining himself in his new surroundings; he also has no choice but to engage in the traditional black-white dialogue of his urban-colonial otherness.
In addition to the racialization of its people, the colonized conditions of the island and the marginalized position of the immigrant create historical continuity in the Puerto Rican people’s impoverishment. In the throes of American-provoked wartime transformation on the island in the 1940’s, immigrants began to migrate to the U.S. and establish Diaspora communities. However, in their new setting Puerto Rican immigrants found little refuge from the economic troubles and social repression they had left back on the colonized island. In their new communities, immigrants entered the blue-collar workforce; however, with the economic strain of the 1970’s the manufacturing sector began to atrophy. As immigrant jobs declined along with it, “Puerto Ricans came to be seen as part of an underclass, stuck in poverty as a result of a culture of indolence and/or dependency.” This reinforced widespread notions of the “persistent poverty” of the Nuyorican experience. As such, while Puerto Ricans’ experience on the island was one of political dependency and oppression, social conditions for immigrants on the mainland saw little improvement.

Once again, Nuyorican poets call upon the lack of political or social mobility in the commonwealth to protest that found in the urban Diaspora. Latina ethnographer Ramos-Zayas presents this impoverishment as a condition of racialization, emphasizing that “Nuyorican implies double marginality based on both class and blackness.”

Perdomo agrees; his verse continues, “Hey, yo. I don’t care what you say – you Black.” Here he is told that his words are inconsequential in his insistence of pluralistic Boricua, and not exclusively black, identity. However, this also indexes the more subtle reality of double-marginality as oppressive and silencing: the voice of the poem insists, “I don’t care what you say,” presumably as a result of Perdomo’s blackness. Here he is stripped of a social voice, and therefore social agency.

Reflecting the superstructures of colonial oppression and residual postcolonial frameworks of understanding, his plight is symptomatic of greater powerlessness of the community. Lamenting this silence and marginalization, repressed and tired of negotiating an incomprehensible identity, he exasperatedly concludes:

I’m a Spic!
I’m a Nigger!
Spic! Spic! No different than a Nigger!
Neglected, rejected, oppressed and depressed

From banana boats to tenements
Street gangs to regiments…

Spic! Spic! I ain’t nooooo different than a Nigger.

By succumbing to outside power, Perdomo’s perception of social reality solidifies the effects of oppression that stem from his “otherness” and rejects the ability to assert his own Hispanic, black, or Boricua identity. Furthermore, this has been a source of oppression that spans from colonization to urbanization, “from banana boats to tenements/Street gangs to regiments.” His explicit linkage to colonization creates continuity between past Boricua and present Nuyorican crisis; however, in doing so he proves Fanon, Sloop and Ono correct by reifying Diaspora poverty in the greater Puerto Rican historical narrative of oppression. He gives up on Boricua and asserts that he is no different than the “Spic” or “Nigger,” further implying that the two categories are no different in their possession of social capital. Admitting to defeat and embracing silence, Nuyoricans have been reified into the lower classes once again by the diasporic-colonial social order of America along with other minorities. In losing, or perhaps giving up on, the voice to assert his Boricua particularities, Perdomo presents the racialization, essentialization, and marginalization of pluralistic Nuyorican identity.

YEARNING FOR HOME: ROMANTICIZING BORICUA

In response to essentializing postcolonial superstructures, Perdomo laments the Nuyorican identity crisis and loss of autonomy. This begs the discovery of unique sources of power outside of colonial frameworks; in light of its displacement and the historically-fragmented precedent of the Puerto Rican people, where can the Diaspora community actually anchor its collective identity and find a voice? Nuyorican poets once again provide the answer. Here the words of its poets take a distinct turn from mournful social commentary and instead focus on collective aspiration and myth-making as a process of constructing new frameworks of self-perception.

Interestingly enough, however, this existential discourse of the “present self” is strongly anchored in the political past of the island. Through mythic narratives of solidarity that appeal to a shared Boricua identity and islander origin, the exact cause of Nuyorican marginalization becomes the source of its salvation.
In conjunction with the impoverishment of urban Puerto Rican immigrant communities in the U.S., fluctuations in the postwar labor markets of the commonwealth island began to draw immigrants to the U.S. As a result of these circular migration patterns to and from the mainland, there arose a general sentiment of “historical discontinuity” within the Puerto Rican community. This interruptive circular migration continues to affect the Diaspora today with what Spanish-American cultural scholar Arcadio Díaz-Quiñones refers to as “la memoria rota” [the broken memory]:

Because no visas are needed for travel, migration from the island to the mainland continues to be marked by a back-and-forth movement that has strongly influenced Puerto Rican family life. This phenomenon reinforces many links to the island, and it also reflects repeated ruptures and renewals of ties, dismantling and reconstructing familial and communal networks in old and new settings.

Along with contemporary nationalist movements in Nuyorican communities, this increasing displacement of the Puerto Rican population brought about a growing desire for a place of belonging that would serve as an anchor of collective identity. In one example, Nuyorican poet Tato Laviera laments of his discontinuous yet loyal relation to the island: “i want to go back to puerto rico/but i wonder if my kink could live/in ponce, mayagüez and carolina.” Situating himself in a state of transient belonging between the island and the Diaspora, his desire to return to the homeland is halted by reservations of the “kink” of Nuyorican urbanity and diasporic displacement. Realistically, Laviera does not desire to physically return, as his experience is widely different from that of the island; instead, his romanticization of the homeland represents the larger desire of the Nuyorican community for a cohesive politics of national belonging that would ultimately repair its rifts.

The reparation of la memoria rota, however, requires its “reimagination” into a usable social artifact that enables its community to “modify the content and character of the tradition” whence they came. Similarly, Ramos-Zayas comments that especially in the Diaspora the construction of Puerto Rican identity requires “a collective construction of a glorified past, or a mythical history that will unite people in a national community.” In juxtaposition with their present conditions of fragmentation and oppression in the Diaspora, Nuyorican poets construct their community’s continuity with the island through romantic recounts of a pre-colonial past and appeals to ancestral roots, empowering the island and Boricua origin to a status of utopic myth.

Conceptualizing Boricua identity as an anchor in space and time, la isla serves as a concrete symbol of collectively-imagined Diaspora yearning for both a community and a homeland. In her hip-hop poetry verse, Nuyorican poet and Latina activist Caridad de la Luz asserts that the schism between urbanity and a romantic conception of Puerto Rico’s past go hand in hand:

Eatin snowflakes at tropical pit stops
This place we forgot
The puddles of our hearts flood out in large amounts
Come drink for all the natives
Look around we all related
Peace and love so underrated
So the patrons and me we get lost singing songs of la isla bonita [the beautiful island]
Here we’re all Boricua

Caridad juxtaposes the “snowflakes” of New York and the tropical paradise of Puerto Rico, but at the same time defines the island’s presence within New York. Caridad’s emphasis on “we” indexes community; therefore, it is through shared imagination and collectivization that Nuyoricans fuse their urban physicality and their Boricua heritage. By beckoning community members to a specific location, to “come” and reminisce of “la isla bonita,” the romantic social imaginary “carried in [the] images, stories, and legends,” of the racial paradise begins to crystallize. Caridad’s perception of the Nuyorican Diaspora relegates the island to a mythical cornerstone of love and family; within her community of “related” Boricua brethren, collective re-imagination forges a deep emotional connection to a shared utopic past and ancestry, where “here, we’re all Boricua.”

Caridad and Laviera’s narratives reinforce that “in literature written by Puerto Ricans, and other diasporic, displaced and marginalized peoples in the United States, there is a recurring nostalgia for a ‘home’ that is the island, and a past golden age that never was, a nostalgia that eludes exclusion, power relations, and difference.” Accordingly, Caridad presents an alternative vision of Puerto Rico as a utopia in which neither Perdomo’s racialized identity nor Laviera’s...
“kink” are constantly called into question. In contrast to the essentializing strictures of the white-Other racial dichotomy of the Nuyorican experience, the spectrum of colloquial racial categorizations on the island between Taíno, African, and Spanish races have come to be romanticized in recollections of the island. This so-called “myth of racial democracy” 43 furthermore promotes the notion of mutual understanding in place of marginalization. While this vision stretches the truth, ignoring the residual postcolonial racism that still exists on the island, 44 the romanticization of the island as a “racial paradise” 45 and its elevation to mythic status presents an answer, or at least a refuge, to the immigrant’s marginalization. The ability of Diaspora myth-makers to construct this narrative of unquestioned belonging to a homeland is central to the crystallization of collective Nuyorican culture.

As Caridad sings, ancestral ties to the island take great weight in constructing transgenerational identity and national loyalty. Renowned social scientist Benedict Anderson further postulates that “every successful revolution has defined itself in national terms…and, in so doing, has defined itself firmly in a territorial and social space inherited from the prerevolutionary past.” 46 In the Nuyorican community, maintaining cultural practices and family ties, as well as reclaiming the referent “Boricua,” specifically “reinforce cultural ties and reaffirm ancient roots” for Puerto Rican immigrants. 47 Nuyorican poets reify this cross-cultural dialogue through rhetoric. Through the active discursive preservation of ancestral ties in their poetry, Nuyoricans relegate the past of the island and its inhabitants to a protective, inspiring, and mythic presence in issues of current social debate.

Summoned into new contexts of contemporary urban expression, ancestral support evident in the discourse of revolution creates cross-generational solidarity and further identification with a shared Boricua origin. As Ramos-Zayas affirms, the identity “Boricua” peripherally references a 20th century nationalist militant force known as the Puerto Rican Popular Army. 48 These struggles for independence, therefore, are ingrained in Boricua identity; through apostrophe to this ancestral spirit of anti-colonial revolution, Morales reinterprets their fight for political autonomy in the context of Nuyorican social inequality. In his piece outlining the “Rebirth of New Rican” 49 Ed Morales constructs an address of thanks to a deceased Boricua icon:

I knew you were passing a living tradition on to me
“We are a deep, dark story,” you groaned. “Our people are a secret unto themselves.”

Eddie they might think you’re crazy but you taught me
What the New Rican destiny will be
Five centuries of miscegenation finally set free
The blood of time-traveling espiritistas
[spiritualists] and Yoruban existencialistas
[existentialists]
Los moros que no se han matado and the
Borinquen aesthetic comiendo bacalao [the Moors who haven’t been killed and the Borinquen aesthetic eating bacalao (fish)]

Young Lord agitator, Central Park acid dealer,
Joseph Campbell revisionist, phony plebisite exorcist!
You held on so tightly to our belief in magic, in simultaneous eternal time

You made me believe that our culture is the future, that our thoughts don’t proceed in straight lines,

That we can take back control of our lives, that we are no longer colonial subjects 50

Morales begins with his debt to the ancestors; by “passing a living tradition” on to the Nuyorican generation, and referencing their Moorish and Borinquen racial plurality, Morales establishes commonality with the anti-colonial resistance of Puerto Rican predecessors. He then empowers his people’s precedent of revolution; indexing the “Young Lord agitator” as a revolutionary in the face of colonial officials, or “Lords,” he asserts that as a result of ancestral solidarity and shared culture, “we are no longer colonial subjects.” Furthermore, the theme of myth resurfaces in Morales’ appeal to a shared “belief in magic, in simultaneous eternal time” that connects the Nuyorican to his ancestor. Continuing across boundaries of time and space, revolution and empowerment by the ones who came before is a theme of enduring hope and nationalist struggle for the Boricua people. As a people who have constantly battled oppressors, Nuyorican poets elevate the power of their Boricua nationalist heritage to construct a continuity of experience in this past, re-imagining the island as a space of solidarity and transforming this rhetoric of oppression into one of hope and unity.
POSTCOLONIAL NEONATIONALISM: RECLAIMING NUYORICO

While the presence of a shared romantic social imaginary transcends Nuyorican fragmentation, where do its social indicators reside? These “mythic narratives” achieve social momentum in their ability to connect with present conditions of nationalism and revolution in the Diaspora; rather, “not as a return to the ‘origins of the nation’ or to recover ‘prophetic voices,’ but as a project of modernity – a look back that seemed to correspond in the present…to a search for reforms of a liberal-democratic nature.” As a means and not merely an end for constructing present reformative thought, the re-imagination of a shared past allows new forms of Nuyorican nationalism to take place.

Expressed earlier, as a U.S. colony that was never fully granted autonomy nor integrated into an overseeing national politics, accordingly Puerto Ricans have attempted since the onset of the twentieth century to reconcile residual traces of colonization. Through investigation of that shared past, nationalists hoped, one could emerge with an historical-based identity that would construct the “authentic” Puerto Rican nationality; however, in practice the conceptualization of this so-called “authenticity” in the Diaspora proves problematic. With neither an anchor of shared ethnic origin nor fixed, autonomous political boundaries, conceptualizations that attempt to reconcile Puerto Rican and Nuyorican national identity turn to alternate determinants.

In spite of Puerto Rico’s fragmentation across ethnic, linguistic, and island boundaries, nationalists in the U.S. and on the island have managed to synergize their understanding, says Ayala, of “Puerto Rico [as] an emergent example of cultural nations: a feeling of nationhood that has not translated into a desire for state formation and political independence, a feeling of collective belonging that spans two territories, the island and the United States.” National identity therefore does not have to be politically autonomous; in light of its transnational fragmentation, constructions of Puerto Rican national identity are more appropriately considered from within the “cultural nationalist” camp, in which the nation is assessed as a “cultural unit” outside the political boundaries of the state. In other words, this pluralistic consideration of national identity, in the case of Puerto Rico, accommodates a more particular perspective outside of the ideologies of colonialism and immigration in Puerto Rican history.

Offering a solution to this postcolonial narrative and the call for cultural nationalism, the “neonationalist” Nuyorican movement came to prominence in the 1980’s and 1990’s. Neonationalism’s embrace of the island’s past independence movements, as well as its “vindication of hybridity and its rejection of essentialist notions of identity,” heralded a “newfound pride in being Puerto Rican, from the [Popular Democratic Party’s] anti-statehood emphasis on identity to national motifs in commercials and pop music lyrics.” Drawing power from the Civil Rights movements and other socio-cultural revolutions of the 1960s, Nuyorican artists, poets, and activists represented the forefront of the movement’s objective of cultural empowerment in the Diaspora. Finding refuge of expression in new contemporary urban media, such as the Nuyorican Poets’ Café, second and third-generation artists set upon defining what it meant to be Nuyorican at the turn of the 20th century.

The root of neonationalist narratives produced by these “myth-making intellectuals” resides in a deeply-seated politics of cultural and individual autonomy. Reflecting postcolonial theorist bell hooks’ notion of “marginality as site of resistance,” neonational discourse embraces the distinctiveness of Boricua hybridity in “a tendency to celebrate affirmation of Puerto Rican identity as a liberating, empowering expression in the face of colonial domination.” The neonational definition of racial ambiguity situates its aims between marginalization and the racial paradise; while hybridity need not be oppressive, it is not absent nor invisible, either. As such, the inability of Nuyoricans to fit into mainstream bureaucratic classification in the U.S. and the practical irrelevance of the racial democracy mandates that neonational Nuyorican poetry favor a more empowering view of Boricua racial ambiguity. In his piece “Rebirth of New Rican,” fellow poet Ed Morales constructs a distinct Boricua identity of liberation:

Freelinguageing from being aquí o allá, here, there, everywhere
Mixed race is the place
It feels good to be neither
It’s a relief to deny racial purity
We’re amused as America slowly comes to see
The beauty of negritude and the Native American attitude
We’ve been living it day-to-day since 1492.
In contrast to Perdomo’s discourse of subjugation, here Morales elevates Boricua racial identity to a source of power. Morales rejects “racial purity,” as he asserts, the notion of unified race is complex and therefore irrelevant as a social measure of identity. Rhetorical scholars Calafell and Delgado agree that “the prevalence of mestizaje and hybridity makes anything other than strategic essentialism an unproductive approach.”65 This “strategic essentialism” is the crux of neonationalism; Morales reclaims control of hegemonic discourse by “denying” its presence in the “New Rican” identity, thereby regaining the voice that Perdomo’s “Nigger-Reecan Blues” forfeits.

Furthermore, in dismissing ethnocentric social theory, Morales counterintuitively unites and empowers Boricua experience, “freed us from being...here, there, everywhere;” conversely, “mixed race is the place.” By constructing conflicting racial identity as a location in space, Morales conjures into being a cornerstone of identity that rejects essentialism and harnesses Boricua identity into a shared state of being. Finally, Morales’ conception of shared confusion, plurality, and irreconcilable difference become the unifying threads of Boricua, and therefore Nuyorican, identity. As such, Morales’ poetry calls for a community-wide embrace of individual diversity as the key to solidarity, and ultimately social revolution; by rejecting bureaucratic categorization and restrictive “racial purity,” Puerto Ricans have the power to escape subjugation and embrace “miscegenation” and the “beauty” of mixed race. As Tato Laviera asserts of this pluralism, “you can call me many things, but you gotta call me something.”64 From this communal diversity rises a voice that must be named; that must be addressed, that cannot be silenced or ignored.

Morales further presents their power as a population in the ability to subvert bureaucratic, and historically imperial, control through a common identity. Referencing colonial occupation dating back to 1492, Morales’ rejection of bureaucratic racialization liberates Boricua from the same marginalization that Perdomo laments, simultaneously relying upon those mythic narratives of historical power. As Morales describes, “It’s a relief to deny racial purity/ We’re amused as America slowly comes to see/The beauty of negritude and the Native American attitude.”65 Embracing Nuyorican “attitude” grounded in blackness, Otherness, and the “Native American” islander origin, Morales sees the dismissal of race as cathartic, bemusing, and ultimately necessary in the Diaspora. Arguably, the individuality of this identity is the freedom and solidarity that Puerto Ricans as a group have been missing all along. Uniting present condition with past myth, neonationalism creates a socially-empowering rhetoric of plurality that subverts the hegemonic superstructure and repairs the internal rifts of a fragmented people.

