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AGAINST THE GRAIN

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SAIS

AGAINST THE GRAIN

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The SAIS Europe Journal of Global Affairs was established by the students at SAIS Europe in 1997 to provide a forum for the discussion and dissemination of ideas about current issues in the field of international relations. The Journal aims to provide a formal outlet for thought-provoking scholarship from students and faculty at SAIS Europe and other graduate institutions, and welcomes work from experts and practitioners.

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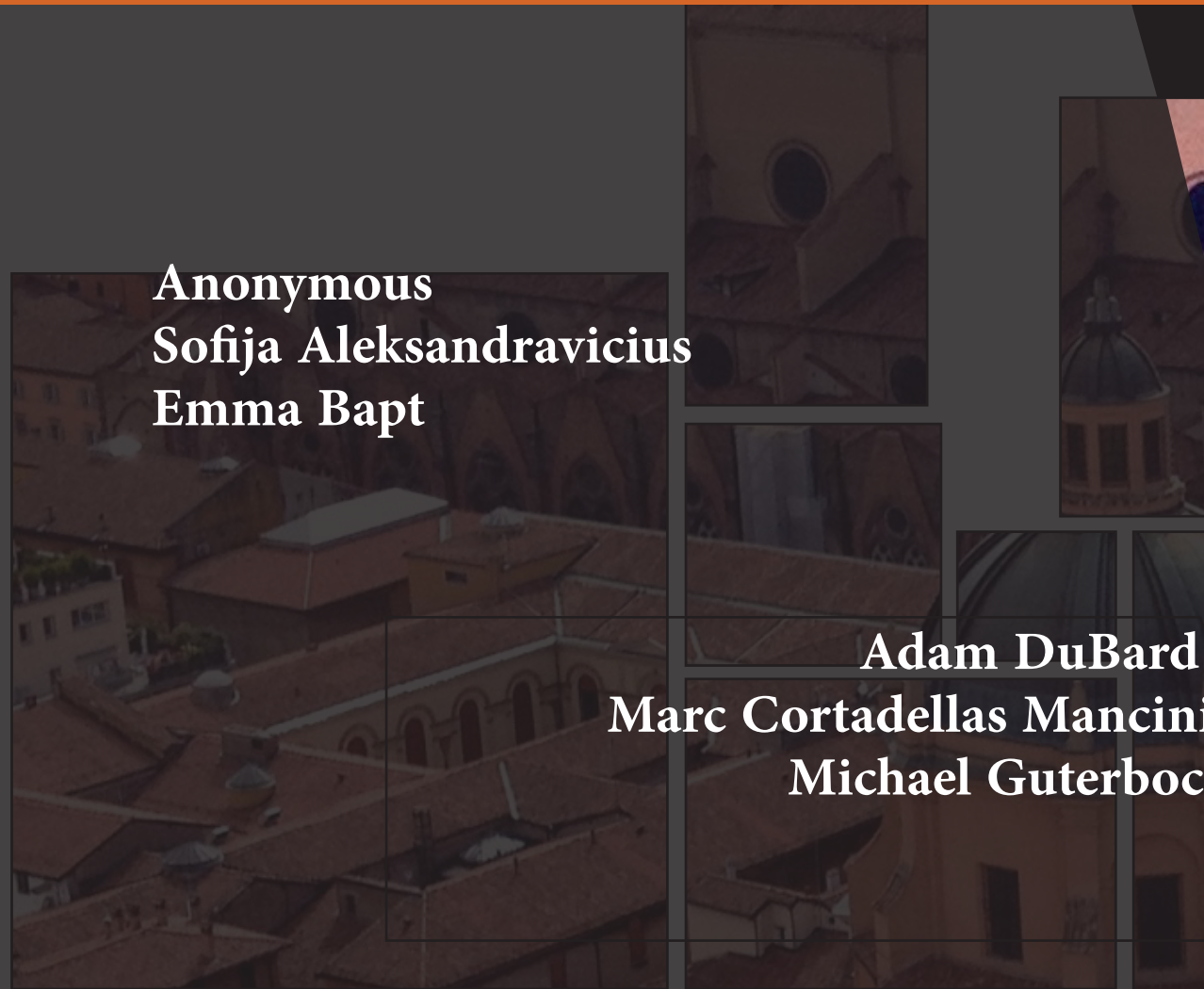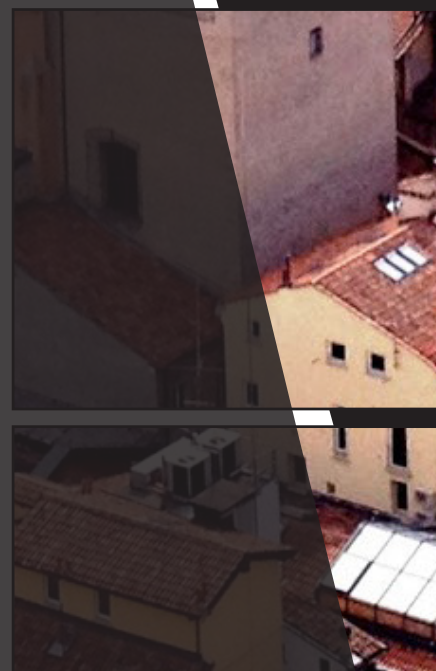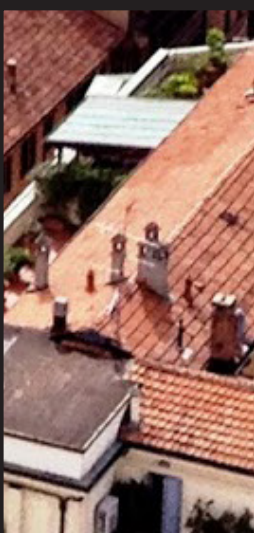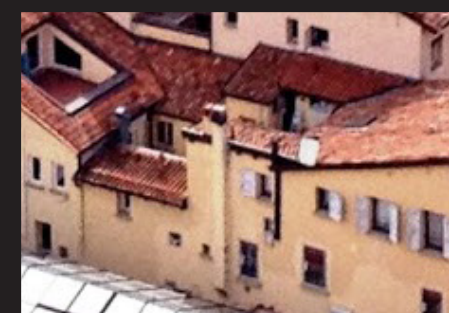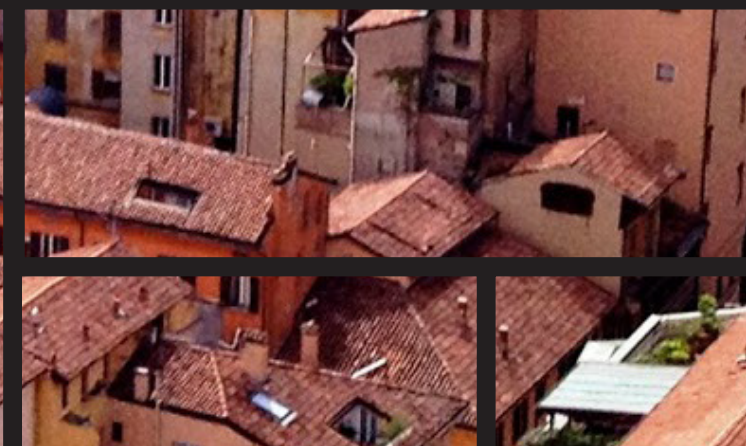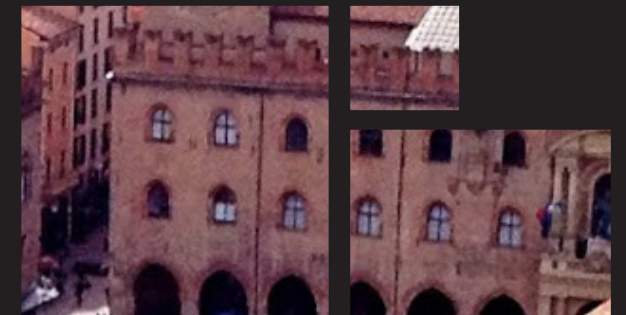
The SAIS Europe Journal of Global Affairs

Letter from the Editors

Dear Reader,

We are excited to present the 23rd edition of the SAIS Europe Journal of Global Affairs. We hope this publication will stimulate discussion about the important topics of our era and encourage thought-provoking scholarship at SAIS Europe.