THE NUYORICAN POETS CAFÉ: SPEAKING NUYSORICO

Through the resonance of these themes within the Nuyorican Poets Café, a distinct yet cohesive solidarity results between artists, audience and community. Nuyorican artists, in rejecting a mainstream society that demands absolute categories of identity, have embraced their own politics of cultural nationalism, strategic essentialism, and neonationalism, choosing instead to celebrate the amorphous definition of the Puerto Rican self. This does not imply, however, an unstable or waning culture; as Bruner writes, the answer lies in “a politics of difference,” in which a cohesive identity “does not then imagine that all conflict should be resolved. There will always be groups [who are] forced to the margins. What it hopes for, however, is the fluidity of positions of power; it hopes to encourage the proliferation of voices.”66

The Nuyorican Poets Café offers that opportunity to voice multiple narratives; it is an investigative space in which the shared outcome is a constant creation of new meaning through the words of its poets. In the Café, the notions of performance and collective re-imagination go hand-in-hand: “Perhaps instead of thinking of identity as an already accomplished fact, which the new cultural practices then represent, we should think, instead, of identity as a ‘production’, which is never complete, always in process, and always constituted within, not outside, representation.”67 Therefore, the embrace of the individual who creates this production, and thus the artist, is key to the revolution of the people. The Nuyorican Poets Café serves as a dialogical metonymy of Boricua identity; a space of chaotic solidarity that resides in the identity of each of its artists and community members, their communitarian dialogue comes to define its pluralistic existence as much as it does theirs. Bridging the disjoint between the voice of its poets and the voice of the politic, the power of the Café creates continuity across the self and the community, the immigrant and the homeland to sustain that dialogue and construct an authentic national identity of the many rooted in the one.
Despite incomprehensible and nonnegotiable ethnic, multilingual, and individual diversity, Nuyorican poets succeed in constructing a meta-discourse of present and past struggles that unite their audience with a common experience. Carried by the words of its poets, within the Nuyorican Poets Café this identity is translated into a shared dialogue of oppression in the Diaspora, the empowerment and cohesion found in past myth, and their intersection in the embrace of neonational power. In Nuyorican performance, artists affirm:

…that our culture is the future, that our thoughts don’t proceed in straight lines,
That we can take back control of our lives, that we are no longer colonial subjects
That to be Puerto Rican is to be fuckin crazy
That the weapon that’s going to win is right here.
The revolution is right here, man.
The groove that’s in our hearts. 68

To be Nuyorican is to be Boricua; it is to be confused, marginalized, isolated, and even “fuckin crazy”; but, by becoming a part of the Café’s space of solidarity, revolution and cultural reclamation, it is also to belong to a transnational, even supernational, community united by this exact experience. The Nuyorican Poets Café emanates that “groove”; the conversations woven by Nuyorican poets at the turn of the twenty-first century transcend urban diversity to craft one intimate community’s cultural resurrection and herald its social empowerment, converting diversity into power and displacement into community.

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ENDNOTES

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15. Ibid., 180.


21. Ibid.

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55. Ayala and Bernabe, Puerto Rico in the American Century: A History since 1898, 316.

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65. Ibid., 99.


68. Algarín and Holman, Aloud: Voices from the Nuyorican Poets Cafe, 98.
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China and Mexico: Convergence in the 21st Century

by SCOTT D. ODELL

Over the past century, China and Mexico have shared similar economic and political development paths which have led them toward economic competition today. While this convergence is generally seen as a threat to the Mexican economy, there is also great potential for a mutually-beneficial relationship between the two nations. The purpose of this article is to investigate the economic and political history of China and Mexico in order to provide useful analysis of their current relationship and predictions for the future.

Following similar revolutions in 1910 in Mexico and 1911 and 1949 in China, both states gave way to single-party rule. For the remainder of the 20th century, the Partido Revolucionario Institucional (Institutional Revolutionary Party or PRI) of Mexico and the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) controlled the economic and political tides of their respective nations. In China, economic and social strategies of the CCP originally bounced back and forth between the positive results of adept leaders and the disastrous policies of Mao Zedong, leading most catastrophically to the famine of the “Great Leap Forward” from 1958 to 1960 in which 25-30 million people died. In Mexico, the PRI maintained nation-wide control by employing a corporatist model in which all sectors of the nation were linked directly to the government, while ties between the sectors were restricted. Poor planning and heavy government control of the economy led to devastating consequences, including inflation rates as high as 140 percent and the need to accept IMF loans to avoid defaulting on foreign debt in the 1980s.

In response to these failures, both countries began to liberalize their economies in the final quarter of the 20th century – China out of a desire to reverse the negative effects of the policies of the previous thirty years and Mexico in accordance with IMF mandates for the loans. Since that time, China and Mexico have undertaken drastic measures of reform in what Li calls “a simultaneous industrial, social, and economic revolution.” Particularly in terms of economics, both countries have deregulated their markets, opened to foreign trade and allowed for the privatization of government firms.

The similarities between the two nations thus led China and Mexico into parallel economic paths, resulting today in direct economic competition that especially pressures Mexico. Indeed, Domínguez reports that “[t]welve of Mexico’s twenty most important economic sectors that export to the United States face some or substantial competition from Chinese exporters” and that the maquiladora sector lost 250,000 jobs to China between 2000 and 2004 alone.

Of course, the relationship cannot simply be described competitively. China has greatly benefited from Mexican lobbying in international bodies and considers Mexico a “strategic partner.” Mexico, too, has much to gain from China, both through large amounts of Chinese investments and trade. Indeed, according to Ellis, “[b]y 2005, China had become Mexico’s second-largest trading partner in terms of bilateral trade.” Yet both countries also face pressing internal and external issues, including Mexico’s War on Drugs and China’s overly-external model of growth. China also faces internal political unrest from individuals calling for greater human rights, violent ethnic conflict and separatist movements in the Western provinces and widespread corruption. The future relationship of China and Mexico – whether competitive, mutually beneficial or both – will have far-reaching effects in the world economy and the domestic affairs of both countries.

In this article, I will investigate the economic and political history of China and Mexico in order to provide useful analysis of their current relationship and predictions for the future. In Section I, I will compare government structure and transition beginning with the revolutions in both countries in the early 20th century. In section II, I will apply the political comparison of Section I to the economic development of both countries during the same period. Finally, in Section III, I will discuss how the political and economic development of the two countries has ultimately led them on a path to convergence today; I will examine the challenges and opportunities of the relationship as well as possibilities for the future.
SECTION I: COMPARISON OF GOVERNMENT STRUCTURE AND TRANSITION

The government structures of China and Mexico through the majority of the 20th century have been strikingly similar. Both underwent revolutions in the beginning of the century, overthrowing deeply entrenched powers and enacting more liberal ideals. The creation of what is today known as the PRI in Mexico in 1929 and the overthrow of the Nationalist Party by the CCP in 1949 placed similar authoritarian parties in control of both nations that would rule for the remainder of the century. In the late 1990s, however, Mexican governance began to diverge greatly from that of China, and the PRI allowed for completely free and fair elections for the first time in the year 2000. In this section, I will analyze the similarities and differences between the governance of China and Mexico since the 1910 and 1911 revolutions.

Comparing the Revolutions

At the turn of the 20th century, both China and Mexico found themselves beneath the strain of entrenched authoritarian rule. China was governed by the Qing Dynasty, the last remnants of the imperial system. Mexico was under the control of Porfirio Diaz – a political powerhouse that ran the federal government for a period of 35 years. But in 1910, Mexicans revolted throughout the country, while just a year later, revolution commenced in China.

In his book entitled From Revolution to Reform: A Comparative Study of China and Mexico, He Li discusses the similarities and differences of the Chinese and Mexican revolutions and analyzes their results. In terms of differences, Mexico is a much less populous country and its colonial history created a far different economic environment than the relatively closed China. Perhaps most importantly, the Chinese revolution represented simply a change in political power, while the Mexican revolution forced political change and power shifts between social classes. Yet in terms of similarities, the revolutions both took place in largely agriculturally-based societies, resulted in the quick overthrow of the entrenched rulers and led eventually to the single-party rule of the CCP and PRI.

Additionally, both revolutions resulted in broad political structure changes – at least in theory. In 1917, Mexico adopted what Li calls “the most socially advanced constitution of its time,” including eight-hour work-day limits and mandates for paid maternity leave. In China, the revolution ended 2,000 years of monarchic rule and prepared the way for the first republic in Asian history, complete with plans for rule by elections.

Unfortunately, these lofty ideals were threatened by the violent aftermath of the revolutions as warlords threw both countries into regional and local conflicts. Ultimately, Mexico achieved political and social stability much earlier than China. Li attributes this in large part to agrarian reform which took place in Mexico as part of the revolution, thus addressing issues of the peasant class. In China, on the other hand, peasant concerns would not be brought to the forefront until the Communist Revolution of 1949.

Between the commencement of the Mexican revolution in 1910 and the eventual formation of the PRI in 1929, the Mexican government passed through many hands in a series of violent political upsets. By creating the PRI, Mexican president Plutarco Elías Calles hoped to unite the disparate revolutionary factions under one banner, thus ending the violence and creating a means for political expression within the party structure. Calles controlled the political machine through various short-term presidents until he was stripped of control and exiled by President Lázaro Cárdenas in 1934.

It was Cárdenas who ultimately entrenched complete nation-wide control of the PRI during his presidency by adopting the policy of Mexican corporatism. As shown in Figure 1, the policy divided the nation into four distinct sectors and placed party leaders at their head. The four sectors included the agricultural or peasant sector, the labor sector, the military sector and the popular or middle-class sector. Each sector communicated directly

![FIGURE 1: The Mexican Corporatist Model.](image)

Created by President Lázaro Cárdenas, the Corporatist model tied all sectors of the country directly to PRI leadership, thus extending party power and preventing dangerous sector coalitions.
with party leadership while the sectors themselves remained separated, thus placing all power in the hands of the party and preventing potential revolutionary coalitions. This corporatist structure became an important force in the party and helped to entrench and maintain the power of the PRI.

Similar to the PRI, the CCP gained its roots in the Chinese revolution of 1911. The Koumintang, or the Chinese Nationalist Party (KMT), had played a major role in the new republic following the revolution. In the mid-1920s, under the leadership of Chiang Kai-shek, the party eventually overtook the warlords and brought China under nationalist control with the help of the recently-formed CCP. Yet in 1927, the Nationalist Party turned against the Communist Party, forcing them into hiding. Over the next nine years, the KMT waged war in an effort to stem the rising support of the CCP, only ceasing its efforts in 1936 to unite with the CCP to battle against Japanese invasion.

According to the Encyclopedia Britannica, the CCP greatly expanded its base during the war with Japan through a “workable political program of alliance between peasants, workers, the middle class, and small capitalists.” The civil war recommenced in 1946 after the defeat of the Japanese in World War II. The CCP’s land reform initiatives provided ever-wider support from the peasant population of the country, leading to the eventual retreat of the Nationalist Party to Taiwan in 1949. Finally, the Chinese Communist Party took control of the nation and officially founded the People’s Republic of China.

Through similar appeals to broad-based peasant populations, China’s CCP and Mexico’s PRI gained widespread control of their respective countries in the aftermath of what Li calls “two of the most important revolutions in the 20th century.” These similar paths to power and support led the PRI and the CCP in similar paths of economic and social governance through the remainder of the century.

**Comparison of the PRI and the CCP**

From their rise to power through the end of the 20th century, the PRI and the CCP have exercised authoritarian control over their respective nations. Many similarities exist between the two parties, but also many differences. Writing in the late 1990s – just before the PRI allowed free and fair elections in 2000, Lindau and Cheek analyzed the similarities and differences of the parties and the political environments in China and Mexico that helped them maintain their power. To summarize their findings, for the majority of the 20th century, both the PRI and the CCP greatly limited democratic expression in their respective nations through authoritarian rule. The political culture of each nation provided an important basis for their legitimacy by encouraging robust central power. Yet the parties differed in that the CCP depended on a strong Marxist ideology while the PRI was founded more on political practicality. The political environments of the two parties also provided evidence of differences through a more negative view of liberalism in China and a greater propensity for democracy in Mexico.

Yet Lindau and Cheek also argue that the CCP of the future could become very similar to the corporatist structure of the PRI, particularly relating to the ideological differences cited above. Indeed, as China moved away from Maoist ideologies under Deng Xiaoping, like the PRI, the “CCP has come to offer [an]…ideologically amorphous political and economic program that prevents the intensification and expression of ideological difference by placating distinct groups who have each gotten a cut of the economic pie.”

Perhaps the most striking example of the authoritarian similarities of the two parties is their parallel responses to Mexico’s Tlatelolco Protest of 1968 and China’s Tiananmen Square Protest of 1989. In 1968, the PRI was preparing to present Mexico to the world community by hosting the Summer Olympics. In response, students in Mexico City who were, according to Skidmore, Smith and Green, “upset at the idea that the government might succeed in gaining international respectability” staged protests beginning in July. Confrontation simmered between the government and students until October 2, when troops violently attacked protestors in the Tlatelolco sector of the city, killing hundreds. The PRI succeeded in squelching the protests, but both the nation and the international community were shocked. Nevertheless, the Olympics continued as scheduled. According to Skidmore, Smith and Green, the massacre elicited little vocal response from the PRI – “There was no inquiry, no convincing explanation from the military or civilian authorities responsible for the slaughter.”

In a markedly similar situation, students across China began calling for greater human rights and democracy in the country in the late 1980s. The movement turned into widespread protest in 1989, with particularly strong efforts in Beijing, as approximately one million protestors...
gathered in Tiananmen Square. Toward the end of June, the CCP attempted to send soldiers into the city but was prevented by protestors. Finally, on June 3 and 4, military troops forced their way into Beijing, shooting into the crowd in the process. The Chinese government admits to only 241 deaths and 7,000 wounded in what is now called a massacre, though the numbers were probably far higher. In response to the violence, protestors agreed to leave the Square. As in Tlatelolco, the CCP was successful in squelching protest and maintaining its power. The CCP’s response to the violence was also similar to the PRI’s response to Tlatelolco – the Party downplayed the significance of the event and to this day, references to the protest in China have been largely silenced. Following the massacre, the international community strongly criticized China’s handling of the situation and the United States even imposed sanctions on the country. The similar responses to protests by the CCP and the PRI provided a stark demonstration of the parties’ commitment to maintain authority in their respective nations.

Near the end of the 20th century, however, the PRI began to display a completely different attitude toward its supremacy in Mexico. As I will discuss in the next section, over the past two decades, China and Mexico have undergone drastic economic reform. Democratic reforms followed closely on the heels of this economic reform in Mexico. Following economic woes in the late 1980s, the PRI began to face serious political opposition. In response, the party improved transparency of its selection of a presidential candidate, who won the election with just 50.3 percent of the vote. In the ensuing years, opposition parties began to win local offices throughout the nation. Finally, in the year 2000, President Ernesto Zedillo Ponce de León broke party tradition and refused to name a successor. The party subsequently organized a primary election to field a candidate against politicians from the two primary opposition parties: Vicente Fox from the Partido Acción Nacional (National Action Party, or PAN) and Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas from the Partido de la Revolución Democrática (Party of the Democratic Revolution or PRD). For the first time since its inception in 1929, the PRI lost the election, and Vicente Fox became president of the United Mexican States.  

It is important to note that the transition to democracy in Mexico has not been easy. Indeed, in an earlier essay entitled “Mexican Democracy: In Search of Stability,” I argued that mass protests and congressional upheaval following the most recent presidential election in 2006 indicated constitutional shortcomings and democratic instability in the country. Despite these challenges, however, Mexico’s transition to democracy represents an important step which could provide great advantages to the nation in the future. I will discuss this further in Section III.

In contrast to Mexico’s action of opening up politically on the heels of doing so economically, the CCP strictly maintains its authoritarian rule in China despite its economic liberalization. Indeed, writing shortly after the 2000 election in Mexico, Li asserted that “[p]olitical stability is the central [characteristic] of China’s authoritarian regime,” and that “China is still far from establishing [a] democratic system. The CCP is determined to crush any attempts to form an organized opposition.” A December 2009 article published in The Economist suggests that the situation is not much different today. The article indicates that though Hu Jintao – current General Secretary of the CCP – often speaks of the need for democracy within the party, his actions suggest that he “is as fearful of giving a voice to the party as he is of giving one to the country.” The article predicts that when Hu steps down in 2012, his successor “will be decided not by the ballot box but by backroom deals between factions.”

In contrast to Mexico’s action of opening up politically on the heels of doing so economically, the CCP strictly maintains its authoritarian rule in China despite its economic liberalization.
Conclusion

The revolutions of China and Mexico in the early 20th century started the two nations on similar political paths. Following periods of internal conflict, governance came under the single-party authoritarian rule of the CCP in China and the PRI in Mexico. While the two parties differed in many ways, their heavy control of all sectors of the nation—including the economy—continued to lead them in similar paths. When both began to liberalize economically toward the end of the 20th century, however, democracy followed quickly in Mexico but remained distant in China. Today, Mexico has opened itself completely to democracy, while China remains under the authoritarian single-party rule of the CCP. An understanding of these similarities and differences in governance provides an important background for a complete analysis of the economic interactions of China and Mexico, which I will address in the following section.

SECTION II: ECONOMIC COMPARISON

Upon their respective rises to power, the PRI and the CCP quickly enacted economic policy changes. Efforts to solidify economic growth would come to define the political movements of both parties to the present day. Both China and Mexico experienced periods of high growth as well as sharp declines before their eventual liberalization, or "opening up," in the final quarter of the 20th century. In more recent years, both nations have experienced rapid growth due in large part to exports to the developed world. However, as I will show in Section III, they also face serious economic challenges both internally and externally. Particularly for Mexico, one of the most important of these challenges is competition with China. In this section, I will describe the economic efforts of China and Mexico since the rise of the CCP and the PRI.