We chose this year's theme: Against the Grain, before the COVID-19 pandemic evolved from a regional outbreak to a global epidemic. At the time, social movements and mass protests were pulsing through nearly every region of the world—some of them part of familiar patterns, while others were unexpected.

Though these movements have diverse origins, tactics and inflexion points, all of which are explored in this volume, they all share an important commonality. The theme pays tribute not only to the individual leaders of each movement, but also to the sinews and fibers of these movements, which serve as a key source of their strength. From this base of support, leaders can guide their movements to reshape a nation's social contract, demand greater accountability from governments and dismantle illegitimate institutions. In other words, the ability of a movement to cut "against the grain" is derived from its popular support.

A phenomenon of the scope and magnitude of the COVID-19 pandemic is generation-defining. As we emerge from sweeping lockdowns and chart a course back to economic growth, humanity faces a choice over whether to return to the status quo ante or venture towards a horizon of progress. In the meantime, however, dark trends have emerged. In Europe, a region with a deep tradition of rule of law, illiberal forces have seized on the chaos of the virus to supplant already weakened democratic institutions in their countries. In Hong Kong, popular discontent has been met with zealous repression. In Syria, climate change has exacerbated the long-simmering civil war. In Latin America, protests in Chile, Ecuador and Bolivia prove small sparks can challenge ossified institutions. Elsewhere, in Argentina, populists have regained power through the democratic process and must

now avert plunging the country into financial ruin. The economic chaos that follows in the wake of the virus will further embolden illiberal forces around the world. But the movements that emerged before the pandemic to challenge these forces will not simply go away. They will evolve into different forms and continue to be a source of study for the years ahead.

This collection of essays and interviews, comprised of contributions from graduate students, academics and professionals across the world, attempts to analyze these movements and answer important questions about their underlying causes and their trajectories. Most essays in the 23rd edition come from our fellow SAIS students whose contributions are imperative to our success. Intellectual curiosity encouraged by SAIS faculty has no doubt compelled many students to join the dialogue in these pages. We would like to thank the entire SAIS Europe community for making this publication possible.

Due to the disruption of the pandemic, this year's Journal will not feature a print edition. However, we are eager to announce that thanks to the diligent efforts of our SAIS Europe IT team, we have unveiled a new website (https://www.saisjournal.eu) where readers can engage with this latest issue and access our archives.

SAIS Europe Journal Editorial Team
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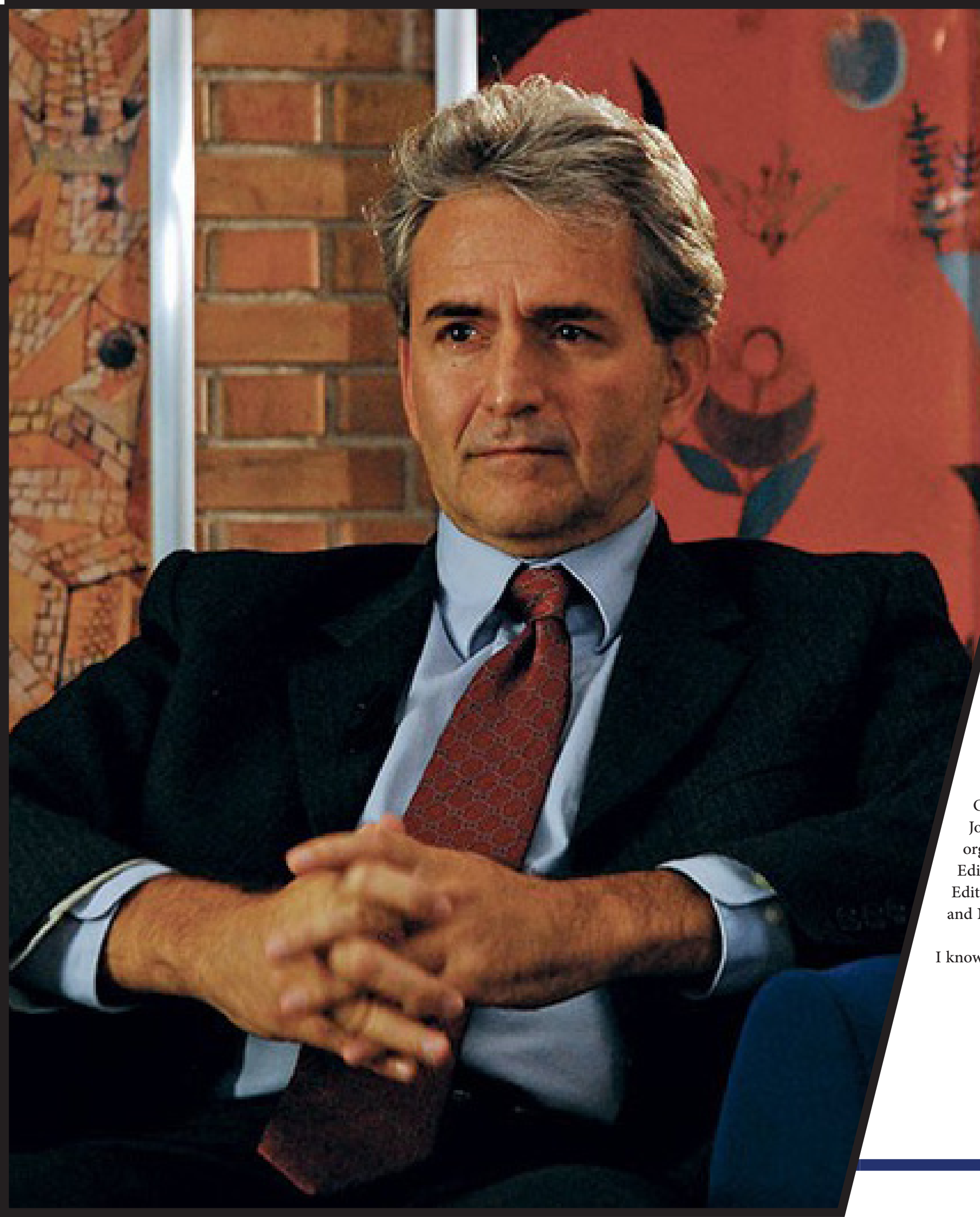
An Introduction from the Director of SAIS Europe

I am delighted to write a foreword to this year's edition of the SAIS Europe Journal of Global Affairs. The Journal enjoys a long tradition of excellence and has always been a provocative forum for the exchange of ideas, tuned to the challenges of the day. It is student-designed and run and therefore reflects the priorities of the new generation of SAIS students, to great effect. The wide variety of topics it typically tackles spans the entire spectrum of the multidisciplinary subjects that we cover at SAIS, and then some. I am always greatly impressed by the energy, creativity and effort that students put into the Journal, with well-earned pride and dedication. This year is particularly remarkable given the disruption caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. Despite the associated challenges, the Journal and its editors did not miss a beat. Such efforts are truly commendable and indicative of strong character and purpose.

The theme of this year's issue, Against the Grain, is a very interesting and, of course, appropriate choice. Indeed, the topic encompasses in many ways what SAIS seeks to prepare its students to be able to do: challenge the status quo using strong analytical tools and from a multidisciplinary perspective. As John Maynard Keynes once famously quipped, "The ideas of economists and political philosophers, both when they are right and when they are wrong are more powerful than is commonly understood….[Those] who believe themselves to be quite exempt from any intellectual influences, are usually slaves of some defunct economist." The key is to decipher the right from the wrong, and in the process we must be prepared to go against the grain. To do so requires strong analytical preparation.

The focus of the issue is on emerging social movements and discourse in the second decade of the 21st century. The topic certainly covers a lot of ground: In Europe, the United States, and across the world civic engagement in various areas and forms has become instrumental in political dialogue and its expression has expanded from the street to include the net. The contributions to Against the Grain are eclectic and thought-provoking, including an interesting overview of the fascinating life and influence of Murray Bookchin, an analytical perspective on the decision-making challenges facing the EU, and the rise of transnational advocacy groups.

On behalf of the Administration, I'd like to extend our thanks and appreciation to the staff of the SAIS Journal of Global Affairs for their herculean efforts. While many participated and I understand that the organizational structure this year was quite horizontal, I would like to especially thank: the Managing Editors (Anonymous, Will Marshall, Olivia Northrop and Marc Cortadellas Mancini), the Executive Editors (Emma Bapt, Michael Guterbock, Eleonora Mazzucchi, Adam DuBard, Sofija Aleksandravicius, and Niklas Hintermayer), and the Design Lead, Hamza A. Dastagir.

I know that everyone will enjoy this year's issue.

Michael G. Plummer,
Director, SAIS Europe and Eni Professor of International Economics

Protests in Hong Kong

From the Extradition Law to Coronavirus

An interview with Professor Ho-Fung Hung

Ho-fung Hung is the Henry M. and Elizabeth P. Wiesenfeld Professor in Political Economy in the Department of Sociology and the Nitze School of Advanced International Studies at the Johns Hopkins University. Professor Hung researches on global capitalist transformation, nationalism, social movements, and Chinese development. He is the author of the award-winning Protest with Chinese Characteristics (2011) and The China Boom: Why China Will Not Rule the World (2015). His analyses of the Chinese political economy and Hong Kong politics have been featured or cited in The New York Times, The Financial Times, The Wall Street Journal, Bloomberg News, BBC News, The Guardian, the South China Morning Post (Hong Kong), Xinhua Monthly (China), and People's Daily (China), among other publications.

In April 2020, the SAIS Europe Journal spoke with Professor Ho-fung Hung on the evolving situation in Hong Kong, where protests have taken place since last year. The following has been edited for brevity and clarity.

Europe Journal:

Many recent protests around the world are tied to economic distress or inequality. This does not seem to be the case in Hong Kong, where demands have centered on political representation. Nevertheless - have economic or class-based grievances played some role in driving protests?

Ho-fung Hung:

The demands of the Hong Kong protesters are mostly political, including universal suffrage, investigation of police violence, or even broader appeal for self-determination of Hong Kong. There are also surveys showing protesters come from diverse socio-economic backgrounds. But it is generally believed that certain economic grievances are behind the protests. One of the grievances is about the increasing domination of Chinese capital in the local economy. Beginning in the fall of 2019, when some protesters turned to more disruptive tactics such as vandalizing shops and property, the storefronts of Chinese companies and Chinese state-owned banks were often the targets. Before the protests erupted, there was a lot of discussion about the expanding monopoly of Chinese companies in different realms of people's everyday lives. This rising monopoly not only means diminished opportunity for local young people (for example, Chinese financial firms that now dominate Hong Kong's financial sector tend to hire those with a mainland Chinese background), but it also helps to extend Beijing's political control (a few state-owned bookstores and publishers now enjoy monopoly status in the local book business, and they have been openly exercising censorship of what books can be published and sold). To many young protesters, the expanding economic monopoly of Chinese companies is part of a "colonization" process that they are resisting.

Europe Journal:

How much support do you think other countries (the US or UK, for instance) can realistically provide to the protesters' cause? Would this support be counterproductive?

Ho-fung Hung:

Verbal or moral support by foreign governments does not help most of the time. Some might think it is counterproductive, as the suspicion of "foreign intervention" would harden Beijing's stance on protesters. But I don't believe the "counterproductive" consideration is crucial, as Beijing has been constantly suspicious of foreign intervention behind any dissident voice and would crack down hard on dissenting acts anyway, as many protests in mainland China and in Hong Kong that had no foreign involvement and little foreign sympathy in the past show.

Even though Beijing invariably talks tough against "foreign intervention," international attention on the status of liberty and autonomy in Hong Kong does constrain Beijing's options on how to crack down on the Hong Kong protests. Since the inception of protests last summer (and in the Occupy movement in 2014), there has been a lot of fear and speculation that Beijing would deploy the PLA [People's Liberation Army] to enter Hong Kong for a bloody crackdown. But so far, the PLA has been remarkably restrained, and Beijing has been reliant on the Hong Kong police force to control the situation through less than lethal (though still brutal)

forces. The head of the PLA garrison in Hong Kong even reportedly offered a guarantee to its US counterpart the PLA would not leave its barracks to intervene in the handling of the protest. Beijing worried a PLA mobilization over Hong Kong would create an unduly international reaction that would jeopardize Beijing's interests in Hong Kong. After all, Hong Kong's role as China's offshore financial center hinges a lot on the international recognition of Hong Kong as a separate entity vis-à-vis mainland China on capital control, trade policy, and immigration. The US has specific laws – the US-Hong Kong Policy Act and now the Hong Kong Human Rights and Democracy Act – stating that the US would revoke its recognition of Hong Kong as a separate customs territory should Washington decide that Hong Kong is no longer sufficiently autonomous from Beijing. As such, Beijing's crackdown has to be carried out without jeopardizing Hong Kong's internationally recognized status. International attention and sympathy of Hong Kong protesters are, therefore, essential and do pose constraints on Beijing.

Europe Journal:

A constant issue in the confrontation between protesters and Hong Kong authorities has been police brutality. Anger over the police's disproportionate use of force and unaccountability strengthens protesters' claims. Do you think there will be moves to rein in the police or hold them accountable?

Ho-fung Hung:

Back in the colonial days before the 1970s, the Royal Hong Kong Police Force used to be very brutal and corrupt. It took spontaneous riots by youngsters in 1966 and a CCP-instigated insurgency in 1967 to force the colonial government to take serious action and reform the police force in the 1970s. By the 1980s, the police had become a clean, law-abiding, and professional body widely respected and admired by Hong Kong citizens. The Police Force after 1997 inherited this late colonial legacy. But scandals in recent years and the disproportionate brutality, as well as alleged collaboration between the police and gangster organizations which employed mob violence against protesters, have swiftly destroyed the reputation of the police force, as public opinion surveys repeatedly show. This is undoubtedly reversible, and reform and restoration of that reputation are definitely doable, as was the case in the late colonial period. But I'm not optimistic. With the deployment of the PLA out of the question, the HKSAR government, as well as Beijing, have only the police force to rely on in repressing local dissent, which will surely grow. The authorities are likely to give the police a free hand to do whatever they see necessary to root out protest, which has resulted in escalating use of confrontational and even violent tactics. A vicious cycle is already happening.