Table 1 provides a summary of major economic events in the two states prior to the opening up of the final quarter of the 20th Century. In general, China fluctuated between positive growth due to sound economic policies and the disastrous consequences of Mao Zedong's radical policies until his death in 1976. Upon assuming leadership in 1978, Deng Xiaoping guided the nation into a new period of economic liberalization. In Mexico, monetary and fiscal policies caused high inflation and the accrual of heavy economic debt. This culminated in a near loan default in 1982, forcing the government

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>China</th>
<th>Mexico</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1949</td>
<td>War with Japan leaves economy in tatters. Hyperinflation due to payment of war debts by printing currency. CCP enacts Soviet-style policies.</td>
<td>1938 Foreign oil companies expropriated to form PEMEX.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1956-57</td>
<td>The Hundred Flowers: Liberalization movement. Strong backlash from Mao leads to the Great Leap Forward.</td>
<td>1945 300,000 Mexican workers in the U.S. through agreement between the nations' presidents to fill gap left by American workers serving in WWII.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1958-60</td>
<td>Great Leap Forward: Mao forces complete communication; initial economic gains give way to famine: 25-30 million deaths and 30 million postponed births due to malnutrition.</td>
<td>Post-war era Increase of government involvement by devaluing exchange rates; the government owned 9 of the 10 largest firms in 1970.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1961-69</td>
<td>Disaster relief and transition to heavy industrialization projects.</td>
<td>1973-1987 Inflation due to government spending and devaluation of the peso reaches 20% and continues to rise into the next decade, reaching a peak of 140% in 1987.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1970-76</td>
<td>Attempts to reassert policies of the Great Leap Forward; Zhou Enlai finally enacts more moderate policies.</td>
<td>1980-81 Oil discovered, government makes large financial commitments. Oil prices plummet in 1981.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1976-78</td>
<td>Mao dies in 1976; new leaders push &quot;Great Leap Outward,&quot; selling oil to build economy. Insufficient oil found; Deng Xiaoping enters the scene and moves toward liberalization.</td>
<td>1982 Government nears default on $80 billion of foreign debt; forced to borrow from the IMF and U.S., with conditionality of economic liberalization.</td>
</tr>
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TABLE 1: Summary of economic policies and events in China and Mexico prior to "Opening Up"
of state-owned companies and terminated government subsidies on food and public utilities. As part of the second stage, Mexico completed accession to the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) – the precursor of the World Trade Organization (WTO) in 1986. Though these actions did not immediately solve the issues of high inflation and public debt, with the help of the United States and government development projects, inflation slowed and GDP grew by 3.1 percent.\textsuperscript{37}

The most important economic policy for Mexico during this period was the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) with Canada and the United States, which commenced in 1994. Though trade barriers were low between the United States and Mexico even before NAFTA, the agreement cleared the way for even greater trade and especially American investment in Mexico. Between 1993 and 2000, trade between the two countries grew by 240 percent and Mexico became the second largest trading partner with the U.S. after Canada. By the economic crisis of 2008-2009, 80 percent of Mexican exports were sent to the United States.\textsuperscript{38}

As shown in Figure 2 above, the post-NAFTA era had mixed results in terms of GDP growth for Mexico.

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{gdp_graph.png}
\caption{GDP Growth Rates of China and Mexico. China’s line prior to Mao’s death in 1976 shows the up-and-down effect of the radical policies enacted during the period, particularly the catastrophic effects of the “Great Leap Forward” on the far left side of the graph.}
\end{figure}
The sharp decline in 1995 occurred as foreign investors suddenly became nervous of the overvaluation of the peso and withdrew vast amounts of money from the country. Growth was quickly restored, however, as the government devalued the peso and the United States helped to shore up foreign debt. The most worrisome decline of the graph commenced in the year 2000. This portion represents the danger of overdependence on the U.S. market, as economic decline there dragged down the Mexican economy. When the U.S. market is healthy, so is Mexico, but when the U.S. economy declines, so does Mexico’s. This rang particularly true during the most recent economic crisis, as The Economist reported a 9.7 percent decline in Mexican GDP through the first half of 2009. Indeed, the current U.S. economic crisis is one of the greatest dangers facing both Mexico and China.

Figure 3 compares exports as a share of GDP in China, Mexico and the United States, highlighting the export-oriented focus that China and Mexico have shared beginning in the last quarter of the 20th century. But while Mexico was forced to liberalize its economy by the IMF loan conditions, China moved carefully toward economic liberalization, following Deng Xiaoping’s oft-quoted strategy of “crossing the river by groping for stones.”

China’s economic liberalization can be broken into two primary periods: phase one, from 1978 to 1992 and phase two, from 1993 to the present. The most important element of phase one was the implementation of a dual-track economy, in which both agricultural and industrial producers were required to give a set percentage of their output to the government but could sell the remainder at market prices and keep the profits. The purpose of this plan was to gradually implement market liberalization while still meeting the government needs left over from the previous era. In addition to the dual-track system, the government set up four special economic zones to encourage foreign investment. According to Naughton, by allowing more liberal policies in the zones to encourage investment, the government “permitted incremental progress within a rigid system.” In other words, the zones, which would increase in number over the coming years, followed the cautious pattern of Chinese liberalization, allowing leaders to check progress and not overwhelm the entire system with widespread reform.

Other important elements of reform during the first phase included a diminished government presence in the industrial sector, allowing new start-up firms to enter

**FIGURE 3: Exports as a Percentage of GDP for China, Mexico and the United States.** This graph shows the rapid increase in Mexican and Chinese exports beginning in the final quarter of the 20th century, demonstrating the liberalization strategies of both countries.
the market and the movement of government-owned companies to market forces, thus improving profitability. Additionally, high national savings rates supported major investments in the economy. These reforms were largely successful, and – as part of the plan – the dual track system began to fade itself out, as large government materials allocations gradually transitioned to private sales governed by market forces. This success paved the way for greater liberalization in the second phase of reform, beginning in 1993.

The second phase of economic development began following a visit of Deng Xiaoping to the Special Economic Zones. Lauding their success, Deng declared that “development is the only hard truth…It doesn’t matter if policies are labeled socialist or capitalist, so long as they foster development.” Accordingly, the next phase of development, beginning in 1993, promoted more widespread liberalization and economic experiments. Key movements of this period included the complete elimination of the dual-track system as market distribution completed its gradual introduction. Additionally, the government reorganized central/local relations and created a much-needed tax system. The government also took on a more regulatory rather than managerial approach to economic governance, most importantly in the banking system and trading sectors.

A very significant step toward liberalization occurred when China acceded to the World Trade Organization in 2001. Doing so required China, like Mexico, to cut trade restrictions and open itself more fully to the world market (Li, 65). Figure 3 demonstrates the incredible success that the policies of the two periods of reform had on Chinese trade, especially after accession to the WTO. Indeed, China currently ranks as the third-largest trader in the world. Most notably for the subject at hand, China surpassed Mexico as the 2nd largest trading partner of the U.S. in 2006.

Returning to Figure 2, the effects of post-1978 policies on Chinese GDP growth are astonishingly clear. According to Bergsten et al, “Real GDP in 2006 was about 13 times the level of 1978, when Deng Xiaoping initiated economic reforms.” Clearly, policies enacted during the final quarter of the 20th century provided great economic success for China. Yet like Mexico, China faces the challenge of overdependence on American consumption. After the European Union, the United States is China’s second largest trading partner, and due

FIGURE 4: Foreign Direct Investment in China and Mexico. Though the adoption of NAFTA in 1994 boosted FDI in Mexico, the second phase of China’s opening up has propelled China much further in this category.
to diminished American consumption as a result of the recent economic crisis, China faces serious challenges to its export-oriented model. Roach asserts that China must successfully build a domestic market in the near future in order to maintain its economic growth.51

To summarize, the similar government structures and transitions described in Section I led China and Mexico through parallel economic trials and successes during the 20th Century. In the next and final section of this article, I will analyze the current relationship between the two nations and discuss the challenges that they face in the near future.

SECTION III: ANALYSIS OF ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL CONVERGENCE

While for the majority of their history, the vastness of the Pacific Ocean has allowed China and Mexico to grow with little interference from each other, the economic and political changes described in Sections I and II have recently forced the two nations to recognize each other and the potential for economic and political competition between them. Diplomatic relations between the countries opened in 1972, and since that time, both have received presidential and other high profile visits from the other.52 But because both economies depend heavily on FDI and the export of labor-intensive goods to the developed world, they compete for the attention of international markets.

Most scholars agree that Mexico is particularly threatened by the rise of China, rather than the other way around. Figure 3 above shows that since its accession to the WTO, China has shot ahead of Mexico in the export market. Feenstra and Kee argue that simply in terms of the variety of exports, China’s expanding product presence in the U.S. market has “caused an adverse market competition effect on the export variety from Mexico.”53 Additionally, Figure 4 below shows that though NAFTA certainly boosted FDI in Mexico, the progress seems minimal compared to that of China. As cited in the introduction to this article, Mexico also faces a significant threat of losing manufacturing jobs to China. Additionally, Mexican goods struggle to compete with Chinese goods, both abroad and even domestically. In 2007, Mexico had a trade deficit with China of $8.4 billion.54

Nevertheless, the relationship between China and Mexico should not simply be described as a risk to Mexico. According to Ellis, both nations can benefit from the relationship. Already, Mexico has successfully lobbied for China to be allowed “observer status” in the Organization of American States (OAS) and supported China in its efforts to be allowed membership in the Inter-American Development Bank (IADB). Both countries could also benefit from Mexican exports of land-intensive goods. There is also the possibility for the two countries to work together on products destined for the United States, as Chinese goods could be ultimately assembled in Mexico for export to the U.S. This particular operation would be beneficial to Mexico through the creation of jobs and to China because the goods would be subject to the low tariffs required by NAFTA. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, there is a growing presence of investment exchanges between both countries, as Mexican businesses find footholds in the Chinese market and China explores major investment opportunities in Mexico.55

Clearly there is great potential for a mutually beneficial relationship between China and Mexico. Yet the question remains, would such a relationship sufficiently outweigh the detrimental effects to Mexican exports from competition with China? In addition to challenges from Chinese competition, Mexico faces the previously-mentioned internal challenge of political turmoil in the wake of its democratic transition in 2000. Perhaps most threateningly, Mexico is currently embroiled in a literal civil war led by President Felipe Calderón against the nation’s powerful drug cartels. These issues place Mexico in a particularly precarious position and make competition with China even more worrisome. Is Mexico destined to watch its manufacturing sector fall prey to the economic powerhouse across the ocean?

While the challenges facing Mexico are certainly vast, the two issues of democracy and the war on drugs actually represent strong advantages for Mexico that China currently does not possess. Mexico’s transition to democracy in 2000 resulted from the PRI’s decision to cave to pressure and allow free and fair elections in the country, as well as the diminishing of party power. This shift represents a very new effort by Mexico to confront internal problems and strive for positive change, rather
than crushing opposition as they did in response to the Tlatelolco Protests of 1968. Similarly, Calderón’s war on drug cartels, though dangerous and challenging, represents a strong initiative to confront internal issues, rather than follow the traditional course of allowing them to fester.

By contrast, though China’s economic efforts have helped to relieve many of their most serious domestic challenges – most notably, poverty – they have not addressed issues that run parallel to Mexico’s push for free elections in the 1990s and the contemporary challenge from drug cartels. Calls for democracy in China elicit similar responses today as they did 20 years ago during the Tiananmen Square uprising. Indeed, in a February 10, 2010 article, The Economist reported that China sentenced three citizens to jail for three, five and eleven years for publicly criticizing the government.56

In another article from July 2009, The Economist reported on uprisings in the Xinxiang province that pitted ethnic Uighurs against Hans. Dozens were killed and hundreds injured in the violence. It appears that rather than confronting the issues at the core of the catastrophe – racism, government restriction of religious practices, and calls for independence – the government showed its brawn and provided damage control by making hundreds of arrests and threatening executions of particularly violent protestors.57 Rather than striving to mediate the separatist movements and calls for human rights, the government harshly silences those who speak out.

Yet these efforts have failed to truly suppress those who hope for change within China. According to Goldman, as summarized by Sharma, “[C]itizenship consciousness’ is too widely spread to be easily suppressed...Even those calling for an end to the Communist Party rule and the establishment of democratic political order have become emboldened.”58 Additionally, Sharma summarizes an argument by Pei that “the lack of democratic reforms in China has led to pervasive corruption and a breakdown in political accountability.” Pei predicts that this will lead to what he calls “illiberal adaptation,” a process “in which elites limit political liberalization and democratization” because the Chinese economy is not yet sufficiently market-oriented to provide long-term economic growth and promote democratization.59

Particularly if China fails to resolve the issue of declining external demand for Chinese goods described by Roach, economic growth will slow. Even Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao called the current economic system “unstable, unbalanced, uncoordinated, and unsustainable.”60 If the CCP cannot successfully address Wen’s and Roach’s concerns, it will suddenly find itself without rapid economic growth to protect it from the increasing calls for democracy, separatist movements and the ravages of government corruption.

Thus, while Mexico’s transition to democracy and war on drug cartels have caused serious challenges for the country, the CCP’s unwillingness to perform similar actions could lead to worse consequences in China’s future. If Mexico makes it through its internal challenges with a more stable government and fewer problems of drug cartel corruption and violence, it will be in an excellent position to rake in FDI and provide a stable environment for economic growth in the future. On the other hand, the nationwide unrest that occurred in conjunction with the Tiananmen Square protests indicates that China’s continual oppression of
“dissidents” and common practice of sweeping internal problems under the rug could easily turn the currently economically-friendly environment inside out.

CONCLUSION
Over the past century, China and Mexico have experienced similar economic and political development paths. Beginning with their revolutions in 1910 and 1911, the countries eventually came under single-party authoritarian rule of the PRI in Mexico and the CCP in China for the majority of the 20th century. As a result of party-controlled economic policies following the Second World War, both countries experienced periods of economic growth but also eventual economic catastrophes. In response to these catastrophes, both China and Mexico liberalized their economies over the final quarter of the 20th century by decreasing state control and opening to the world market.

This opening up led China and Mexico into periods of economic growth. However, the similar economic paths also carried them into direct competition with each other, creating particularly worrisome results for Mexico, which is struggling to compete with Chinese exports and to attract FDI into its own borders rather than watching it head to China. There is great potential for a mutually beneficial economic relationship between the two countries, particularly through trade and cooperation of manufacturing destined for the U.S. market and from Chinese investments in the Mexican economy. However, the question remains whether Mexico’s manufacturing sector can hold up against the incredible export capacity of China.

In addition to Mexico’s challenge of competing with China economically, it faces internal struggles related to its recent transition to democracy and President Calderón’s War on Drugs. However, these very challenges represent Mexico’s propensity to face internal conflict which, if successful, will create an economically stable environment in the future. In the long run, this could create lasting economic benefits for Mexico. By contrast, though China currently maintains a powerful economic position, its continued practice of suppressing and failing to address internal issues such as government corruption, calls for greater human rights and separatist movements in its western provinces could easily lead to political violence in the future.

Though it is impossible to predict what the future will bring, it is likely that Mexico’s decision to confront its domestic issues will result in strong economic and political advantages in contrast with the potentially devastating economic and political results of China’s current unwillingness to do so.
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Reconciling Heritage and Progress:
First Language Education in the Philippine Highlands

by CARLO FELIZARDO

ABSTRACT
The question of development is a salient one in many parts of the world. In countries such as the Philippines, a large part of the answer hinges on the use of the educational system to create a more competitive labor force in a globalizing world. Development strategies within education, however, have thus far focused on increasing the use of English and Filipino while simultaneously excluding minority languages from the education system, under logic that portrays these minority languages as counterproductive to improving students’ skills in areas deemed more educationally-relevant, such as English, Filipino and mathematics. These strategies have failed to engage with statistical proof that an educational system that focuses exclusively on these two official languages has hampered the development of the very skills valued for development, particularly in areas where one or both are functionally foreign to the students who speak one or more of the myriad minority languages located in the area. Ironically, these poorer areas often have the largest strides to make in terms of student scholastic performance.

This paper argues that language rights of minorities, specifically within the realm of education, are theoretically and practically compatible with democratic rights frameworks and development strategies. It analyzes competing arguments advanced by supporters and opponents of more institutionalized, comprehensive language rights for minorities, and references the First-Language Component Bridging Program (FLC-BP) an empirical case that shows that integrating minority languages into the education system can improve minority students’ academic performance.

INTRODUCTION: EDUCATION AND THE ROAD TO PROGRESS
As a diverse, developing country, the Philippines has always sought to improve its competitiveness in the international community and to foster national cohesion. Language and education have been important as agents of change toward these goals. On the one hand, English language education has been encouraged as a means of enhancing the global viability of the Filipino workforce. This is especially important considering the country’s sizeable reliance on remittances from overseas Filipino workers (OFWs), most of whom find work in English-speaking countries like the United States, as well as on the call-center industry, which has recently become economically viable at the domestic level. The extent to which the Philippine educational system values English is clear: most education, especially in mathematics and the sciences, is taught in English, regardless of the level. On the other hand, national cohesion has also been forwarded through the development of the national language, Filipino. The choice of Tagalog as the base of the new national language was in itself controversial, as it was not the most widely spoken language when it was chosen. Nevertheless, the 1987 Constitution explicitly provides for its development, and it is almost everywhere used as a secondary medium of education alongside English. Both the language and its literature are taught to all students.

Numerous questions have been raised as to how, if at all, the use of these two languages in the education system has actually benefited the Filipinos. There have been no great strides in economic development. In particular, both academic competency and, consequently, the global economic viability of the workforce have not improved substantially as a result of the adoption of the bilingual education system. The effects (or lack thereof) of this system are most clearly seen in rural areas inhabited by indigenous peoples and language minorities, as well as in areas where schools are massively underfunded. This is not to say that the problem is not endemic to the country as a whole; progress has been slow everywhere. Some authors have even cited the stagnant “third-world” status of the country as evidence of the system’s ineffectiveness. But what has also been observed in these areas is the further decline of indigenous minority languages, many of which are yet undocumented and may hold a wealth of undiscovered linguistic knowledge. With many of their members leaving
their home communities in pursuit of a better life in urban areas and other countries, the number of speakers of these languages has decreased greatly. Many academics have condemned these government initiatives as neglectful and unproductive at best, and destructive at worst.  

An alternative model of education has been designed and experimentally run in the country's northern highlands. Utilizing local minority languages as the first medium of elementary education alongside English and Filipino, the First-Language Component Bridging Program (FLC-BP) has been introduced in a number of communities. The goals of this paper are twofold. First, it will establish a theoretical model that not only accommodates but also strongly supports the inclusion of language rights for minorities into a democratic rights framework and the educational system. Second, it seeks to illustrate the practical benefits of such inclusion, using the FLC-BP as a case study. While contending with both theoretical and pragmatic challenges to the model, the paper ultimately argues that programs such as the FLC-BP, which tangibly incorporate minority language rights, are both just and advantageous within a developmental and democratic framework, and must therefore be expanded and supported.

**A DEMOCRATIC FRAMEWORK: THE CASE FOR LANGUAGE RIGHTS**

“Most democracies provide for freedom of interference in private language use, but many are reluctant to make legal provision for promotion of language in the public sector other than the dominant language.” This stems largely from a number of persistent arguments against language rights. The first is that language rights are inherently group-based, in clear opposition to the other generally individual-based human rights. This argument, however, misses the fact that language rights “are more importantly mostly based on such fundamental rights as freedom of expression and non-discrimination,” indicating that they are not so radically different from all other rights. Having the right to education in one's native language, for example, ensures that the majority-language system does not discriminate by making it harder for minority language speakers to learn in school. Language rights are important because language enables individuals to participate in society and to have opportunities for economic success. Thus, language rights are essential to ensure equal protection and provision of many rights to everyone, minority and majority alike.

Additionally, rights that are assigned to groups already exist in society. Organizations, for example, have rights to free speech and so forth because they are groups of individuals who each have rights of their own. There is no reason to exclude minority groups from this logic.

Another argument against language rights is that of special treatment. “Group-differentiated rights are viewed far more skeptically, often hostilily, by liberal commentators. They are most often associated with particularism and the potential illiberality that may result…when one apportions rights differently between groups.” There are a number of problems with this logic. First, the perceived potential for illiberality in this case is, if anything, ridiculously low. The right of minorities, who may want to use their language beyond the private sphere in areas such as education and government, does not supersede any rights of the linguistic majority. More importantly, such rights would not be particularistic; if anything, they would act as an equalizer. Majorities already have the rights to use their languages in the public sphere, whereas minorities cannot. Giving language rights to minorities gives them what they formerly lacked in comparison to the ethnolinguistically larger groups, and in so doing remedies the preexisting lack of equality. One may go so far as to argue that language rights are essential for democratic participation. It is difficult to vote, to write to your local congressman, to understand candidate platforms, and to democratically participate in many other ways, if you do not have a strong understanding of majority languages. Insofar as this is the case, lacking the right to education in one's own language is an obstacle to authentic and accessible democracy, which should include all members of society. Thus, the government’s responsibility must be extended beyond tolerance and permission to include enablement. Any illiberality that exists does so because of the lack of minority language rights, and would be corrected by providing them; the government has an obligation to ensure this provision.

A third argument is that linguistic homogeneity is desirable in a modern nation state because it contributes to national unity. This argument has previously been used to support the creation of a national Filipino language. While national unity is indeed desirable, it should never take precedence over diversity. First, such an argument “considerably understates the possibilities of holding dual or multiple identities…and yet it is clear that many of us can and do hold multiple and complimentary identities.”
That bilingualism and multilingualism are not just possible but widespread in democratic societies like the Philippines is a clear sign that these linguistic identities are not mutually exclusive. Second, diversity itself is a cornerstone principle of democracy. The sanctity of individual identity is integral to any democratic framework and deserves protection. The desire for national unity must be reconciled with tolerance and respect of diversity in numerous spheres – including language.

The final concern of those opposed to language rights is logistics. What requirements should a language minority fulfill to be eligible for language rights? When they do fulfill these requirements, what are governments then required to give them? Documents such as the draft of the 1996 Universal Declaration of Linguistic Rights have argued for “explicit legal guarantees… for the linguistic rights,” but it remains unclear what “the extent to which nation-states will be obliged to act” will be. Some academics have pointed out the lack of any tangible, existing legal remedy to language rights violations. This argument, however, does not question the intrinsic value of language rights, meaning that states are still responsible for protecting them in the best way possible. While it is unreasonable to expect any country, the Philippines included, to perfectly protect language rights, there is no excuse for complete inaction. Additionally, the argument that no legal framework for implementing language rights exists is simply untrue. Courts and legislatures in any democratic country can be used to address these issues at the domestic level, while institutions like the Organization for Security and Cooperation (OSCE) in Europe have either been created or adapted to be able to mediate between states and language minorities regarding language rights. The OSCE has mediated conflicts involving Tatars in Ukraine and Albanians in Macedonia. Such mechanisms and organizations have been created in the past and can be created in the future. Lastly, a number of requirement schemes for providing costly and large scale language rights such as minority language education have already been proposed and implemented elsewhere, including a minimum required population for a single minority group in a specific local government unit, as has been used in Canada.

It is evident that the protection of language rights is legally and logistically feasible. Democratic governments such as the Philippines consequently have an essential responsibility to uphold these rights.

The Role of Education in Minority Language Rights

Where does education fit in the scheme of language rights? As stated earlier, education is considered an enabling right for effective democratic participation. Because of this, the Philippine government has a responsibility to provide accessibility to education for all, as enshrined in Section 1 of Article XIV of the 1987 Philippine Constitution. Additionally, the use of minority languages within the educational system is essential in both perpetuating and “marketing” minority cultures. Teaching the cultural systems and languages to children is key to preserving them for future generations. This demonstrates the value of minority languages and cultures – especially to those individuals who have left or may potentially leave their cultural groups in search of a better life. Through using and institutionalizing a language as a teaching medium, governments show that it is a viable and important vehicle of knowledge, increasing the perceived worth of said language. This is particularly key in a globalizing society so focused on economic progress that it poses a “choice of globalization” between heritage and progress, a choice that the Philippine public seems to view as legitimate. Education, meanwhile, proves that a language can both be preserved as a part of a group’s heritage and used as a means to academic and economic progress. Therefore, it is a necessary cornerstone of language rights overall.

While the FLC-BP only recently received substantial attention, a number of minority language education programs have been implemented in numerous parts of the country. The majority of these have been health education programs – understandably so, since most of the indigenous minority groups in the Philippines live in remote areas with fairly little (if any) sanitation, utilities or infrastructure. These health education programs provided materials in the vernacular languages that made it easier for health workers to connect with their target audiences; for example, health education books in the Bontoc area of the Cordillera mountains in northern Luzon were produced trilingually in the vernacular (e.g. Kankanaey, Ifugao), Filipino and English. In a number of cases, such as that of the Cotabato Manobo speakers of Sultan Kudarat province in the early 1980s and the Western Subanon speakers of the Zamboanga peninsula in the late 1980s and early 1990s, these health education programs were combined with movements to record oral literature passed in the language
and to promote adult literacy in the vernacular language as well as in Filipino.

It is easy to see why these literacy movements were successful. Prior levels of adult literacy in both groups were very low; for example, the adult literacy in Cotabato Manobo speakers before the programs were introduced was at 2%. Both groups, however, expressed an interest in learning their language in both written and oral form, as well as in learning Filipino in the interest of communicating with people outside their communities. The efforts of non-governmental organizations like the Summer Institute of Linguistics (SIL) and the Translators Association of the Philippines (TAP) combined with the willingness and motivation of the minority groups contributed to the success of these programs.

In addition to recorded literature and health education materials, a number of other educational publications have been produced. For instance, atlases were produced in the Ayta Mag-Anchi (bilingual with English) and Tagbawa languages. More technical training and materials have been offered in minority languages, such as those for pharmacy management in remote areas and efficient farming techniques for hilly terrain produced for the Western Subanons.

**FLC-BP IN ACTION: THE LUBUAGAN CASE STUDY**

Until recently, little has been done to create a model that integrates minority groups’ native languages into the formal education system. This integration is extremely important, particularly during the first few years of elementary education. It is easy to understand why; for a sizable proportion of students in the Philippines, Filipino and English are foreign languages. Students who enter an education system that teaches exclusively in these two languages are assumed to have sufficient language skills upon entry. In practice, they are expected to acquire, master and apply these languages simultaneously. The use of regional languages like Ilocano in the northern parts of the country is insufficient in preparing children for formal education, especially in remote areas where minority languages serve as vernaculars.

Forcing children...to attend schools that use a language they neither speak nor understand hinders rather than helps them to develop their potential as productive members of society because it is close to impossible for them to learn when they cannot comprehend what they hear in class.

The slow progress of minority students in learning the material may also be attributed to “the lack of opportunities for practicing the activities of speaking, listening, reading, and writing in these two languages.” Students neither understand the language of instruction, nor do they have the opportunity to practice it in real life situations. If this is the foundation for basic education, then students can be expected to either develop extremely slowly or not at all, putting them at a severe disadvantage in general and in comparison to other students in the country.

In response to this problem, the First Language Component Bridging Program (FLC-BP) was designed by a joint effort between SIL and what was then called the Department of Education, Culture and Sports (DECS), now the Department of Education (DepEd) of the Philippine Cabinet. It was originally conceptualized in 1962 and first launched in 1985 in the Hungduan School District in Ilocos province. It was later brought to the Kiangan School District, also in Ilocos province. In both of these school districts, the vernacular language, which was also used in the FLC-BP, was Tiwali Ifugao (30,000 speakers in the southern part of Ifugao Province, in Luzon, the largest island of the Philippines). A more recent case of the program – currently one of its best-known cases in academia – came a few years after, when the program was brought to the municipality of Lubuagan in neighboring Kalinga province. Lubuagan is a municipality of around 10,000 people in 1,800 households. It is largely homogenous, composed mostly of Lubuagan Kalingas. The main vernacular language in this municipality is Lubuagan Kalinga, a language spoken by 14,003 people in eastern Abra province and Kalinga province. In its current state, the language is used in all public spheres with the exception of church. The educated prefer to use English or Ilocano, though. The recent success of the Lubuagan Kalinga model, recently featured by UNESCO, has been the basis of Senate Bill 2294, passed in 2008 to “mandate the use of the mother tongue of instruction from Grades 1 to 3.”

Prior to the implementation of the program, a number of problems were observed in the municipal educational system of Lubuagan. While the public perception was that students could acquire literacy skills in English and Filipino within four months of basic schooling, a 1989 survey of the municipality showed that it took as many as four or five grades (or even more) for students to become genuinely literate. Standardized test results were dropping, highlighting the bleak reality of the situation. The use of Filipino and English as media of instruction from the beginning was
pinpointed as a major reason for this problem. The two languages were not taught in the classroom, but instead used, with the assumption that learning would ensue from “immersion,” despite the fact that this was clearly not the case.\(^{39}\) As a potential solution, the FLC-BP program was introduced to a number of teachers free of charge at the nearby Nueva Vizcaya State Institute of Technology, in neighboring Nueva Vizcaya province.\(^{40}\)

The FLC-BP seeks to improve the basic education system using the following three principles:

1. “A child’s language should be used as an instrument for teaching and learning in Grades 1 and 2.
2. “A child’s cultural model of the world should be used for helping him process perceptual information, understand concepts, and form new ones.
3. “New concepts and skills should be built on existing knowledge structures rather than bypassing them by using a rote-memorization methodology.”\(^{41}\)

The program also emphasizes the use of three methods of “bridging” in the learning process. First, trilingual materials use implicit bridging, or teaching the same concepts three times per day in the proper language sequence (first language-Filipino-English) and explicit bridging, or pointing out differences (concepts, vocabulary and grammar) between the three languages. Second, the vernacular is used in conjunction with Filipino and English to convey that ideas can be represented in numerous ways (languages). Finally, language decoding skills, including the recognition of phonetic and lexical similarities among the vast majority of Philippine languages, are taught and used.\(^{42}\) Thus, the system creates a more effective model of learning, beginning with what the students know best (their vernacular) and developing their capacities in other languages using their own as a base.

The FLC-BP was experimentally run starting in 1998 for Grade 1-3 students in three schools in Lubuagan. Control groups maintained the usual class schedule that included only English and Filipino classes. For experimental groups, the class day was divided into three sections: four and a half hours of instruction in Lubuagan Kalinga, followed by one hour each of Filipino and English. The Lubuagan Kalinga section included classes in language development (grammar, vocabulary), reading, writing, indigenous cultural studies (arts, music, and literature), mathematics, science, and social science. The Filipino section began with a focus on listening fluency and a grammatical comparison between Lubuagan Kalinga and Filipino, and continued on to more formal studies of grammar as well as reading later during the school year. The English section followed a similar pattern. Teaching materials were provided in each language, including visual aids and literary pieces for listening and reading – although teachers were allowed and encouraged to be creative in producing their own resources for classroom use.\(^{43}\)

Understandably, the transition into the program was not without difficulty. Since Lubuagan Kalinga is spoken in one of the poorer parts of the country, an important issue was the lack of books and other supplies. This is a general problem throughout the Philippines, but the need for specialized materials created an extra burden. However, more have since been produced and are being developed and printed.\(^{44}\) Another interesting problem was the attitudes of the children’s parents. They assumed that less time spent learning in the usual languages of instruction – especially English – would result in lower test scores and slower development of language skills.\(^{45}\) Private schools in particular resisted the movement to use the FLC-BP program.

The results of the program have demonstrated otherwise. Parental concerns regarding English language instruction were disproven by the fact that students in the experimental groups maintained a significantly better performance in all English skills – listening, grammar and reading – during all three grade levels. The dramatic improvement in performance due to the FLC-BP was not limited to English. While the performance of the students in the control group in Filipino – assessed through an examination of the same skills listed for English – started out slightly better than the performance for students in the experimental group, the performance of the latter grew much faster than the students in the control group, exceeding the former by Grade 2 and continuing to do so in Grade 3. Mathematics skills in the experimental group were also consistently superior to the control group.\(^{46}\) The positive results of the experimental program have encouraged more schools in the municipality to adopt FLC-BP as well. By 2007, “Lubuagan District Grade 3 students ranked [number one] in the Kalinga Division in the 2006 NAT [National Achievement Test] Grade 3 Reading Test, scoring in the English and Filipino reading tests 15-25 percent higher than all other Kalinga
Technology. College classes in these languages are also a regional colleges like the Nueva Vizcaya State Institute of but this is something that could be accomplished at require more advanced study in these minority languages, like middle school or high school. To do so would past the FLC-BP phase and into higher levels of education, A potential next step is extending first language education means of progress. desirable considering the value placed upon education as a be extended to other parts of the country, which is especially improved academic achievements observed in Lubuagan can e FLC-BP especially benefits those minorities who live in remote areas and speak their language much more often than any other regional or national languages. Funding is necessary to train teachers in these areas and to create and distribute the specialized teaching aids needed to run trilingual classes. The improved academic achievements observed in Lubuagan can be extended to other parts of the country, which is especially desirable considering the value placed upon education as a means of progress. A potential next step is extending first language education past the FLC-BP phase and into higher levels of education, like middle school or high school. To do so would first require more advanced study in these minority languages, but this is something that could be accomplished at regional colleges like the Nueva Vizcaya State Institute of Technology. College classes in these languages are also a possibility; this has been done for the Kven and Meänkeli languages in northern Scandinavia. Extending the use of the minority language in education would show that it is viable and worthwhile even beyond early educational stages. It also increases the likelihood that these languages will eventually be sufficiently documented, studied, developed, and taught regularly in the classroom. A final recommendation is the development of language-specific teacher training programs. A good example of this is Maori; New Zealand universities offer a specific education degree for teaching in Maori-language schools. This adds to the value and recognition of the language while simultaneously training specialized teachers to run the FLC-BP programs and similar programs. It increases the capacity of such programs to draw upon teachers who are genuinely passionate about their languages and particularly interested in teaching them. As with college level classes suggested above, these programs can be made available at regional colleges, where most of the teachers who would teach in the minority language area schools are trained in the first place. LOOKING FORWARD: RECOMMENDATIONS FOR MINORITY LANGUAGE EDUCATION The success of the Lubuagan experiment shows that the use of first languages is essential to optimize academic performance, especially at the earliest levels. This has been shown in theory and in practice. These early years act as the foundation for later levels, and the learning and development children experience during this time is extremely important to their futures. It is imperative that the Philippine Congress expedites the review and passing of Senate Bill 2294, which would open up funding for the program in Lubuagan as well as its expansion into other parts of the country. The FLC-BP especially benefits those minorities who live in remote areas and speak their language much more often than any other regional or national languages. Funding is necessary to train teachers in these areas and to create and distribute the specialized teaching aids needed to run trilingual classes. The improved academic achievements observed in Lubuagan can be extended to other parts of the country, which is especially desirable considering the value placed upon education as a means of progress. A potential next step is extending first language education past the FLC-BP phase and into higher levels of education, like middle school or high school. To do so would first require more advanced study in these minority languages, but this is something that could be accomplished at regional colleges like the Nueva Vizcaya State Institute of Technology. College classes in these languages are also a possibility; this has been done for the Kven and Meänkeli languages in northern Scandinavia. Extending the use of the minority language in education would show that it is viable and worthwhile even beyond early educational stages. It also increases the likelihood that these languages will eventually be sufficiently documented, studied, developed, and taught regularly in the classroom. A final recommendation is the development of language-specific teacher training programs. A good example of this is Maori; New Zealand universities offer a specific education degree for teaching in Maori-language schools. This adds to the value and recognition of the language while simultaneously training specialized teachers to run the FLC-BP programs and similar programs. It increases the capacity of such programs to draw upon teachers who are genuinely passionate about their languages and particularly interested in teaching them. As with college level classes suggested above, these programs can be made available at regional colleges, where most of the teachers who would teach in the minority language area schools are trained in the first place. CONCLUSION: PROGRESS REVISITED If education is to be an effective means to progress, we must understand that it cannot be uniformly applied to each student in an extremely diverse country such as the Philippines. Language is a particularly important element of educational success because it is the medium through which education is conducted. Therefore, the FLC-BP is an important key to fostering academic success within linguistic minority groups. Additionally, “using the [minority] language the child understands…affirms the value of the child and his cultural and language heritage.” If we are to maintain the endangered languages of the Philippines, affirming this value is essential to show both the minority groups and the public that these languages ought be preserved. We can protect our cultural heritage while working towards progress. We do not need to choose one or the other. With this in mind, it is essential that the FLC-BP be supported, expanded, and applied on a greater scale.
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Paradise Lost and Won: The Indonesian-East Timorese Struggle and the Roles of Inherency and Contingency in Ethnic Conflicts

by PHILLIP SITTER

Abstract: The Indonesian-East Timorese conflict, which began with the Indonesian invasion of East Timor in 1975 and ended with East Timor’s declaration of independence in 2002, was driven by decisions based upon a constant interplay of inherency and contingency. Inherency drove Indonesia to invade East Timor and kept international, non-ethnic actors from intervening in the conflict for decades. Contingent events developed East Timorese ethno-nationalism and provided the opportunities for East Timorese autonomy and independence through Indonesian-allowed East Timorese self-determination and international intervention. Understanding this interplay between inherency and contingency is important in evaluating, or even preventing, other ethnic conflicts.