Europe Journal:

The media entrepreneur Jimmy Lai and two Hong Kong politicians were arrested during what was considered a peaceful protest. This seems to break with the past practice of arresting only activist leaders or those in obvious breach of the city's ordinances. What does this reveal about the Hong Kong and central government's evolving strategy?

Ho-fung Hung:

Beijing's policy on Hong Kong is becoming increasingly hardline. It is not only about Hong Kong. Beijing's postures in Xinjiang, toward Taiwan, over the South China Sea, and toward the US and other countries, are all becoming more aggressive and confrontational. It is a shift across the board under Xi Jinping. In Hong Kong, radical, confrontational protests used to be quite marginal. Still, with the crackdown on the moderates and on advocates of peaceful protest, Beijing is making the radical and confrontational voice more mainstream. Polarization and escalating conflict will be the consequence, and this is worrying.

Europe Journal:

To what extent have Hong Kong protests been about Chief Executive Carrie Lam (protests began in response to her proposed extradition bill in February 2019 but have continued after the formal withdrawal of the bill in October)? Her administration's slow and initially lax response to the coronavirus outbreak has been seen as more evidence of Lam's inability to act in the public interest.

Ho-fung Hung:

The protest's initial concern was the Bill, but the way Carrie Lam handled it and her unconditional support of the police force made her and police brutality the central focus. It is why the rally went on even after the Bill was withdrawn. Opinion surveys show a vast majority of Hong Kong residents are angry with her and the police force. Now even many establishment figures and business tycoons, who are supposed to be very conservative, openly express their dissatisfaction with her. Her tone-deaf approach to handling crisis – including both the protest and the coronavirus outbreak – makes her the target of widespread discontent. It doesn't change even when the epidemic appears to be decreasing in Hong Kong.

Europe Journal:

The coronavirus epidemic has meant demonstrations are smaller and less frequent. Is this a sign that they will peter out, or a testament to their endurance?

Ho-fung Hung:

As I speak, protests are resurfacing while the epidemic is abating. Rallies and demonstrations are being planned in the upcoming weeks and months as the anniversary of the protests approaches. And the outcry over the last two weeks shows the police force has not stepped back from its tough approach, as even peaceful singing rallies in shopping malls invoke full-scale crackdown and arrests by the police. After a hiatus during the epidemic, protest and confrontation appear to be escalating again.

Europe Journal:

Are there specific ways in which the virus is being politicized in Hong Kong, by the government, the protesters or both?

Ho-fung Hung:

As containment of epidemics always involves the governing capability of the authorities, it inevitably becomes a political issue. At the beginning of the outbreak, the government was slow in responding, and it took a medical workers and other essential workers' strike to force the government to adopt specific policies (such as restriction of cross-border traffic along Hong Kong's border with the mainland) in fighting the disease. Fortunately, the memory of SARS motivated many Hong Kong people to adopt social distancing and other necessary measures voluntarily, so the epidemic never got as bad as people feared. But few people would attribute this success to the Carrie Lam government.

Europe Journal:

What overall political impact is the epidemic having on public opinion in Hong Kong? In mainland China there was anger over the silencing of coronavirus whistleblowers, but as the number of infected people flattened, opinions shifted.

Ho-fung Hung:

As mentioned, the epidemic was not as bad as feared, but people generally did not think the government deserved much credit for that. The fact that the government was taking advantage of the crisis and people's inability to protest in order to tighten its grip infuriated people. Some of the grip-tightening measures included the arrest of moderate democrats and Jimmy Lai, a discussion on reintroducing national security legislation, and an official statement that the Beijing office in Hong Kong (the Liaison Office) is not bound by the Basic Law and enjoys supervisory power over Hong Kong politics. As soon as the epidemic is gone, the protests will flare up again. The discontent will continue to grow when the economic repercussions of the epidemic become more apparent. The Chinese economy has been contracting and it is likely to get worse as the global economy is battered. Hong Kong's economy, which has been reliant on financial speculation and real estate bubbles for so long, might undergo a more painful adjustment than many other places. A deep economic downturn will only aggravate existing grievances and conflicts.

Europe Journal:

The death of Dr. Li Wenliang in February 2020, who had tried to warn of an emerging virus last year, sparked widespread online criticism on China's social media platforms of the government's mishandling of the situation, rare in a censored society where people usually refrain from expressing anger toward the government. Do you see online dissent as playing any significant role in Chinese society's call for political change?

Ho-fung Hung:

Definitely. Signs point to many Chinese citizens' anger over the initial government cover-up that caused the epidemic. The anger is likely to linger as the economic impact of the epidemic deepens. On the other hand, nationalism fueled by government misinformation and mutual finger-pointing by the US and China could rally some support around the government.

Europe Journal:

Looking at the long term, is there the possibility that Hong Kong's more democratic system of governance will influence mainland China? Or is it more likely that Hong Kong itself will be governed like the mainland? Can the "One country, two systems" principle hold?

Ho-fung Hung:

This is the most difficult question to answer. From a broader, longer-term perspective, how the Hong Kong question is resolved is related to how US-China relations will evolve. One of the strongest factors in helping to maintain Hong Kong's status quo has been the sufficient autonomy certification under the US-Hong Kong Policy Act. Beijing has made the calculation that a creeping increase in control over Hong Kong without a drastic crossing of "red lines" in the view of the international community (such as deployment of the PLA) can keep Washington from revoking its recognition of Hong Kong as a separate customs territory. This balance hinges on an amicable US-China relationship, which has been deteriorating rapidly in recent years.

What is most important is what will happen to Hong Kong after 2047. The Sino-British Joint Declaration and the Basic Law designate the maintenance of the "One Country, Two Systems" arrangement until then, 50 years after the handover. It is uncertain what will be the official status of Hong Kong beyond 2047 and how this is going to be determined. The question has not been on the minds of the older, moderate democrats who will not be around when the time comes. And many of them expected, back in the 1980s, that China would become a democracy by 2047, so it was never seen as that important. With the hope becoming ever dimmer that China will democratize anytime soon, younger democrats in Hong Kong have finally put this on the agenda. The recent rise of localist radicals who call for self-determination or even independence of Hong Kong shows new attention being placed on the territory's status beyond 2047. Though people now worry Hong Kong's "One Country, Two Systems" will become "One Country, One System" long before 2047, at least the Basic Law and the Sino-British Joint Declaration are still valid as a foundation on which the opposition can make demands for autonomy and universal suffrage. As the two documents will become irrelevant after 2047, the constitutional status of Hong Kong beyond then is the biggest unknown. How this is resolved will have a profound impact on the unfolding battle between different socio-political forces in Hong Kong in the years to come.

Update: On May 22, the National People's Congress [Chinese parliament] proposed a National Security Law for Hong Kong that will almost certainly pass and is set to take effect in July 2020. The SAIS Europe Journal asked Professor Hung what this new legislation spells out for the territory.