The Indonesian-East Timorese conflict began in 1975, when, after Portuguese decolonization and the outbreak of civil war in newly independent East Timor, Indonesia invaded the territory. Over the next 24 years, Indonesia brutally attempted to control East Timor and, in the process, was responsible (directly or indirectly) for the deaths of hundreds of thousands of East Timorese. The Indonesian occupation came to an end in 1999, when Indonesia supported an East Timorese vote on independence. After a wave of bloody, anti-independence violence against the East Timorese followed in an attempt to prevent the vote, an Australian-led U.N. intervention force took control of the territory. Elections were held, and in 2002 East Timor officially declared independence. This raised many questions: why did Indonesia invade East Timor? Why did the international community not respond to the violence for over two decades? Why did Indonesia finally surrender to international community-supported East Timorese claims of independence relatively without much resistance? Finally, what are the ramifications of the Indonesian-East Timorese struggle for other ethnic conflicts?

In this examination of the Indonesian-East Timorese conflict, I will answer these questions by, in Section One, showing that Indonesia’s decision to invade East Timor and the international community’s decision to collectively ignore the issue for so long were inherency-based rational decisions to perpetrate or allow ethnic violence, deemed necessary to achieve self-interested goals and cost-effective as opposed to alternatives. In Section Two, I will show how contingent, or unexpected, events affected the development and eventual end of the conflict, demonstrating how they fostered the growth of East Timorese ethno-nationalism and resistance to Indonesian rule and provided the opportunity for internationally-supported East Timorese independence. I will conclude that the Indonesian-East Timorese conflict was deeply shaped by a constant interplay of contingent events and inherent decisions, an interplay which is also applicable to other ethnic conflicts and an understanding of which may offer possible solutions to these, and future, conflicts.

PERPETRATOR, ACCOMPlices, AND INHERENCY: WHY INDONESIA INVAdED EAST TIMOR AND WHY THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY DID NOT RESPOND

In 1975, Indonesia chose to invade East Timor, and ignited a conflict which would smolder for a quarter century – why? Why did Indonesia feel that it needed to control East Timor? The answer is simple; while East Timor is not a part of Indonesia, it shares the island of Timor with Indonesian territory, and Indonesia feared that an unstable neighbor would inevitably lead to an unstable Indonesia. As author Michael Leifer explains, Indonesia’s decision to invade “must be seen in terms of ‘the abiding sense of territorial vulnerability arising from geographic fragmentation and social diversity’” within the country. David Armstrong, author of the article “The Next Yugoslavia: The Fragmentation of Indonesia” says that even though the Indonesian government has tried to instill a sense of national unity, “the promotion of… a ‘national’ culture has been perceived by many as an attempt to impose what are essentially the customs and traditions of the 50% of Indonesians who live in Java on the rest of the country.” This is probably due to the fact that Indonesia is made up of 1,000 inhabited islands, and is home to 300 ethnic groups, 600 dialects, and 4 main religions – a
geographical and ethnic nightmare for trying to instill and maintain national unity of any kind.\textsuperscript{9}

Indonesian leaders were (and still are) acutely aware of the perceived potential for their republic to come apart along geographical and ethnic seams. In 1975, Indonesian leaders were particularly concerned, as Mark Rolls states in his essay “Indonesia’s East Timor Experience,” that instability in East Timor, “a newly independent and weak state within the archipelago” (as evidenced by the post-colonial civil war) “could spread across its borders and offer opportunities for unwanted external intervention.”\textsuperscript{10} The external intervention Indonesia particularly feared would have been from communist powers; as Mark Rolls continues, “The Indonesian government was troubled by the thought that... East Timor had the potential to become a source of communist subversion in the archipelago itself.”\textsuperscript{11} History professor John Roosa from the University of British Columbia also adds that using the military option to assure these fears of an East Timorese-led dissolution of the Indonesian state made perfect sense, as “the Indonesian military sees itself as the guarantor of national unity, the state’s last line of defence against separatist movements.”\textsuperscript{12} This fear (shared by Indonesian leaders) about an unstable East Timor creating a base for subversive – particularly communist – activity within the wider Indonesian state, and their decision to use military force to assuage it, were feelings also shared by their Western allies – feelings that would prevent any kind of outside intervention into the conflict.

Indonesia, as an anti-communist regional power, was an important ally for the United States and other Western powers during the Cold War. At the time of the Indonesian invasion of East Timor, the U.S. had already lost the war in Vietnam, and it was not prepared to see another South Asian ally (especially one that, as Mark Rolls explains, “occupied vital positions astride major sea lanes of communication and possessed important strategic raw materials”) succumb to communist subversion.\textsuperscript{13} The previously classified transcripts of a meeting between Indonesian President Suharto, American President Ford, and other high-ranking Indonesian and U.S. officials – including U.S. Secretary of State Henry Kissinger and U.S.-Indonesia Ambassador Newsom – in Jakarta on December 6, 1975 (the day before the Indonesian invasion of East Timor) show that the United States essentially gave Indonesia a carte-blanche to invade East Timor.\textsuperscript{14, 15} After a lengthy discussion on the spread of, and fight against, communism in Southeast Asia, President Suharto brought up the East Timor issue and the possibility of imminent Indonesian action, to which Secretary of State Henry Kissinger replied, “It is important that whatever you do succeeds quickly... whatever you do, however, we will try to handle in the best way possible.”\textsuperscript{16} President Ford added, “We will understand and will not press you on the issue.”\textsuperscript{17} Western powers supplied Indonesia with weapons for its invasion, and the nation of Australia, who also felt threatened by the possibility of an East Timorese-led communist takeover of Indonesia, even went so far as to officially recognize Indonesia’s occupation of East Timor.\textsuperscript{18, 19}

It is clear then that the reasoning behind Indonesia’s decision to invade East Timor, and the calculated lack of response by the international community, were inherency-based. What is inherency? Earl Conteh-Morgan, author of Collective Political Violence: an Introduction to the Theories and Cases of Violent Conflicts, explains, “The inherency approach emphasizes collective violence as an aspect of the rational pursuit of self-interest.”\textsuperscript{20} Conteh-Morgan also states that, “the resort to collective violence is seen as one way for individuals or groups to maximize political influence and increase leverage over decisions. It is viewed as extreme but ‘normal.’...the use of collective violence is thus a rational choice or a tactical route that involves cost-benefit calculation.”\textsuperscript{21} In other words, Conteh-Morgan argues that individuals or groups see violence as just another tool or option available to them to further their own agenda(s), and that if a given situation appears to be best resolved in a party’s favor by the use of violence, violence will be employed. This is exactly what is seen within the East Timorese context.

Indonesia viewed the use of violent military force as the only rational option. Doing nothing about the East Timor situation was inviable, for it could invite disaster in the form of the destabilization of the Indonesian states along geographical and ethnic lines, possibly supported by communist activity. The price to be paid by the East Timorese people – non-Indonesians – for this decision was simply viewed as necessary or perhaps not even an issue at all, compared to maintaining the internal integrity, security, and power of Indonesia; Indonesian leaders believed the cost of action (which they would largely not have to pay anyway) was much less than the potential costs of inaction, and made their implementation of violence to protect their
self-interests rationally acceptable. Such logic was also
shared by the United States, Australia, and other Western
powers, who tactically viewed the possible deaths of a few
East Timorese as a worthy expense. It paled in comparison
to the possible costs exacted by the realization of the threat
of losing another Asian ally to communism, and all of the
regional and international political, military, and security
issues that scenario entailed. However, as will be presented
shortly, these inherency-based decisions to commit or
allow for ethnic violence in order to preserve political
stability and power had unintended consequences and
the Indonesians in particular were not prepared for the
subsequent contingencies.

THE WILD CARD OF CONTINGENCY:
THE RISE OF EAST TIMORESE ETHNO-NATIONALISM
AND THE REALIZATION OF INDEPENDENCE

The idea of being “East Timorese” is a fairly new one. Mark
Rolls notes, before the arrival of the Portuguese colonizers
to the area, “there was...no primordial sense of a Timorese,
or East Timorese, identity.”22 This remained mostly true
up to the eve of the Indonesian invasion in 1975, save for
the exceptions of shared experiences of Portuguese colonial
rule and Japanese occupation in World War II, and a few
shared behaviors of East Timorese society.23 However, once
Indonesia acted on its inherency-based reasoning, by seizing
control of East Timor and trying to subjugate its people,
this contingent event of Indonesian occupation came to
define East Timorese identity – “strengthening [the] East
Timorese' national consciousness,” as Rolls puts it. Rather
than crushing the East Timorese, the contingent event of
Indonesian occupation actually helped to create a real East
Timorese primordial identity.

Contingent events are defined by Earl Conteh-Morgan
as “chance occurrences that hinder or facilitate.”24
Furthermore, Conteh-Morgan continues, they are
“conditions that occur accidentally,” are “unusual,” and
“involve a great deal of chance.”25 Of course, the invasion
of East Timor by Indonesia was no accident, but instead
a calculated maneuver, as has been previously discussed;
however, for the East Timorese people, it was indeed
a chance event – a sudden, unexpected change in the
conditions of their environment to which they had to adapt.
East Timor was jolted overnight from being in the midst of

a civil war – a contest of competing, uncertain identities –
into a situation with one common enemy – the Indonesian
government. The mere presence of Indonesian forces in
East Timor was not enough to create a new East Timorese
identity, however; that was largely a result of another key
part of “contingency theory” – relative deprivation.

The East Timorese were not treated kindly during the
years of Indonesian occupation. During this time, David
Armstrong explains, in East Timor “Indonesia banned
the use of both Portuguese and the main indigenous
language, Tetun, in schools, replacing them with Bahasa
Indonesian [sic].”26 James Traub writes in his Foreign Affairs
article “Inventing East Timor” that under Indonesian rule
“the poverty rate there [in East Timor] was twice that of
Indonesia proper, while the rate of maternal mortality was
among the highest in the world. The Indonesians took all
the good jobs for themselves...East Timor was permitted
neither a professional class nor a political one.”27 Adrian
Vickers, in A History of Modern Indonesia, depicts East
Timor as a place “the Indonesian military...used as a
training ground...where young officers were ‘bledded’
into a culture of torture and murder, where they learned to
dispose of bodies and to eliminate potential opponents.”28
Impoverished, physically abused, and with what little
cultural identity they had being under attack, the East
Timorese were relatively deprived compared to their
Indonesian occupiers.

It was this relative deprivation that shaped the new East
Timorese identity. Ted Gurr, a leader in the theory of
relative deprivation, defines it as “actors’ perceptions of
discrepancy between their value expectations (the goods
and conditions of the life to which they believe they are
justifiably entitled) and their value capabilities (the amounts
of those goods and conditions that they think they are able
to get and keep).”29 These “perceptions of discrepancy”
understandably led to frustration on the behalf of the East
Timorese people, frustration which drove them to unite
around commonly-perceived primordial values against the
Indonesian occupiers. One of these primordial values was
Catholicism and membership in the Catholic Church, which
Damien Kingsbury says in his book East Timor: The Price
of Liberty became “a point of common identity, as well as a
legal means to conduct otherwise clandestine activities...The
church, especially at the community level, became deeply
entwined with the resistance...as well as being a medium for
the spread of Tetum...as a common language.”30
rallying point of identity became the so-called blood land connection; Kingsbury explains, "The massive loss of life of the period following the Indonesian invasion…profoundly etched into the consciousness of most East Timorese the connection between ‘the blood of the people’ and the land into which it was absorbed.”31 The East Timorese lost many of their brothers and sisters at the hands of the Indonesians, and their resolve to defend the land that now guarded their fallen siblings only grew stronger over time.

This sense of East Timorese identity, fashioned around primordial ideals, was organized in response to the relative deprivation facilitated by the contingent, heredity-driven Indonesian occupation. However, it would be another unexpected event which would again facilitate aid for the East Timorese people and help bring about their independence; that event would be a global financial crisis.

In 1997, the rupiah – the Indonesian currency – crashed due to a variety of financial factors, including the bursting of an Indonesian real-estate bubble.32 This financial crash seriously undermined the Suharto regime (the same dictator of Indonesia who invaded East Timor in the first place); as Kingsbury explains, “It was claimed…that its [Suharto’s regime’s] record of economic growth justified its existence…when the Indonesian economy collapsed, the…regime quickly lost what little genuine support it may have had. Increasingly, large blocks of Indonesian society deserted Suharto.”33 This collapse of support for Suharto led to, as Kingsbury puts it, “a groundswell of public protest and widespread demands for far-reaching reform.”34 This included the issue of East Timor, whose occupation was becoming costly, both in terms of money during the economic crisis, and in terms of international face (due to the ongoing bloody human rights violations). As professor James Cotton states in his book *East Timor, Australia and Regional Order*, “the serious effects of the Asian economic crisis made many of Indonesia’s leaders acutely aware of the importance of maintaining a positive national image in order to guarantee an uninterrupted flow of financial support.”35 B.J. Habibie, Suharto’s successor, cracked under this mounting pressure, and as James Traub reports, “in January 1999…agreed to let the Timorese hold a referendum on autonomy.”36 This act drew international attention.

In particular, Australia and the United States drew new international attention to the issue of East Timor – the same two primary parties that had helped Indonesia invade in 1975. In 1998, Australia’s foreign minister began drawing up plans with other experts in the event of East Timorese autonomy or independence, and determined that the only rational course of action was to directly enter into negotiations with Indonesia.37 Meanwhile, in the United States, James Cotton says that the Senate unanimously adopted “a resolution on 10 July calling on President Clinton to work actively to carry out the UN resolution on East Timor and to support an internationally supervised referendum on self-determination.”38 This latter action came in response to a wave of anti-independence violence carried out against the East Timorese by pro-Indonesian militias after Habibie’s announcement.39 After the Indonesian government refused to stop the violence at the request of the United Nations, an Australian-led intervention force took control of East Timor. The violence was stopped, and elections were finally able to be held, with 80% of the voting East Timorese in favor to breaking off “relations” with Indonesia.40

The price to be paid by the East Timorese people – non-Indonesians – for this decision was simply viewed as necessary or perhaps not even an issue at all, compared to maintaining the internal integrity, security, and power of Indonesia.
The East Timorese had won back their freedom, and their island paradise, after 24 years of brutal Indonesian occupation. The contingent event of the Indonesian occupation had developed their sense of ethno-nationalism against the very force which defined it.

And another contingent event – the 1997 financial crisis weakened Indonesia's power considerably, causing Indonesia to make the inherency-based decision that holding on to East Timor would come at too high a price, which then opened the door to successful international intervention. These and other lessons of the Indonesian-East Timorese struggle have much to offer for further ethnic conflict analysis, especially in the critical area of understanding the interplay between inherency and contingency which so drastically shaped the formation and resolution of this ethnic conflict.

CONCLUSION
The Indonesian-East Timorese conflict shows us two things: 1) that ethnic conflicts are often started by rational parties with rational goals in mind, based on inherency-minded decisions, and 2) contingent events often can drastically shift the course of conflicts. The scenario of a state waging war against an ethnic group or groups in the rational interest of maintaining internal security is unfortunately not unique to Indonesia. Russia's actions in Chechnya and Sudan's in Darfur are just two other examples that immediately come to mind. Understanding why a state may view the use of ethnic violence as rational is, and will continue to be, an important realization that can help prevent conflicts before they start, through mediation and open discourse between ethnic parties with grievances.

We also learn from East Timor the importance of keeping in mind how unexpected events can and do affect the outcome of conflicts. Just as an unexpected event – the shooting down of a presidential aircraft – was the final spark that ignited Rwanda, so an unexpected event in the form of a financial crisis helped bring peace to East Timor. While unexpected events, by their very nature, are often impossible to predict, it may be important to at least try and anticipate all possible contingencies in a conflict situation, no matter how remote they may seem. Australians did this in the days leading up to East Timorese independence, and this may have better prepared them to lead the successful intervention force.

No shift in a conflict should ever come as a devastating surprise, and no conflict should be inherent either; understanding the interplay between contingency and inherency, within the context of East Timor, should help us to prevent future bloodshed, and this is perhaps the greatest lesson we can draw from (and the best way to honor the dead of) East Timor.
Price of Liberty as Damien Kingsbury explains in the introduction to his book 125,000 to upwards of 250,000. Many victims were buried in mass graves, and total East Timorese victims during the complete occupation period ranging from numbers of East Timorese killed after 1989. In my research, I saw numbers of cant is somewhat ambiguous and hence, this figure may not even include signifcant or killed by hunger and disease – although his language regarding the time frame of 200,000 East Timorese victims – murdered by Indonesians Traub lists a figure of 200,000 East Timorese victims during the complete occupation period ranging from 125,000 to upwards of 250,000. Many victims were buried in mass graves, and as Damien Kingsbury explains in the introduction to his book East Timor: the Price of Liberty, many bodies were also dumped into the ocean. It is therefore likely that the true number of victims will never be known.

ENDNOTES


2. James Traub, "Inventing East Timor," Foreign Affairs 79, (2000): 74-89, 76. Traub lists a figure of 200,000 East Timorese victims – murdered by Indonesians or killed by hunger and disease – although his language regarding the time frame is somewhat ambiguous and hence, this figure may not even include significant numbers of East Timorese killed after 1989. In my research, I saw numbers of total East Timorese victims during the complete occupation period ranging from 125,000 to upwards of 250,000. Many victims were buried in mass graves, and as Damien Kingsbury explains in the introduction to his book East Timor: the Price of Liberty, many bodies were also dumped into the ocean. It is therefore likely that the true number of victims will never be known.


27. Traub, “Inventing East Timor,” 76. Traub speaks in particular of teaching and police jobs, in which Indonesians always took the higher quality, higher paying positions.


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Breaking the "Iron Wall":

The Role of Nonviolent Action in the Palestinian Struggle for Self-Determination

by STEVE HORN

The Israeli-Palestinian conflict resembles what many refer to as a perpetual “cycle of violence,” wherein one side strikes violently, the other side retaliates, and the cycle continues until the strongest side is victorious. This is reminiscent of the ideas of Thomas Hobbes, whose influential work Leviathan famously proclaimed that without binding law, men are stuck in what he coined “the state of nature,” and essentially mired in “might makes right” behavior.1 Hobbes extends this into the international arena, which he believes resembles the state of nature: a place defined by scores of nation-states unbound by any supranational force of law. Hobbes, of course, wrote Leviathan long before the creation of the League of Nations and the United Nations, yet his ideas remain influential. Supranational laws and resolutions have no binding power, and sovereign states can choose either to obey orders, or simply dismiss them, meaning actors in the international arena still exist in a “state of nature”.

Early Zionist thinkers understood clearly that Jewish statehood would not come without bloodshed. The Palestinian people, like other indigenous groups, would not abandon their home without conflict. The most prominent thinker on this topic was Ze’ev Jabotinsky, author of “The Iron Wall” and “The Ethics of the Iron Wall,” two essays written in 1923, which to this day encapsulate Israeli military strategy. The essence of Jabotinsky’s “Iron Wall” was to build a force that could outlast the inevitable opposition that would accompany the colonization of Palestine and its slow, steady transformation into Eretz Yisrael. The need to develop a strong defense apparatus has defined the modern Israeli state: a society with mandatory conscription, always prepared for immediate mobilization. In other words, modern Israel has become an “iron wall” of defense.2

Dan Horowitz, in a paper titled “The Israel Concept of National Security,” explains how Jabotinsky’s Iron Wall plays out in contemporary Israeli military strategy. In the paper, he explains that Israel is always in a state of “dormant war,” because Israeli leaders believe that “Israel is always engaged in a struggle for its very survival.”3 Accordingly, Israel has transformed itself into a military juggernaut, and the Israel Defense Forces are one of most powerful and well-equipped militaries in the world. A direct military conflict between Israel and Palestine resembles a tale of David vs. Goliath, with Israel possessing the F-16s, tanks, M-16s, rubber bullets, and a separation wall, while Palestinians possess outdated Katyusha rockets, suicide bombers, and stones. In the event of open warfare, Israel would annihilate the Palestinians.

Despite being at a clear disadvantage in terms of military strength, the Palestinians have, in a quixotic fashion, repetitively chosen to use violent struggle in their attempt to win statehood. This has come at a great cost in lives lost, homes demolished, and people displaced; which raises the important question: Would the Palestinians stand to gain more by engaging in non-violent action, rather than violence? Would “waging peace” be a more effective tactic to end the Israeli occupation? Do the conditions on the ground in the Palestinian territories exist for a movement of this sort to take place? If the conditions do exist, what would it take for the movement to succeed? These are all difficult questions, which will require a great deal of analysis to resolve.

Today, 62 years after the birth of the State of Israel, with all Palestinian leadership - first the Palestinian Liberation Organization,3 and then Hamas4 - calling for violently resisting Israel and Zionism, one can safely conclude that violent forms of resistance have failed to deliver a sovereign Palestinian state. Tens of thousands of Palestinians have died, tens of thousands of Palestinian homes have been demolished,7 hundreds of thousands of Palestinians now live as refugees, tens of thousands live in prisons, and Palestinians still live under a foreign military occupation in the West Bank and under a blockade in Gaza. The track record speaks for itself: violence has not worked thus far, as Israel, time after time, doles out heavy sticks as punishment and Palestinian society pays a hefty price in turn. Non-violent direct action can work in a variety of different conditions on the ground. The international consensus calls for a two-state solution immediately and world opinion and third party support in terms of solidarity is behind the cause and the Internet makes it more possible than ever to reveal
violent repress to non-violent direction action, which will grant Palestinians using non-violence what Gene Sharp coins the “weapon of moral power” in playing the game of “moral and political jujitsu.” Furthermore, Jabotinsky’s Iron Wall and Israel’s national security doctrine is based on countering violent action, not non-violent action, lending more support to the use of non-violence in exclusivity on the part of Palestinians. In this paper, I will demonstrate that only through the use of non-violent direct action can the Palestinian people break Jabotinsky’s Iron Wall and achieve statehood along the 1967 borders. I will do so by utilizing the examples of the Bi‘lin wall protests, the 1992 prison hunger strikes, and the East Jerusalem Sheik Jarrah protests as successful case studies of how to run successful nonviolent direct action campaigns.

HOW AND WHY NONVIOLENT DIRECT ACTION WORKS: GENE SHARP’S THEORY OF POLITICAL POWER

In the opening pages of his landmark study titled The Politics of Nonviolent Action, Gene Sharp discusses the basic nature and social roots of political power. In discussing this, he distinguishes between a “pluralistic” nature of governmental power versus “monolithic” governmental power. Monolithic theory assumes that the power of government is relatively fixed in nature, independent of the people it has power over, while pluralistic theory assumes the opposite: that the system is dependent on the people’s good will, decisions and support. In short, political power is based on following the orders of the ruler, and if subjects do not obey, leaders have no power.8

Expanding on this theory, social theorist and student of Karl Marx, Antonio Gramsci crafted Conflict Theory, which states that that the ruling class maintains power through the control of hegemonic ideas, by controlling media conglomerates, schools, the halls of power in the government, writing the textbooks for schools, sitting on the school boards, setting up the curriculum for what is and what is not taught in schools, etc. This explains how, despite the fact that, as Sharp states, the nature of governmental power is dependent on the consent of the governed, it generally rules in a monolithic manner, as governments convince subjects that they are representing their best interests. According to the Gramscian school of thought, it is only the fear of violence and oppression which holds back the masses from revolt against the unjust elite.9

There is a caveat to Conflict Theory: internally, the collective conscious knows when it is being maltreated, but it takes either a great leader and/or something bothersome occurring in society to serve as a catalyst and call-to-action and as a means to stand up against the previously internalized sense of wrongdoing. Examples include the individuals like Gandhi, Martin Luther King, as well as controversial events like Operation Cast Lead and the Sabra and Shatila Massacre. Conflict theory is based on the fact that governmental power is pluralistic, and not monolithic, in nature, while also explaining how governments often operate under the façade of possessing unchallengeable monolithic power. It is next important to understand, in precise terms, what nonviolent direct action is, and what it is not.

Often, laypeople possess a poor understanding of Gandhi’s convictions and mistake non-violent action with passivity. Gandhi did not believe in passivity, but believed in what Scott Ritter, former chief United Nations weapons inspector in Iraq from 1991 to 1998, and known later for his critiques of American foreign policy, has called “waging peace.” Ritter explains that those who believe in peace often fall prey to their own preference for non-confrontation and become pacifists who personally may not participate in violence, but do nothing to halt violence done onto them, nor act assertively to stop violence being done in their names in other countries by their own government. Like military strategists, Gandhi and Ritter explain that peace activists should use calculated military-like strategies to achieve their aims. By no means does this mean sitting back passively.10

Gandhi’s strategic use of non-violence to end injustice is known as the Satyagraha. Non-violent scholar Gene Sharp explains Gandhi’s Satyagraha in his book titled Gandhi Wields Weapon of Moral Power:

The satyagrahi (a believer in satyagraha) looks upon all as his brothers. He believes that the practice of love and self-suffering will bring about a change of heart in his opponent…He believes that the power of love, if pure, is great enough to melt the stoniest heart of an evil doer…The satyagrahi holds to the truth and refuses to compromise on basic moral issues in the face of punishment, persecution, and infliction of suffering on him. Thus he hopes to produce in the opponent’s mind and heart an emotional up surging or stinging of his conscience. Satyagraha as resistance and direct
action is a substitute for violent direct action, such as rioting, violent revolt, or war.\textsuperscript{11}

Nonviolent direct action, said Gandhi, means, in an organized manner, confronting the oppressor through the use of non-violence and winning the moral battle, particularly if not the power player in the given struggle, i.e., the Palestinians in the Israel-Palestine conflict.

Schwarcz explains the basic premise of the Satyagraha best:

[It] is direction action—but without violence. [It] is not an alternative to war—it is war; a war in which I may not kill, where I must not even as much as hate my opponent, but in which I must be prepared to be killed, so that my suffering and my sacrifice, living proof of the truth and justice in my cause, may win the heart of my opponent and bring him to the realization of the wrong which he has committed….The aim of Satyagraha is to convince our opponent and win him over to cooperate with us, whereas the aim of violence is to punish conquer, and subject the enemy.\textsuperscript{12}

Nowhere in either of the above descriptions of the Satyagraha was passivity or cowardice mentioned. The Satyagraha means standing strong, in a strategic, well thought out, nonviolent manner, and doing whatever it takes to win the battle of moral and political jujitsu in the public sphere.

FEARLESSNESS, TRANSPARENCY, LEADERSHIP, AND OFFERING AN ULTIMATUM: LAYING THE GROUNDWORK FOR NONVIOLENT ACTION

Military strategists are generally transparent as to what their military strategy is in a given conflict; and according to Sharp non-violent direction actionists should emulate this behavior. A group cannot possibly be transparent if it is fearful and cowardly, while the transverse is also true: if a group is fearful and cowardly, it cannot possibly be transparent and open about what the aims and goals of the nonviolent direct actions are. Strategic transparency translates into the offering of an ultimatum, or what the ultimate objective of the nonviolent direction action is, and what those engaged in the actions will settle for nothing less than.\textsuperscript{13} First and foremost, Gandhi was a vehement believer in condemning cowardice and condoning fearlessness, as it related to the Satyagraha. Sharp explains Gandhi’s doctrine, stating, “The coward seeks to avoid the conflict and flees from danger, [while] the nonviolent actionist faces the conflict and risks the dangers involved in pursuing it honestly.”\textsuperscript{14} One cannot attempt to keep non-violent direct action a secret; a campaign of non-violent direct action should be well known to the general public, including to the opponent. Fear of the government is the hallmark of a despotic government. Sharp explained that “Despotism…could not exist if it did not have fear as its foundation.” For these reasons complete openness and transparency is crucial. Sharp states, “[T]he most powerful single objection to secrecy in a nonviolent action movement is that secrecy is not only rooted in fear but that it contributes to fear. Fear is often a block to action.”\textsuperscript{15}

Generally, mass social movements of these types also require a great leader. Great Man Theory, a social change theory offered by historian Thomas Carlyle and sociologist Max Weber, states two things respectively: 1.) “The history of the world is but the biography of great men,”\textsuperscript{16} and 2.) Great men possess what he called, “charismatic authority,” which involves influential individuals using their personal charisma, intelligence, and wisdom to engender a monumental or political impact.\textsuperscript{17} Edward Bernays also explains Great Man Theory in his book Propaganda, stating that movements of all types require “trusted leaders,” or figures people can place faith in.\textsuperscript{18}

The Palestinians have yet to elect a great leader who believes in the strict use of non-violence as a means to ending Israel’s military occupation of the West Bank and the blockade of the Gaza Strip. Sharp states, “…the leadership of [nonviolent direct action] movement[s] must be in the hands of those who believed in nonviolence as a moral principle.”\textsuperscript{19} It is plausible that the visionary Fatah Prime Minister Salam Fayyad, a man up-and-coming in the contemporary Palestinian political scene, could be the great leader to spearhead this campaign—only time will tell.

Lastly, the non-violent actionist must call for what Sharp coins an “ultimatum” for his opponent, which he says is “intended to influence both the opponent and the general public.”\textsuperscript{20} The ultimatum serves one general purpose and

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Early Zionist thinkers understood clearly that Jewish statehood would not come without bloodshed.
is a sign of strength, not cowardice: “the leaders of the nonviolent group list their grievances and demands without exaggeration.”23 In making the demand, the actionist is declaring that he will struggle for justice and not allow injustice to be done upon him passively and cowardly.

THE INEVITABLE REPRESSION OF NONVIOLENT DIRECT ACTION

It is a grave error to believe that if one side uses nonviolence, the other side will as well. As Sharp explains, “The launching of nonviolent action will almost always sharpen the conflict, cause the conflicting groups to become more sharply delineated, and stimulate previously uncommitted people to take sides.”24 In the case of Israel, the Iron Wall and its national security doctrine make sense on a moral and strategic level only if there is a violent resister, but nonviolent resistance throws everything off, so to speak.

The more threatening the nonviolent direct action to the opponent and the more it challenges the opponent’s power, the more likely repression is. As Sharp puts it, “freedom is not free”25 and a heavy price in blood and oppression will most likely have to be paid in order to achieve autonomy. Yet the price paid will still probably be less than if the actionist were to instead employ violent resistance, which evokes an even more violent and lethal response by the opponent. The resister must know this from the onset and remain steadfast; repression is a sign of success and it means the opponent is taking notice. Taking things a step further, the actionist must also be ready to suffer against what is sometimes “overwhelming physical force.”26 Just like troops engaged in guerrilla war, the nonviolent actionist must put be willing to put his life on the line.27

THE COUNTERPRODUCTIVE USE OF VIOLENCE IN NONVIOLENT DIRECT ACTION CAMPAIGNS

Remaining steadfast to the exclusive use of nonviolence is crucial for the viability of long-term nonviolent direct action campaigns. This is the case because to achieve gains in nonviolent direct action campaigns, the actionists must win over both third party support and the support of actors on the opponent’s side. The death of the Israeli Left after the Second Intifada provides an example of this phenomenon.

The Second Intifada started with nonviolent direct action by the Palestinians, but soon erupted into a violent campaign of suicide bombings, resulting in an Israeli society rife with post-traumatic stress disorder28 and as a result, the Israeli Peace Camp shrank immensely.29 Violence on the part of the Palestinians actionists weakened third party support worldwide, particularly in the wake of the 9/11 terrorist attacks in the United States, and caused a loss of a sympathetic opposition on the part of the Israeli left. As Sharp states, “The use of violence by the nonviolent actionists…has a strong tendency to shift attention to that violence and away from the issues at stake in the conflict and from the nature of the opponent’s system, and also away from the (usually much greater), violence of his repressive measures.”30

As will be touched on later, success in nonviolent action campaigns is largely reliant upon the delicacy of something Sharp coins “political jujitsu,” which roughly can be translated as a process by which the nonviolent actionist uses the force of moral power, through the exclusive employment of nonviolent direction action, to highlight the oppressiveness of his opponent. By exposing this repression, the actionist hopes to win over support from both third parties and the opposing side. In order for nonviolence to be successful, there must be a total commitment to refrain from violence. Sharp explains

Violence by…the nonviolent actionists is also likely to bring an abrupt reversal of sympathy for them among the members of the opponent group, and especially end any internal opposition to the objectionable policies or repression…Members of the opponent group who have supported the policies and regime out of idealistic motives are especially likely to be alienated by violence…Resistance violence is especially likely to restore loyalty and obedience among any of the opponent’s troops or police becoming disaffected by the nonviolent action. Soldiers under fire are likely to remain obedience, not mutiny. It is well known that ordinary soldiers will fight more persistently and effectively if they and their friends are being shot, wounded or killed.31

Using this passage in the context of the case of the Second Intifada, one can understand how the use of violence was ultimately counterproductive to the ideal Palestinian endgame of self-determination and statehood. Indeed, what came of the violent campaign was a security wall, increased checkpoints,
more soldiers in the occupied West Bank, more settlements in the name of “security,” and less support among both third party actors and the Israeli left for the Palestinian cause.

**THE IMPORTANCE OF PLAYING THE GAME OF MORAL AND POLITICAL JUJITSU**

The turning point in nonviolent action campaigns is a process Sharp coins “political jujitsu.” Under the assumption that people are rational and moral beings, Sharp states “Cruelties and brutalities committed against the clearly nonviolent are likely to disturb many people and to fill some with outrage. Even milder violent repression appears less justified against nonviolent people than when employed against violent resisters.”

If willing to suffer these inevitable cruelties and brutalities, sometimes for an indefinite period of time, momentum can swing in the actionists’ favor. This is especially the case today, with media such as blogs and YouTube, through which human rights abuses can be much more easily exposed to a broad audience. The galvanization of third party and opponent support has never been easier thanks to this democratization of media outlets.

An interesting case in point is a group known as “Breaking the Silence,” a group of IDF veterans described as an...

“organization…that collects testimonies of soldiers who…are witness to, and participate in military actions which change them immensely. Cases of abuse towards Palestinians, looting, and destruction of property have been the norm for years, but are still excused as military necessities, or explained as extreme and unique cases. Our testimonies portray a different and grim picture of questionable orders in many areas regarding Palestinian civilians…”

(This is a somewhat awkward structure, but since I don't have the original quote, you might want to work on it. I only changed it because it was too long to be quoted in the text.)

The changing face of the mass media has given groups like this a voice that otherwise would be silenced in Israeli society’s mainstream media. Interestingly, though, one can assume that fewer people would listen to the words of those involved with a group like Breaking the Silence with sympathetic ears if the opponent were employing violence against these soldiers. As has been stated before, the actionists must maintain a focused steadfastness to nonviolence for it to work properly; in the end, this is how political jujitsu operates and works to its fullest possible capacity.

**NONVIOLENT DIRECT ACTION IN THE PALESTINIAN FIGHT FOR STATEHOOD AND SELF-DETERMINATION**

Nonviolent direct action campaigns have prospered in situations as wide-ranging as in Apartheid-ridden South Africa, India’s break from British colonialism, the Russian workers’ revolution, and the African-American civil rights battle in the United States. The conditions on the ground of these revolutions were vastly different from each other, but the actionist succeeded in each instance. Gandhi stated that only in extremely repressive situations is the use of violence against the oppressor justified, and only when it is a life-or-death matter. In his own words, one must “refus[e] to bend before overwhelming might in the full knowledge that it means certain death. Fight violence with nonviolence if you can, and if you can’t do that, fight violence by any means, even if it means your utter extinction. But in no case should you leave your hearths and homes to be looted and burnt.”