Ho-fung Hung:

Many said the National Security Law, which could be used to persecute Hong Kong citizens for their speech, opinions, and personal connections, is an endgame for Hong Kong. I would say it is not. Rather it will foment the beginning of a new round of turmoil. For one thing, Beijing's need to take this drastic step to bypass any pretention of "one country two systems" to legislate on the NSL directly shows it has run out of options for tightening control of Hong Kong without risking the loss of Hong Kong's economic use to China. Now the world is reacting to the NSL by revoking recognition of Hong Kong's autonomy from Beijing. The US has started dismantling the special statuses that it has granted Hong Kong since the handover, concerning visas, the tech industry and finance. China is going to lose Hong Kong as its backdoor to gain access to sensitive high-tech equipment and software with US compo-

nents. Financial sanctions against banks complicit in destroying Hong Kong's freedom are in the making. The business community in Hong Kong, including foreign investors, fear Beijing will heighten its effort to bully them into showing their political loyalty. Businesses will become vulnerable to political revenge (like fabricated allegations of spying or supporting subversive elements) by their politically well-connected Chinese competitors. Associations representing foreign businesses in Hong Kong have voiced their concerns. Talk of relocating to safer places for business is in the air.

Therefore, the NSL will incur great economic costs for Beijing. Yet, the will of the Hong Kong people to defy Beijing's control, as shown in the 2019 protest, suggests that the resistance will not easily die down because of the NSL. The US, UK, Taiwan, and other governments are going to offer an exit option like political asylum for persecuted Hong Kong citizens. This would keep the resistance alive. The movement might go underground, waiting for new opportunities to flare up again, but it won't go away easily. More worrying is that with the imposition of yet another structure of control, including Chinese public security officials stationing in Hong Kong, Beijing is injecting another source of instability among the establishment elite. Local business elite and pro-establishment politicians, whom Beijing has relied on in the governance of Hong Kong, were sidelined and even kept in the dark in the NSL legislative process. They now would need to fear whether they could be potential victims of the NSL themselves. Infighting behind closed doors between elite factions linked to competing vested interests in Beijing has been becoming more and more apparent in recent years. It is likely to intensify in the years to come.

In sum, the NSL is not likely to make Hong Kong more stable. It may tranquilize the city for a short while, but in the long run, it will be a recipe for more unrest.

2 EUROPE

Who Decides in Europe?

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The EU is broken – long live Europe? We can and we should move towards a completely redesigned Europe to save the European project. If we do not, it may end in a dystopia dominated by populism and nationalism. We have forgotten that without utopia, there is no better future. As the great Swiss composer Ernst Bloch once said, a society needs a permanent stream of utopian thinking. Europe needs this now, more than ever, as the continent is shaken by multiple crises. Serbian human rights activist Borka Pavicevic wrote the sentence: 'The refugees come to ask us who we are. And we need to answer them.' Right now, the European Union does not have a sufficient answer. The ebbing out of utopian energy is therefore the most ardent problem in Europe. It is thus time to rediscover what Europe once wanted to be: A veritable transnational, European democracy. That democracy can be in bad hands when left to nationalist movements is not only the European experience of the 1920s; it is repeating in front of our eyes today. And precisely this was the motivation for the foundation of the European Union: to disentangle democracy from the nation state to avoid nationalism. Europe thus needs a reset. It must go back to the roots of its own founding idea. The utopia is simple: One market, one currency, one democracy. That's all! Two of them – the market and the currency – have already been achieved in (most of) the European Union today. As much as national elites were willing to Europeanize the market and currency, they were unwilling to do the same in the political arena. As such, in recent years, they administered their national democracies through largely neutralized grand coalition schemes lacking political contours, leading to a perfect erosion of state functions on the national level.

National elites fiercely resisted every idea to build channels of communication, processes of mutual recognition or transnational voting and party systems, which would allow the European citizens to merge their interests. For this would also have challenged the monopoly of representation of the national ruling classes, both internally and at the supranational level, thus tleaving them as the only intercessors of 'their' citizens regarding the European institutions. In other words: the all so desired 'politization' of Europe, where the arbitrage of political decision-making could have been organized beyond nation state sovereignty, never took place. The political system of the EU with the EU Council as its 'grail' inherently mirrors this pattern: things in the collective interest of all European citizens are systemically torpedoed by 'national cards', be that a common refugee policy or a European unemployment scheme.

The European citizens know this and currently put the EU institutions under pressure from different sides. A rough half of them wants to go back to nationalism; the other half wants a more united Europe. A part of the civil society, especially young people, is therefore, more and more passionate about renewing old structures of the EU and its so-called "Trilogy", which does not appropriately represent the will of the European people, but is only governed by the European Council in nn opaque and barely accountable manner.

This raises the question of what we are doing in this nearly Hegelian mo-

ment, in which a system is politically exhausted, but at the same time has no power to reform itself, because it is in a populist state of shock and afraid to move. Populism could only be on the rise, because the citizens were the forgotten entity in the whole EU's institutional set-up, which displays a parliament nearly without legislative power, no accountability and a parliament without control of the budget or the executive power of the EU. The so-called 'democratic deficit' of the EU became unbearable in recent crisis years and legitimized critic was left to the so-called populists, as the EU system showed increasing inertia to change. The sovereignty question – who decides in the EU? – became wide open and until it is clearly answered (nation state vs. Europe), the EU will probably not have enough political power to deal with the policies it should better succeed in. One of the most immanent elements of the EU's democratic deficit is that citizens – however the real sovereign of the system – are not equal in front of the law.

Europe's biggest problem: The nation state?

Nation state vs. Europe is the new political paradigm which has replaced the left-right dichotomy in European politics. Especially since identitarian populist movements claim sovereignty back: Salvini against Brussels on the Italian budget, Orban against Brussels on refugees, Poland against Brussels on lawyers' retirement, Germany against Brussels on carbon pollution in towns etc. Who is this Brussel's beast that the nation states now want to fight down, resist against or at least ignore? However, it is in all these cases not the nation firing back against Brussels regulations or orders. It is – to make things more complex – in each case only half of the nation. We are told to witness a time of 'renationalisation' in Europe these days. Yet - in reality - we are experiencing across the continent the split of nations: whole societies fall into two pieces.

On the one hand, there is a cosmopolitan, rather urban, educated, flexible, value-open, liberal part of society, clinging to 'Europe'. Those are, in the wording of former British prime minister Theresa May the 'citizens of nowhere'. On the other hand, a rural, uneducated, immobile, older and male part of society who wants an ideal construct of the nation back to keep control over too many changes and provide security. Those are the 'citizens of somewhere'. The question is: who can claim to be the real Italians, the real Brits, the real Poles or the real Germans? Who stands for the nation? Who is the people? In the British case the Brexiters, the Remainers or who? Today's nation state, in a way, is the victim of this historical process.