Some have argued, at least in the Gaza Strip, that the Palestinians are almost at the point which Gandhi describes as “overwhelming might” that one day could lead to “certain death.” Sara Roy has stated that the Israeli blockade of the airways, seaways, and land borders of the Gaza Strip has caused “the breakdown of an entire society.” Mary Robinson went so far as to say the blockade was destroying Gaza’s “entire civilization.” Yet a neutral observer must ask, did the use of violence on the part of rogue terrorist organizations during the 2008 ceasefire help the cause of the Palestinian people? The disastrous results of Operation Cast Lead on Gazan society point to the contrary. A different route must be taken—a route of nonviolent direct action. This is the route the Prime Minister of Fatah, Salam Fayyad, has recently called for. While the IDF employs repressive...
measures, these measures are par for the course in nonviolent direct action campaigns and are not insurmountable. The opposition can be overcome, but it will take a great leader who is dedicated to, appreciative of, and maintains a solid comprehension of the nonviolent cause.

The effectiveness of nonviolent protest is illustrated in three case studies: the weekly marches and demonstrations in front of Israel's separation wall in Nil'in and Bi'lin, the hunger strikes for better conditions in Palestinian prisons, and the weekly marches in protest of the building of illegal settlements in Occupied East Jerusalem. These three cases will demonstrate that nonviolent direct action holds the potential to provide tangible benefits to the Palestinian people.

**BI'LIN AND NONVIOLENT DEMONSTRATIONS AGAINST THE ILLEGAL SEPARATION FENCE**

An enlightening case study of the efficacy of nonviolent direct action is that which has occurred in Bi'lin since January of 2005. Every Friday, for the past four and a half years, Palestinians have steadfastly marched against both the existence and the exact route of the separation wall, which annexes valuable Palestinian arable land crucial for the agrarian-based Palestinian economy.\(^{37}\) In 2004, both the Israeli High Court and International Court of Justice (ICJ) ruled that the route of wall was illegal.

Although the route of the wall was deemed illegal by the Israeli Supreme Court and the International Court of Justice, the route remains, by-and-large, in the same place. Indeed, the situation strongly resembles that of the aftermath of the United States’ *Brown v. Board of Education*, as highlighted by Gerald Rosenberg in his groundbreaking book, *The Hollow Hope*. In the book, Rosenberg points to the fact the Supreme Court of the United States, without the complicity of the legislative and executive branches, is unable to make widespread social and legal change, which is in line with Sharp's theory of the pluralistic, rather than monolithic nature of political power.\(^{38}\) As Sharp demonstrates in his book, and as historian Howard Zinn points out, it was nonviolent direct action that pressured lawmakers to comply with the written law during the civil rights era. A parallel situation exists with regards to the wall, and in the half a decade since the demonstrations began, much progress has been made.

The Bi'lin wall protests follow a standard Sharpian pattern of nonviolent direct action. Activists have confronted the opponent's power, cast off fear, remained open about the fact that they will demonstrate against the wall on a weekly basis until the injustice ends (the ultimatum), received fairly brutal repression on a weekly basis, developed a wide-ranging solidarity network, and, in the sphere of international politics and negotiations, are beginning to win the game of political jujitsu by exposing their struggle through media outlets like YouTube.\(^{39,40}\)

An article written in the March 2010 issue of the Washington Report on Middle East Affairs magazine summarizes nicely many of the aspects of nonviolent direct action, in-action:

> One can only conclude, however, that the weekly nonviolent grassroots protests in villages like Bi'lin…are growing disturbingly effective, since these targeted arrests and detentions mark an escalation in Israeli tactics to try to undermine, fragment and destroy this form of mass popular struggle. Israel has added the removal of key organizers of the popular resistance movement through dubious arrests and detentions to its current repressive arsenal of tactics, which includes the use of tear gas, sound bombs, rubber-coated and live ammunition and “sewage” spray on unarmed demonstrators, mass arrests, nighttime military raids, and curfews to intimidate activists and shatter unity.\(^{41}\)

As discussed earlier, one has to expect repression as a given fact when involved in nonviolent struggle—indeed, it is a sign of progress and illustrates that the opponent views the actionist as a threat to its power. Week after week, the action continues, with the videos of the repression displayed prominently across the World Wide Web, winning solidarity with third party actors, and eventually winning the game of political jujitsu.

While repression has come, so has progress for Palestinians. In 2007, the Israeli High Court of Justice ordered the government to reroute a 1.7 km stretch of the wall that protruded into Bi'lin.\(^{42}\) In a *Brown v. Board of Education*-like manner, the Israeli government did not follow court orders at first, and the marches persisted. Nearly two and a half years later, the Israeli government caved in and began rerouting the barrier.\(^{43}\) Despite this win, the demonstrations
carry on, as the rerouting of the wall will still exceed the boundaries of the 1967 Green Line. Accompanying the continuation of the demonstrations is a persistence of repression, including a recent repressive law making the area where the Bi’lin protests regularly take place in a closed military zone in which only Palestinian demonstrators can now enter, barring all Israeli citizens and Israeli activists from the area. The demonstrations, though, proceed full-steam-ahead, week-after-week.

No doubt, the nonviolent campaign against the route of the wall in Bi’lin has been a struggle with many ups and downs. Yet, the end result has been less bloodshed on both sides and bigger gains for the Palestinians, who could not hope to overcome the Israelis through the use of force. One can assume that, since the nonviolent demonstrations have been successful, the marches will continue until a just solution is reached on the issues of both the wall and Palestinian land rights in general.

PALESTINIAN PRISON CONDITIONS
AND HUNGER STRIKES

In a seminal ethnographic book by Israeli professor Maya Rosenfeld entitled Confronting the Occupation: Work, Education, and Political Activism of a Palestinian Family in a Refugee Camp, she reveals the daily realities and conditions for Palestinians detained in Israeli prisons, which eventually resulted in prison-wide hunger strikes in opposition to the conditions. The Israeli prisons, in which several human rights organizations have documented scores of instances of systematic torture and scores of other human rights abuses, have been a breeding ground for Palestinian activists and a source of unity in forming their political identities and consciousnesses, with Rosenfeld referring to the interrogations as a “rite of passage that confers manhood” for upcoming Palestinian activists.

Rosenfeld quotes one of the detainees about the formation of his political consciousness in prison, and his view of the prisons as a university: “Before being in prison, I was connected emotionally to the national struggle, but in jail I became connected intellectually and ideologically. It was in prison that I read the theory. Love of the homeland became more rooted, for two reasons: my discussions with other people and my reading pamphlets and books.” In the detention centers, the prisoners, as a collective unit, studied and discussed the political theory of the likes of Karl Marx and Frederich Engels, whose teachings rang true to the Palestinian collective experience of being a people subjugated under an occupying force. It was through these readings and through group discussions that the prisoners planned strategic political activism, which eventually culminated in the 1992 hunger strike.

The 1992 hunger strike worked because it followed the Sharpian formula of nonviolent direct action. Particularly in a situation like prison, with the prisoners constantly under the watchful eyes of prison guards, nonviolence was the only realistic response to injustice. In September of 1992, over 10,000 Palestinian prisoners began a prolonged hunger strike. In a letter written to U.N. Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali on Sept. 25, the prisoners stated their grievances:

We are demanding an end to the policy of long periods of solitary confinement and other arbitrary individual and collective punishments; the closure of special underground punishment sections where dungeon conditions prevail; a reinstatement of adequate food rations; a halt to overcrowding; access to proper medical treatment; and an end to beatings and tear-gassing in the cells and to demeaning strip searches.

In writing the letter, the prisoners created an ultimatum—improve prison conditions, or they would refuse to eat and would die for the cause. Thousands of Palestinians dying due to a refusal on the part of Israel to provide Palestinians with adequate prison conditions would shed a terrible light on Israel in the international sphere. Recognizing this, after only 15 days the Israel Minister of Police stepped in and acquiesced to many of the strikers’ demands.

All of the vital elements of nonviolent direct action were utilized in the Palestinian hunger strikes, including: “laying the groundwork for nonviolent action” through the reading and teaching of Marx and other works of political theory, “challenge bring[ing] repression” in the continuation of torture and brutal interrogation techniques being used, “solidarity and discipline
to fight repression" in the rounding up over 10,000 participants for the hunger strike, and "political jiu-jitsu" in winning over the Israel Minister of Police and mainstream human rights organizations, as well as gaining coverage of the struggle in mainstream media organizations like the New York Times, among numerous others.

THE CASE OF SHEIK JARRAH

Another ongoing nonviolent campaign taking place to end the occupation is that of the weekly marches and demonstrations in the Sheik Jarrah neighborhood of occupied East Jerusalem. In recent times, East Jerusalem has become more and more of a focal point in the Palestinian struggle for self-determination and statehood. “The battle line in Israel’s war of survival as a Jewish and democratic state now runs through the Arab neighborhoods of Jerusalem,” wrote David Landau, the former editor of the Israeli daily Haaretz.

Under UN Resolution 242 of 1967 and UN Security Council Resolution 478 of 1980, the Israeli annexation of East Jerusalem is considered illegal. In 1980, Israel’s Knesset passed what it coined the “Basic Law,” which stated, “Jerusalem, complete and united, is the capital of Israel,” in defiance of international law. Resolution 478 was written in direct response to this law, which in essence reiterated UN Security Council 476, stating that “all legislative and administrative measures and actions taken by Israel, the occupying Power, which purport to alter the character and status of the Holy City of Jerusalem have no legal validity and constitute a flagrant violation of the Fourth Geneva Convention.” Thirty years later, the battle over East Jerusalem continues to wages on.

At the American-Israel Political Affairs Committee National Conference in late-March of 2010, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu stated, “Jerusalem is not a settlement, it’s our capital,” which came weeks after, while Vice President Joe Biden was visiting Jerusalem, Israel announced it would be building over one-thousand additional housing units in East Jerusalem, causing a major rift and tension between the Obama Administration and the Netanyahu-led Israeli government.

The rift, though, was a culmination of what have been weekly protests each Friday against the Israeli Occupation of East Jerusalem. It was a matter of bad timing on behalf of the Israeli government, but to the Palestinians and left-wing Israelis, this was a struggle they had been fighting for years. Finally, though, the struggle had gained some exposure in the mainstream media thanks to the poorly timed mishap on Israel’s part.

The Obama Administration has spoken against the annexation of East Jerusalem, as has the left-leaning American-Israel lobby J-Street, the new European-Israel lobby J-Call, the left-wing lobbying group Peace Now, Jewish Voice for Peace, along with many others. As a result of this, the Israeli government is being forced to discuss coming to the bargaining table and having a serious discussion over these manners, without the normal bargaining chip and trump card of “refusal to engage in dialogue with terrorist organizations.” By no means will the issue of East Jerusalem be easy to resolve, but Palestinian steadfastness to nonviolent action has forced Israel, through the pressure of the United States, to take part in serious dialogues on the matter.

CONCLUSION

Co-author of the controversial book The Israel Lobby, Dr. John Meirsheimer, illustrated the basic thesis of this paper best in a lecture he gave on April 29, called “The Future of Palestine.” At the lecture, he stated,

Israel and its supporters have been able to do a good job of keeping the mainstream media in the United States from telling the truth about what Israel is doing to the Palestinians in the Occupied Territories. But the Internet is a game changer. It not only makes it easy for the opponents of [occupation] to get the real story out to the world, but it also allows Americans to learn the story that the New York Times and the Washington Post have been hiding from them. Over time, this situation may even force these two media institutions to cover the story more accurately themselves.

The growing visibility of this issue is not just a function of the Internet. It is also due to the fact that the plight of the Palestinians matters greatly to people all across the Arab and Islamic world, and they constantly raise the issue with Westerners. It also matters very much to the influential human rights community, which is naturally going to be critical of Israel’s harsh treatment of the Palestinians.
The Internet is truly a game-changer for the cause of Palestinian statehood and self-determination. Never before has it been easier to document and display to a wide-ranging, worldwide audience the repression that occurs when activists choose to demonstrate non-violently against the occupation. A wealth of videos and montages are available for those seeking out such a thing and for those who want to find out more about the nuances of the weekly protests at places like Bi’lin and neighborhoods like Sheik Jarrah. In short, the Internet has become the great democratic media equalizer.

The Palestinians and the world community must stand strong in solidarity in order to wage peace. Jabotinsky’s Iron Wall doctrine and Horowitz’s national security understanding can be cracked, but only if the Palestinians stick to Ghandian nonviolent action. The gains will be much greater, and the losses will be much less, as illustrated by the many cases of Palestinians falling prey to the Quixotic use of violent resistance to the occupation. 43 years after the occupation officially began, the Palestinians have a clear choice: the path of Gandhi, or the path of violence. The choice is theirs.

ENDNOTES

15. Ibid p. 484-485
20. Ibid, p. 510
21. Ibid, p. 511
22. Ibid, p. 524
23. Ibid, p. 537
24. Ibid, p. 548
25. Ibid, p. 554
29. Ibid, p. 567
30. Ibid, p. 567
d/hrcouncil/specialsession/9/FactFindingMission.htm
40. “Bi’lin - protest against the separation fence 25-1-07” http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HZzKMDwv1Ye&feature=related
46. Ibid, p. 525
47. Ibid, p. 259-63
48. Ibid, p. 263-4


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“We are content with discord, we are content with alarms, we are content with blood… we will never be content with a master.”

The Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA), a narrow band of area sandwiched between Afghanistan and Pakistan, is home to a rugged people and landscape who have historically and currently defined the region. A point of convergence of various mountain chains, FATA spans an unforgiving land between countries, split along the arbitrarily defined Durand Line by the British. Ethnic Pashtuns, the dominant group inhabiting this area have successfully defeated every invasion attempt for the last millennia. They are Muslims by faith, Pakistanis by allegiance, warriors by nature, but above all, Pashtuns. Their lifestyle, religion, and custom of Pashtunwali organize and define their lives. After the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979, FATA and its people have become recipients of aggressive jihadi militants whose activity has piqued after September 11th, 2001. The Federally Administered Tribal Areas represent a product of land, people, and activity with a shared history, woven together into a coherent, powerful entity. Each constituent element of FATA will be analyzed to gain insights into their meaning, history, and relation to each other in order to see their current expression in the region.

LAND

Approximately the size of Connecticut, FATA sidles the Pakistan-Afghanistan border as a geographic boundary region. The mountain passes of Nawa, Khyber, Kurram, and Tochi topographically cordon off and provide exclusive access to the Indian subcontinent. On the southern edge, FATA touches the tropical floor of the subcontinent and spans northward to the Himalayas, Pamir, and Hindu Kush. With less than 7% of the land considered arable, FATA consists mainly of three terrain zones: isolated hills with nomadic and pastoral life, small hill plateaus with gardens and terraces, and small “hill-grit river valleys.” Despite its forbidding landscape, FATA is home to approximately three million people who furiously guard this border region and eke out a living on the rocky landscape. FATA is commonly referred to as Yaghistan, “the Land of the Rebels” or defiants and also as Ilaya Ghair, the land beyond control of the civil government. Within its land area, FATA is further divided into smaller segments.

FATA consists of several agencies and regions split by the Durand line that marks the boundary between Pakistan and Afghanistan. Originally, the British established the border after Pakistan’s independence in 1947 as a way to divide the ‘unmanageable’ territory and weaken the native Pashtun people. Under the uti possidetis juris principle of international law, most states recognize this transfer of this border from the colonial period to post-independence, though it has been opposed by Afghan governments. The Pakistani side of the 24,000-kilometer (27,220 square kilometers) stretch of territory is comprised of sections of the North West Frontier Province (NWFP), Baluchistan, and FATA. FATA forms the northwest part of the border. Seven tribal agencies including Bajaur, Khyber, Karram, Mohmand, Orakzai, North Waziristan, and South Waziristan make up the FATA section, while the NWFP contains four Frontier Regions: Peshawar, Khoat, Bannu, and Dera Ismail. This demarcation of FATA only marks the most recent attempt by foreign powers to assert control over the region.

Throughout much of last centuries, FATA has been affected by outside influences, though not direct control, of British and Russian forces. British members of the East India Trading Company, founded in 1600, landed in India and slowly moved up toward what is now the FATA region. By 1772, the British had expanded northward to Bengal and encountered Afghans who they considered to be a shadowy menace in that area. British victory in the 1839-1842 First Afghan War marked a period of increased involvement in Afghan (Pashtun) affairs. The British employed a ‘forward policy’ that transformed the FATA region into definitive ‘buffer zone’ on the northwest frontier intended to inhibit Russian expansion.
southward.12 During this period of contestation that came to be known as the Great Game, spheres of influence arose between Russia and Britain that eventually gave way to Afghan pushes for independence in the early 20th century.13 Afghanistan gained full sovereignty from the weakened British Empire in the 1919 Treaty of Rawalpindi, while Pakistan gained independence on August 14, 1947 from the British Raj upon secession from India.14 Throughout the entire period of British-Russo vying for control, the Pashtuns remained fiercely independent and after 1947, the tribal belt continued to provide serious law and order problems for the newly formed Pakistani government.15 These continuing problems have come to define the nature of law and order in the FATA region.

British influence from the colonial period established a method of governing authority that has remained intact to the present day. Just as the British could not control the Federally Administered Tribal Areas, nor does the Pakistani government explicitly rule the Pashtun tribes who dominate the area.16 After Pakistan became a sovereign state, FATA ceased to function as a buffer and instead was granted a lego-administrative status varying with its classification of settled districts or tribal areas.17 Codified in the 1973 Pakistani Constitution, this distinction appears in Clauses 246 and 247 and defines tribal areas and restrictions on them. Article Twenty-Five declares that all citizens are equal before the law in Pakistan with the exception of the people tribal areas who have no constitutional guarantee of rights as citizens.18 In addition to their distinct legal status as citizens, inhabitants of FATA also have a unique system of laws.

Legal governance in FATA stems from top government authority in Pakistan as well as lower-level associates in the seven regions. The Pakistani president serves as the only governing body with the power to make laws for the tribal areas.19 The bureaucratic, administrative government of FATA includes the Ministry of States and Frontier Regions in Islamabad, the FATA Civil Secretariat under the Governor of the NWFP in Peshawar, and political agents, maliki (local agents), khasadars (tribal officers), and frontier corps who operate in the field.20 Governing law in FATA is embodied in the Frontier Crimes Regulation (FCR), a tool of social control through tribal jirgas that take the place of courts of law in the tribal areas.21 FCR has been criticized for its “arbitrary provisions for collective punishment, discrimination against women, and [the lack of] right to appeal” and its provisions that have bred clientalism, strengthened patriarchal values, and exploited tribes.22 Analysis of the FATA land area, its history, and lego-political background provides the backdrop for studying the people who live there and the conditions they face.

PEOPLE

“You want to know whether I am a Pashtun, a Muslim, or a Pakistani? I have been a Pashtun for 2,000 years, a Muslim for 1,400 years, and a Pakistani for 30 years. Therefore, I will always be a Pashtun first.”23

The Pashtuns, one of the largest ethnic groups in the world, reside in Pakistan and Afghanistan and particularly in the FATA region. Estimates of the size of the Pashtun ethnic group range from 25 to 40 million, though the label applies to a heterogeneous, contentious mix of tribes who share a common language (Pashto), culture (Pashtunwali), and a shared clan-based lineage.24 They are generally adherents of Sunni Islam (Hanafi school) and have gained a reputation for their unity under charismatic religious leaders who organize resistance to invasions.25 Pashtuns of FATA embody a mixture of rugged autonomy and love of clan, “Pathans are men of guns and simultaneously men of love and romance.”26 The historic trajectory of this group has been definitive in forming their identity and shared customs.

Historians have not decisively agreed on the birthplace of the Pashtun ethnic group, but they generally recognize the influence Islam has had on the people. Some have defined Pashtuns as descendents of the Prophet Moses, one of the lost ten tribes of the Bani-Israel, or conversely, progeny of Aryan stock.27 Proponents of the Aryan theory claim that in 1500 BCE, the Aryans laid the foundation for the Pashtun culture and come consider them Northern European people from the Black Sea region. Other historians trace their birth place to southern Russia, Mongolia, and Chinese Turkestan.28 Regardless of their beginning, the influence of Islam on the Pashtuns became evident after the conquest of Kabul in 664 C by the Umayyads. Islam matched well with the Pashtun code of life, particularly the ideals of “equality, brotherhood, social justice, and honesty.”29 Throughout their history, the Pashtuns continued to be ruled by Islamic regimes, if not directly. In 1516, Babur’s army crossed the Khyber Pass and founded the Islamic Mughal Empire whose influence in the tribal areas continued until its fall.30 The lasting
effects of these historical identifications can still be seen on the region. For instance, the word *Afghan* itself originates from a Persian term for the Pashtuns. The background of the people provides an historical basis for the current developmental situation in the tribal areas.

Geographically isolated until recent years from the rest of Pakistan or Afghanistan, FATA’s economic and social development has been stunted and lags behind that of the surrounding areas. With an estimated population of 3.5 million, the inhabitants of FATA reside in the poorest, least developed section of Pakistan. Poverty estimates reach 60%, twice that of Pakistan and the unemployment rate rests around 60% to 80% or even 100% seasonally. Per capita income is about $250 per year, half of that in Pakistan, with 80% of the population relying on agriculture for subsistence. Only 102 colleges (U.S. high schools) exist in the tribal areas with enrollment for boys around 68% and girls 19% and overall literacy rests high schools) exist in the tribal areas with enrollment for boys around 68% and girls 19% and overall literacy rests.

Medical camps have been recently established and have treated 37,357 patients to date. Inaccessibility until recently has contributed to the lack of healthcare infrastructure. Currently, only 524 doctors practice in FATA, one for every 6,307 patients, but army medical camps have been recently established and have treated 37,357 patients to date. This storm of statistics describes the Pashtuns and other inhabitants of FATA by their numbers but it must be augmented with a more humanistic approach to understand the people themselves.

Pashtuns in the FATA region have been historically and recently stereotyped as a people of Islam, commerce, and rugged, guerilla activity. Early British forces in FATA noted the religious zeal of the Pashtun tribes. They saw religious figures including *mullahs* and *faqirs*, “who stand outside the tribal charter and can thus suppress tribal conflicts and focus opposition on external threats to autonomy.” Scholars have noted the congruence of tribe and Islam at the heart of the Pashtun identity. Islam as part of the Pashtun identity proves inseparable from life in FATA including commerce activities where they serve as merchants, moneylenders, and mercenaries. The strategic location of the Pashtuns in the tribal areas has enabled them to develop economic niches throughout the region and “a considerable transit trade.” Economic control of land routes throughout FATA has provided Pashtuns with the ability to dominate their neighbors for centuries. Religious, economic, and other activities provide orientation for individuals within FATA, roles that are compounded by their community roles.

Pashtun society in FATA can best be understood as the interaction between concentric social rings of the population. Afghan scholar M. Jamil Hani explains that each individual is surrounded by “concentric rings consisting of family, extended family, clan tribe, confederacy, and major cultural-linguistic group.” A hierarchy of loyalty exists as one gets closer to the innermost rings, moving from tribe (*kaum*), to extended (zat), to clan (*tappa*), and to family/household (*kore*). The Pashtuns identify themselves in terms of these familial ties and commitments. They emphasize a decentralized egalitarian, paternalistic, and respectful society and seek to protect familial honor. Respected elders in each village, referred to as *Spin Geera* (man with a white beard), participate on the council of elders of *firga* that resolve disputes for the tribe. The tribal systems in place in FATA function as a natural outgrowth of the underlying, internalized code of conduct that rules society.

*Pashtunwali*, which translates as, “the way of the Pashtuns,” underwrites tribal organization and culture in FATA. It serves as the cornerstone of society and its precepts orient Pashtuns’ lives from birth to death. *Pashtunwali* is comprised of several interrelated elements that define this cultural identity. Honor, *nang*, is founded on close, unquestionable observance of *Pashtunwali* which implies a fiercer dedication to tribal mores than those of Pakistani or other societies. As an outgrowth of *nang*, *nunn* upholds the honor and sanctity of women in the tribal landscape who are veiled and must remain chaste before marriage or risk their family’s honor. The Pashtun code of conduct also grants asylum and support for guests, referred to as *namawatey*, which means “going in.” Pashtuns honor this contract and upon taking a guest into their home, must protect them to the death or risk their own honor. The final aspect of *Pashtunwali*, *torah* means “sword” and symbolizes bravery and manhood. *Toorah* becomes invoked particularly during times of conflict or threat when the tribe must respond with *balal*, or “revenge” against invading forces. *Pashtunwali* effectively defines an unwritten social contract that governs the lives of Pashtuns in FATA.
In accordance with the tenets of *Pashtunwali*, inhabitants of FATA offer a divergent perspective on centralized control from the Pakistani government in Islamabad. Put simply, the tribal areas “do not recognize provincial or federal laws.”52 Instead, local maliks serve as the link between tribal authority and the administrative government. They receive funds from the political agents, khasadars, which they use to appropriate their policies.53 In the tribal areas, these agents of the government are unrivaled in “power, prestige, and glamour” and have been known for their corruption and misappropriation of funds.54 Superimposed on this structure, tribal jirgas provide the local, village-level law and order. Through adherence to *Pashtunwali*, Pushtuns bind themselves to this process and its outcomes. For example, elders often settle disputes by ritually placing a rock between the homes of the affected parties called *tigah* (“placing the stone”). In the following days, the council hears testimony from each side, deliberates, and eventually after reaching unanimity, binds the parties to a decision.55 As part of the larger Frontier Crimes Regulation (FCR), the village-level legal system meshes local *Pashtunwali* customs with external rule to create a fiercely independent but provincially limited self-rule.56 With this basic knowledge of the Pashtun people, their land and their identity, it is possible to analyze how this region has been shaped in recent years with the influx of militants to the tribal lands.

**MILITANT ACTIVITY**

Efforts to expel the British from the FATA region in the 1930s laid the groundwork for *jihadi* operations that would occur sixty years later in the same area. During the end of British rule, the Faqir of Ipi (the “Scarlet Pimpernel of Waziristan”) served as an implacable resistance force against the British and a champion of the Pashtun cause. His work and the nonviolent efforts of Abdul Ghaffer Khan, catalyzed protests of local Pashtuns against British rule and ousted them from power.57 Sixty years later, forces arising from the same ethnic group would again oust an invading force but through the use of violence.

The Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979 and subsequent occupation catalyzed *jihadi* operations in FATA through the 1970s and 1980s. Soviet occupation drew tribal and religious leaders to the area in a popular jihad against a common enemy, a *mujahidin* holy war, to liberate Islam and Afghanistan from an atheistic regime.58 Afghans fled to Pakistani refugee camps and enlisted in the *mujahideen* forces while madrassas helped indoctrinate and organize native Pashtuns and incoming fighters.59 FATA became both a sanctuary for returning *mujahideen* and part of the ‘Afghan front’ where new forces could be educated.60 Tribal organization in FATA concurrently underwent a power shift as Islamist mullahs replaced maliks as power-brokers and Pashtun-appointed warlords rallied forces.61 Extremists from Chechnya, Xinjiang, and Arab and Central Asian countries flowed into the tribal areas and settled in Waziristan, using it as a launching pad against the Soviets.62 The porous nature of the Afghanistan-Pakistan border also aided the transnational movement of extremists who converged in FATA, which became the forefront of the *mujahidin* resistance effort. After the Soviets had been expelled, many warlords and militants continued to be powerful in the tribal regions.63 The legacy of the convergence of extremists provided the networks for militant actions in recent years in the FATA region.

In particular, participation in the *mujahideen* forces generated organizations with roots in FATA that acted as forerunners to al-Qaeda and Taliban. Taliban soldiers emerged from FATA as a veteran group of the Afghan-Soviet War comprised of ethnic Pashtun religious students from poor, conservative, and the least literate areas of Afghanistan and Pakistan.64 These Muslim militants, They are Muslims by faith, Pakistanis by allegiance, warriors by nature, but above all, Pashtuns. Their lifestyle, religion, and custom of *Pashtunwali* organize and define their lives.
fighters, returned to their homes on the Afghan-Pakistani border after the war to continue their religious education that had begun in Afghan refugee camps and madrassas. Al Qaeda forces emerged in the FATA area in 1984 as an outgrowth from the Maktab al-Khidmat lil Mujahidin al-Arab (Afghan Service Bureau, MAK) in Peshawar, Pakistan. During this time, Osama bin Laden developed contacts with Khalid Sheikh Muhammad in Pakistan to formalize al Qaeda ("the base") with the purpose, "to unite Muslims and establish a government which follows the rule of the Khalifs." The organization sought to facilitate the movement of mujahidin fighters to the jihad in Afghanistan during the Soviet-Afghan War. The Soviet occupation of Afghanistan and the coalescing of resistance forces in FATA created ties that have since been activated in the region.

In recent years, the Federally Administered Tribal Areas have experienced a continued presence of terrorist networks and jihadis. The portion of the area that has become a host for militants closely coincides with the regions of the tribal areas dominated by the Pashtun ethnic group. According to the U.S. National Intelligence Agency, at least four overlapping militant groups occupy the FATA area. These include: global terrorists, Afghan Taliban, Pakistani Taliban, and other tribal militias, extremist networks, and sectarian groups. Militant groups have enlisted the Pashtun people who lack significant education or economic opportunities and suffer from political alienation. Militants also intimidate local elites and draw on ranks of poorly educated and unemployed young Pashtun men. Local Pashtuns have been inextricably drawn into a "gun culture and drug trade" as militants have converged on the area. Different organizations operate in FATA both as and in response to militant threats including: "Talibans," al Qaeda, and Pakistani government officials. Each group's significance and recent actions, especially after 9/11, will be analyzed in light of their context and activities in the area.

The Taliban emerged out of the mujahideen forces soon after the withdrawal of Soviet troops from Afghanistan when they returned to their homeland in FATA. Taliban students from refugee camps in the FATA region, where they continued their Deobandi education after 1989, were dismayed by governance in Afghanistan after forces left. They coalesced as a force under the leadership of Mullah Omar in an effort to retake Afghanistan and implement Islamic policies. The Taliban's ideology centered on a fundamentalist, Wahhabi Islam and jihad against nonbelievers learned from madrassa schools. They used Pakistani training, Saudi fundamentalism (Wahhabism), and American weapons to support their fundamental, religious extremism and to ultimately overrun Kandahar (1993), Heart (1996), and Kabul. FATA became a launching pad for Taliban activities. Tribal groups joined the ranks of militants to create a transnational 'Taliban' comprised of Afghan and Pakistani groups whose populations spanned and easily moved across the Durand line. By 1996, the Taliban effectively controlled all of Afghanistan and remained in power until 2001. After the September 11th, 2001 attacks in the United States, Taliban operations in and around the FATA area rose to international concern and became the epicenter of conflict.

As the frontline of the War on Terror, the Taliban-controlled Afghanistan once again became the center of conflict with external coalition forces. The War in Afghanistan from its beginning, echoed strongly in FATA and Pakistan. As U.S.-led coalition forces stormed Afghanistan, they forced the Taliban from power in 2002. Taliban forces regrouped in FATA and Pakistan and sources claim that Mullah Omar, the Afghan Taliban leader resides in Quetta, Balochistan. Pashtun Taliban fighters cannot be easily separated into Afghan or Pakistani members. Their ranks are comprised of poor, unemployed madrassa recruits from FATA under a loosely defined mix of militant groups labeled Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) led by Mullah Baitullah Mehsud. The group's goal is 'Talibanization' of the region. After the war began in Afghanistan, an administrative and political vacuum developed in FATA that incoming militants filled. Maulana Fazlullah, a radical cleric, led militant groups as they overran Swat Valley on the border of FATA from 2003 until last year, capturing the valley in November 2007. They employed intimidation tactics against girls, schools, music and other 'vices' and created an "atmosphere of fear and sense of loss of government control." Since the Soviet-Afghan War, the Taliban has become an increasingly potent militant group in FATA where its operatives reside with al Qaeda, another extremist group in the area.

Al Qaeda also developed as an outgrowth from mujahideen effort in Afghanistan that attempted to facilitate the movement of fighters in and out of FATA. The organization, a militant Sunni group headed by
Osama bin Laden, officially began on August 11, 1988 with the goal of leading global jihad. After the Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan, the center of al Qaeda operations shifted from Pakistan (1988-1991), to Sudan (1991-1996), to Afghanistan (1996-2002), and back to Pakistan (2002-present). Al Qaeda currently operates from the FATA territory, likely from North Waziristan. The Umanzai and Wazir tribes serve as the main hosts of Al Qaeda. While this province of FATA experienced ‘Talibanization,’ tribal maliks lost power to local clerics who mobilized locals for jihad in Afghanistan against coalition forces and the Pakistani Army. As this power shift has occurred, al Qaeda, with the help of the Taliban have created a headquarters in FATA and re-created their training infrastructure in North Waziristan 2,290 km closer to the West. Though U.S.-coalition involvement in Afghanistan has hindered movement for al Qaeda operatives, they have still been identified as a considerable threat to particularly the United States and Britain. The Taliban and al Qaeda constitute two of the many militant groups operating in the FATA region. After 9/11, the Pakistani government has made distinct efforts to deal with threats from these extremist groups in FATA with varying success.

After the events of 9/11, Pakistan stated its intent to ally with the United States in the War on Terror staged in Afghanistan. In 2002, for the first time in its history, the Pakistani government led by General Pervez Musharraf, deployed some 80,000 troops to the tribal regions. The troops entered the Khyber and Kurram agencies, traditional ‘no go’ areas, in order to block militants fleeing from Afghanistan from entering the territories. Since that time, Musharraf has pursued discordant strategies: vacillating between military action and tactical deals with corrupt, nonstate power brokers and groups. Labeled by his administration as the Three Pronged or ‘comprehensive’ approach, Musharraf has employed, “military, political, and economic approach[es] to counter-insurgency” in FATA. Though he has developed an unprecedented response to insurgents in FATA, Musharraf and the Pakistani government have been staunchly criticized for their actions.

Drawing on historical countenances of the FATA region, Pakistani operations have been deemed ineffectual at combating insurgents or underlying socio-economic issues. Many consider Musharraf a pawn of the U.S. government and his post-9/11 operations part of “Washington’s War.” In response, some organizations who support militant groups have called for jihad against the Pakistani government. Despite military advances, particularly after declaring emergency rule on November 3, 2007, Musharraf has continued to undercut the effectiveness of military operations by brokering deals with insurgents. For example, many agreements including the Shakai Peace Agreement with the Wazir Tribe (2004), the Saraogha Agreement with the Mehsud Tribe (2005), the Waziristan Accords (2006), the Peace Accord in North Waziristan (2008), and many others have only provided intermittent peace for FATA. Many point to the need to refocus policies on socio-economic conditions in FATA to discourage local Pashtuns from joining the ranks of militant organizations. Projections for the future have considered the improvement of socio-economic conditions absolutely vital for the FATA region.

Just as the Pashtun identity cannot be separated from the rugged landscape of FATA, nor can the current situation be isolated from the history, people, or conditions of the region. In order to combat militant insurgency in FATA, many scholars have recommended attacking socio-economic measures instead of relying on military force. Preventative measures must focus on the younger generation in FATA who are at risk of becoming radicalized because of lack of education, employment, or opportunities. Post 9/11, the radicalization of this group has prevailed over tribal elders and upset traditional political and social structures in FATA. As Henry Kissinger stated in the International Herald Tribune, “a strategic consensus remains imperative.” This includes the coordination of activities to attack the root of insurgency in FATA as well as the sharing of knowledge about the history, people, and even geography of the region so to arrive at more mutual understanding.

Pashtuns honor this contract and upon taking a guest into their home, must protect them to the death or risk their own honor.
CONCLUSION

“We are still masters of our fate. We are still captains of our souls.”

The land, people, and history of the Federally Administered Tribal Areas hold the key to combating current militant activity in the area. Together, they represent a product of a shared history, woven together into a coherent, powerful entity. In order to combat problems in the area, each element cannot be viewed as an exclusive, separate unit but as an amalgamation of interrelated, interwoven parts of an identity. Ultimately, FATA has historically been home to a rugged landscape and people and just as they existed in the past, do they now, and so will they in the future.

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