If – in the theoretical paradigm of the Italian philosopher Giorgio Agamben – an electoral body falls into two or more non-reconcilable parts, the country is in the state of civil war – Stasis, in its Greek expression. Stasis means institutional deadlock. In other words, a system that has not sufficiently adapted to change and that therefore confronts objection from the outside. That is the confrontation EU vs. 'populists' today. It is too easy to blame the so-called populists for nibbling at the EU. Rather the EU must answer the question of whome has the legitimate monopoly
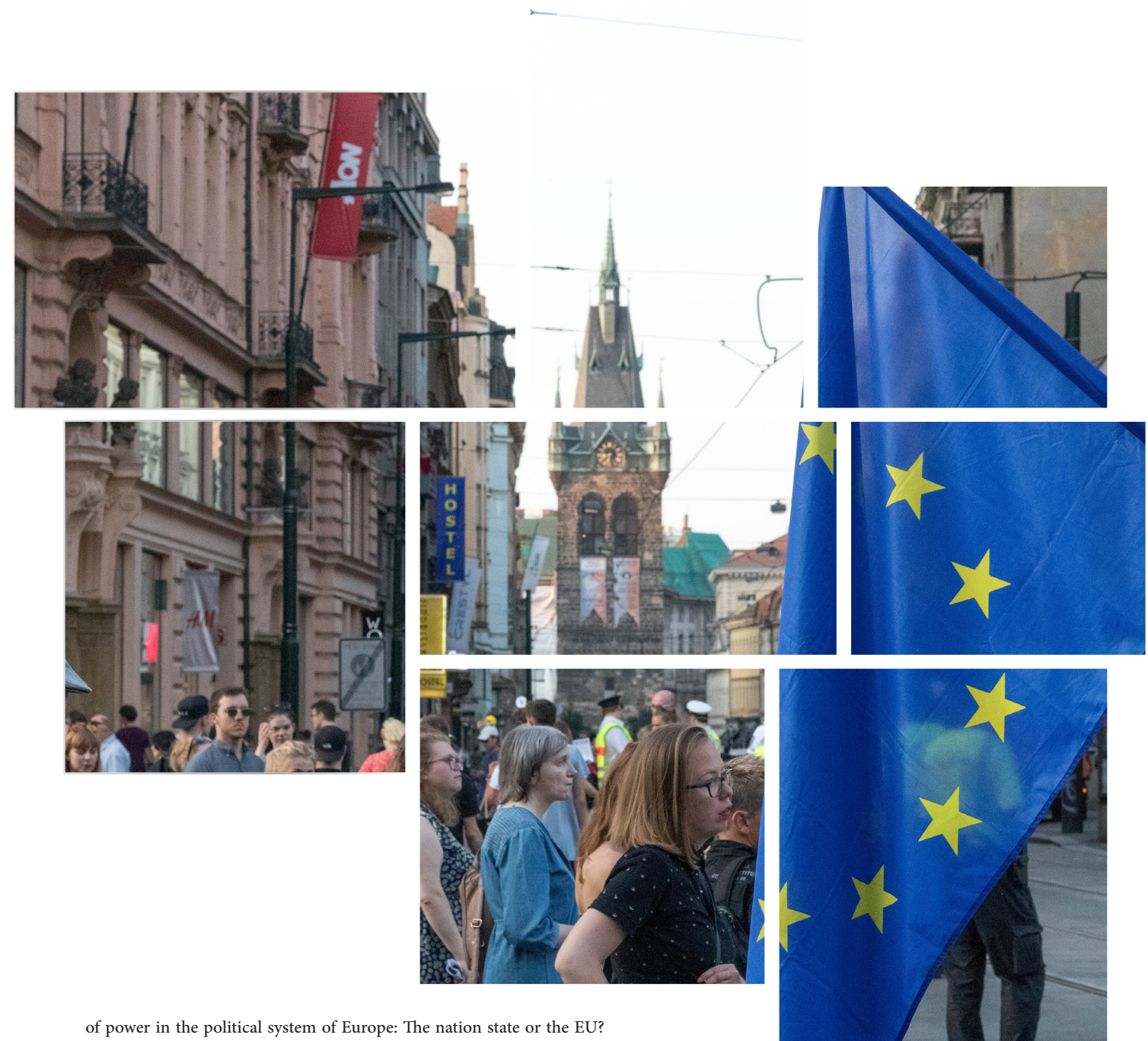
of power in the political system of Europe: The nation state or the EU? And how is it legitimized?

Who decides?

Time to let go the EU and to move away from "Unites States of Europe". Time to discover the citizens in the European project and to remember, en passant, that citizens, not states, are sovereign. The Maastricht Treaty promised de facto a 'Union of States' and a 'Union of Citizens'. Yet, only the former materialized. To make this concrete: In essence, British citizens, now affected by Brexit, would – in theory – stay European citizens, despite the fact of the United Kingdom leaving the EU. Nothing demonstrated more crudely that 'European citizenship' right now is only an empty shell. Thousands of British citizens living in continental Europe are affected by Brexit; as much as many European citizens, living and working in the UK. Focusing on the notion of 'European citizenship' when thinking about ways and steps to change and improve European

democracy thus is important.

But when it comes to what the French sociologist Pierre Rosanvallon calls 'le sacre du citoyen', i.e. the sacred good of the citizen, the essence of citizenship, we cannot be described as European citizens.[1] The one principle that needs to be applied to Europe is this: in a democracy, citizens are all equal in front of the law: equal in voting, taxes and social rights. Europeans citizens remain compartmentalized by national law containers. A political project can never function like this. If we want to realize one European democracy, we need to strive for the principle of political equality. If the French revolution brought legal equality beyond classes, the European revolution of the 21st century must bring legal equality beyond nations. That would be a compelling offer for Europeans citizens to untie behind, from South to North, from East to West. This is

probably the only compelling offer capable to healing the wounds of the cumulated European crises. Europe cannot succeed if, within the same political project, the nation state is basically used as tool for competition, be it on taxes or on welfare. The entire reshuffling of the political system of Europe stems from the principle of political equality, which is also the conditio sine qua non for a fully fletched transnational, representative parliamentarian democracy in Europe, corresponding to the principle of division of powers. The principle of political equality and the principle of division of powers are two things never put into question in national democracies: time to grant European democracy this treatment.

A general, direct and equal voting system ('one person, one vote') for all European citizens would thus be the next important step in establishing a political unity on the continent. The objection that such a move outweighs the citizens of the small states – e.g., Luxemburg or Malta – by the big states, especially Germany is illegitimate. It is precisely the parliamentarisation of the vote which would de-homogenize the German vote because not all Germans vote the same. Through full parliamentarisation, the system would be shifted from 'nationally aggregated' voting towards a 'politics-tops-nation' system, in which the political orientation matters more than the ethnic or national background. It does not matter which nationality one has, when it comes to the question, whether one would like to see European unemployment insurance. In this precise decision, probably Germans citizens would have given a diversified vote, whereas the German representative in the European Council as aggregated vote opted against.

Recently, the EU has finally, albeit a bit late, discovered its 'misunderstood citizens' (or 'verkannte Bürger' in the words of the German social historian Hartmut Kaelble) as political subjects.[2] It was only in 2018 and 2019 that countless citizens' consultations were carried out in all European member states as per EU Council decision in the run-up to the European elections. However, the problem has never been that we do not know what the citizens of Europe really want, it is the lacking possibilities for its implementation that is the problem. In fact, the crucial problem seems to be that we are now constantly talking about European citizens, but the crux of the matter is, of course, that none of us is really a European citizen. When it comes to European democracy - and the question of how European citizens will be able to participate in the future - the citizens themselves are the real players.

The 'Delors approach' could still serve us well today and should inspire us. This means that it is important to set a timeframe in case you cannot achieve something immediately. This requires a treaty, a clear goal, a timeframe and clearly defined intermediate steps, or milestones. And finally, a cut-off date for the changeover to a European system. The introduction of the Euro followed the same approach: A treaty was made, which specified a deadline and a cut-off date, the project was divided into intermediate steps and everybody was committed to one European goal. There were three steps: The European Monetary Union was created in 1994, and the exchange were rates fixed in 1999. And finally, on 1

January 2002, all coins and banknotes were converted. According to this approach – treaty, timeframe, intermediate steps, deadline – we could bring about a European citizenship via a treaty over the next 5, 10, 15 or 20 years. We could define intermediate steps – a European social security number by 2030, a European tax number by 2035, and finally a uniform European ID card by 2040. If this seems too daring, one could implement this with a neutral impact on the existing population, i.e. the change would only apply to European citizens born after conclusion of the treaty. Over the next 18 years we would thus socialize future generations into a European citizenship and hence into a European democracy, just like we have socialized everybody into the euro since 2002 and children nowadays cannot even remember that things used to be any different. The establishment of a true European citizenship, which would give European citizens that triad of civil, political and social rights, would then basically mean the completion of a political union in Europe, where

European citizens would have equal rights and could start to establish a real European democracy.

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[1] Pierre Rosanvallon, Le Sacre du Citoyen, Paris, 1994.

[2] Hartmut Kaelble: Die verkannten Bürger. Eine andere Geschichte der europäischen Integration, (The Misunderstood Citizens. A Different History of European Integration), Berlin, 2019.

3 LATIN AMERICA

Latin America's 'Autumn of Discontent'

Protests in Bolivia, Chile and Ecuador Highlight Consistent Inefficiencies

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Protests have raged through Bolivia, Chile, and Ecuador in the latter half of 2019, sending South America into a frenzy all too familiar in the continent's history. Whether it was a presidential run in violation of the Constitution, an increase in metro fares, or a slash in gas subsidies, respectively, citizens throughout the countries are taking their voices to the streets, protesting for weeks, even months, in hopes of bringing change.

While the protests are all separate in their grievances, hints of the same issues ring throughout the protests: government distrust, inefficiency, and bureaucratic entitlements. South Americans are growing tired of institutions that are often dated, they are unhappy with low income and low employment levels, and they have lost faith in their once valiant leadership.

Bolivia: The End of Evo Morales' Fourteen Year Reign

On November 10th, 2019, former President Evo Morales resigned from the presidency of the Plurinational State of Bolivia.[1] Following accusations of fraudulent elections and over two weeks of violent protests that saw at least 17 people dead in major Bolivian cities such as Santa Cruz, La Paz, and Cochabamba, the armed forces turned their backs on Morales and formally requested his resignation. Morales, vice-president Alvaro García, and Senate president Adriana Salvatierra, all members of Morales' Movimiento para el Socialismo (MAS), also resigned.

Next in succession according to Bolivia rule is Jeanine Áñez of the opposition Movimiento Demócrata Social, the second vice-president of the Senate, who assumed the presidency following Morales' resignation. As of 2001, Bolivian law states that presidential operations must not be suspended, so that whomever is next in succession assumes the presidency ipso facto, that is without the need to have a quorum, but they also must call elections within 90 days.[2] Bolivia must also elect new members of the Electoral Supreme Court, as the previous members had been arrested and accused of fraud. On November 20th, 2019, the interim government began the first phase of the process to call new elections by sending a proposal to Parliament.

Áñez' promised Bolivia would have a new government by January 22, 2020, a federal holiday and the day Bolivia celebrates the anniversary of officially becoming a plurinational state, yet this proved complicated and polemic. Controversy with Áñez emerged with her interim government on issues such as bringing religion into politics, alleged arrest of political enemies, and Áñez presenting herself as candidate for president.

Shortly after she began the process to call elections for a new president, Áñez presented herself as a candidate for election, a decision with which many disagreed. Áñez made this decision based on her feelings that no other candidate can unify the country against the MAS party, as MAS still retains the legislative majority.

However, many claim this violates the transitional process and that elections would no longer be neutral.[3] Unrest with Áñez and the opposition built up, leading to more violent protests erupting in the streets. The protests showed no political allegiance, as this time they called for Áñez' resignation. Presidential elections will be held in Bolivia on May 3, 2020, marking the first election in almost 20 years in which Evo Morales is not a candidate.[4]

The Rise and Fall of Evo Morales

In 2006, Morales became the first indigenous president of a country in which the population is over 60% indigenous, giving hope to a previously neglected population. During his first term, he altered the constitution to allow for a president to run for a second term.[5] This was passed in 2009, the same year in which he won his second term and governed until 2014. Morales then stated in 2014 that he would not run for reelection in what would have been his third term. However, he did so and won after he filed an appeal claiming he should be able to run because his first term did not count given that it was under the previous constitution. During this third term, he held a referendum in 2016 appealing to Bolivians for a chance to run for a fourth consecutive term, a referendum which he narrowly lost.[6] At the time, he claimed he would respect the results, but in October 2019 he showed otherwise, running for office for a fourth time.

Morales claimed victory despite not legally being able to run for office. Allegations of fraud and false counts emerged on the night of the election, and protestors took to the streets as a reaction. To win the presidency in Bolivia, a candidate must either receive 50% of the vote or 40% of the vote and have a 10-point lead. Bolivia runs on a two-count system: there is a quick count, which has no legal bearing, and then an overall count when all the votes are tallied. The Organization of American States (OAS), a regional body comprised of the countries of the Americas (except Cuba) and representatives, sent an electoral mission to monitor the election, as they do with many elections in the region. What they found, however, were several irregularities, according to a report.[7] After this initial report, Morales invited a team of OAS auditors to audit the election results. They found irregularities in both the voter count and technical systems of the election, issuing a report claiming: "flawed transmission systems for preliminary elections results and the final count" and "forged signatures and alteration of tally sheets". This led to increased protests and violence in the streets.

Following this report and days of protests, both the police and armed forces of Bolivia turned their backs on Morales. Following this dramatic shift in loyalty, the commander of the military, Williams Kaliman, publicly suggested that Morales step down, which Morales did shortly after.

What does this mean for Bolivia's future?
An official source, who requested anonymity, claimed that Bolivia was a polarized country under Morales. "[When you arrive in Bolivia], the external perception is confirmed. MAS has control of practically everything, all the state agencies, the executive, the assembly, the judicial power, and the electoral power. They abide by the law when it's convenient. There's pressure on those who are critical of the government. There's no censorship like there is with Chavismo [Hugo Chavez, former president of Venezuela], but there are other indirect forms of pressure. There's pressure against the political opposition".[8]

Given this, it is no surprise that many people were upset with Morales claiming victory, but it is also important to note that a large proportion of Bolivians still support him, and it will be hard to change their minds. The future of the Bolivian presidency, as well as the polarization it brings, will be determined in 2020. Elections have been postponed due to the coronavirus pandemic; the proposed timeline is between June 28th and September 27th, 2020.[9]

Bolivia is currently under a full, strict quarantine given the rise of COVID-19 in the country. Borders are closed, citizens can only leave their homes during certain hours and they can only leave once a week to purchase groceries and other needs; the military has been brought into some cities to force quarantine measures.[10]

Chile: Youth Call for Changes to Dictatorship-Era Constitution and Institutions

For years now, Chile earned the label of poster child for Latin American countries, both politically and economically, largely due to the period of growth started under the dictatorship of Augusto Pinochet. During this time, Milton Friedman and other economists from the University of Chicago jumpstarted Chile's economic growth the country still enjoyed today. Yet as protests in recent months have shown, this economic growth has not been enough to satisfy all Chileans, and they are bringing their feelings to the streets.

A proposed increase in metro fees in October 2019 was the last straw for many Chileans who struggle to make ends meet with the wages they currently earn. After accounting for taxes and essentials such as healthcare, education, and transportation, the average Chilean is left with a small percentage of his or her paycheck.

Another area in which the country has not seen growth, or change, since the dictatorship era is its institutions. The grievances with which Chileans have issues include the healthcare, education, and transportation systems. Whether public or private, these fees can dig into a minimum wage paycheck. Transportation alone can be up to 20% of their take-home pay. Protestors are also upset with the pension system in Chile, the privatized water system, and increasing prices of electricity.[11] Wages have not grown proportionally to the economic growth in the country, and the population has felt the effects.

Elsewhere, protestors have brought attention to Chile's constitution, written in 1982 under the dictatorship of Augusto Pinochet. Many Chileans claim that the Constitution and the institutions are outdated, written and established during a time of horror in the country, and need to be changed. Protestors have called for the writing of a new constitution, a problem in itself when it comes to bringing parties to the table to write a new document.[12] Nonetheless, the Chilean government has proposed a plebiscite to take place in April 2020 to decide on the writing of a new constitution; if this passes, during the months following and into 2021, those who will rewrite the Constitution will be elected by Chilean citizens and rewrite a document to be voted on in the months following, also by Chilean citizens.[13]

The protestors have taken to the streets countrywide, in a unified form, to protest against multiple grievances. Many of the protesters are young, often university-age students, who seek a better future through government changes. However, their means have sometimes been questionable: they range from signs and chants, to the banging of pots and pans, known throughout Latin America as cacerolazos, to the burning of buses, metro stations, and other public spaces.

Thousands of protestors, most seemingly between 16 and 30 years old, congregate in the streets with Chilean flags and signs with messages ranging from "Fuera Piñera" (Pinera Out), "#Chile Despierta" (Chile's Awake), "No Estamos en Guerra" (We are not at War), "Educacion Libre y Digna" (Free and Worthy Education), "No Son $30, Son 30 Anos, #NuevaConstitución" (It's not 30 [Chilean] pesos [$0.04 USD], it's 30

years, #NewConstitution), referring to the Chilean Constitution of 1980. Signs also calling for Piñera to step down fly throughout the city as well; protestors say they will not stop until he steps down.

However, the government has been slow to respond. Sebastian Piñera, the millionaire president in his second non-consecutive elected term (the constitution of 1982 does not permit consecutive terms), has slowly made changes, including requesting the resignation of his entire cabinet, yet this has not been enough for protesters' demands.

The nationwide protests have been met with violence from the Chilean police and military. Hundreds of Chilean protesters have lost vision and been badly injured, met with violence, tear gas, and rubber bullets in the streets. Often scenes of army tanks strolling through the streets populate both local and international media, with scenes of up to 4 army tanks on one street. Piñera also has sent the army tanks to patrol the streets for anyone who violates the curfew, an image that haunts Chileans with the memory of the military dictatorship that created economic growth at the cost of roughly 3,000 human lives.

From 1973 to 1990, Augusto Pinochet ruled over Chile, at the height of the Cold War, following a US-assisted military coup of Salvador Allende. Under Pinochet, thousands of Chileans were kidnapped, tortured and killed, a memory that still plagues the country today. The present-day brutality is a memory that has been nothing short of traumatic for Chileans who remember the dictatorship well, or at least know the stories they have been told.

At the time of writing, the protests seemed to have calmed down, and

Chileans await the plebiscite of the rewriting of a new constitution in April 2020. Yet the vote on the new constitution has been delayed given the rise of COVID-19 in Chile. Chile's response to the virus was slow, and the country does not have a unified quarantine strategy. The borders are closed, but Piñera, among others such as Jair Bolsonaro of Brazil, has been accused of focusing more on the health of the economy than of the Chilean people.

Ecuador: Lenin Moreno's Battle with Ecuador's Indigenous Population

In Ecuador, the tune does not ring as far back as the legacy of a dictator or a president in power for nearly 14 consecutive years. However, in Ecuador, the enemy was two-fold, and one more common than the other: the International Monetary Fund (IMF). Indeed, the region has found itself at odds for quite some time with the DC-based institution. The relationship between the IMF and several countries' governments over the last 30 years has been nothing short of tumultuous. From Argentina to Brazil and now Ecuador, the institution has brokered deals for the lending of large sums of money in exchange for fiscal reforms and strict austerity measures. However, Ecuador was one country in which the deal collapsed even before it started.

Following an announcement by Ecuadorian president Lenin Moreno regarding the elimination of fuel subsidies as part of a potential economic assistance package to be accepted by the IMF, Ecuador, one of two members of OPEC (Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries) in the Americas,[14] saw a shift in its social scene it had not for nearly 20 years. Protests led by indigenous groups took to the streets against the elim-

ination of subsidies. In the midst of the protests, Moreno turned away the reform package and cut the deal with the IMF. However, it was not before protests rang through the streets for weeks, leading to the death of seven, more than 1,100 arrests, and 1,340 injured.[15]

Following weeks of protests in the country, mainly in the capital city of Quito, the government and the indigenous groups entered into a dialogue to quell the violence and exchange ideas. An agreement was reached on October 14, 2019, which repealed the law that was to eliminate fuel subsidies among other parts of the agreement, and the violence and protests in Ecuador calmed.[16] At time of writing, no further protests in Ecuador have occurred surrounding the fuel subsidies. Citizens resumed their normal lives, and there have not been protests since.

However, Ecuador finds itself as one of the worst victims of COVID-19 in Latin America. In Guayaquil, a city with a similar-sized population to Quito and the business capital of Ecuador, bodies have been left in streets as an effect of the damage COVID-19 has ravaged on Ecuador. The country is currently under quarantine, with borders closed, as it continues to combat the virus.

Where do Bolivia, Chile, and Ecuador go from here?

Given the rise of COVID-19 in the region, the Bolivian government is focused on confronting the virus, choosing to militarize some of its larger cities; Chile is seemingly more focused on the economy as it was slow to close its borders in comparison with its regional neighbors; Ecuador, the country most hard hit by the virus in Latin America, is struggling to find the balance between economy and health. The region overall is expected to see an economic contraction, and is ill-prepared with supplies, testing kits and other items necessary to combat the virus.

Prior to COVID-19, the three countries had seen many different conclusions to the issues. The protests in Ecuador calmed, and people were able to return to their normal ways of life. In Bolivia, the tension between political parties remained, and elections were slated to take place in May, with the interim president presenting herself as a candidate, despite many questioning her intentions. Chile was slated to begin the voting process in creating its new constitution in April 2020 but has been forced to postpone this. Nevertheless, the tension between citizens and

government remains, with many still calling for Piñera's resignation. Yet what the protests all throughout the region show are common themes. South Americans are growing tired of institutions that are often dated, they are unhappy with low income and low employment levels, and they have lost faith in their once valiant leadership.

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Argentina on the Brink:
A Sovereign Debt Crisis with Consequences for the Country's Economy and Social Fabric

In 2001, Argentina's then-president Fernando de la Rúa fled the presidential residence by helicopter amid deadly riots against the government's response to a deep financial crisis. Argentina's subsequent default on its sovereign debt effectively barred it from borrowing in global financial markets for years and ushered in over a decade of populist policies under the successive Peronist administrations of the Kirchner political dynasty.

Today, Argentina faces another crisis as it scrambles to avoid its ninth sovereign debt default. The administration of recently elected President Alberto Fernández finds itself in a precarious financial situation due to questionable policies of preceding governments, compounded by inter-

An interview with Guido Sandleris, former President of the Central Bank of Argentina (2018-2019)

The following transcript has been edited for brevity and clarity.

mittent recessions since 2011. Meanwhile, Argentinians have become increasingly disillusioned with the government's fiscal mismanagement, which they blame for a rising poverty rate and rampant inflation.

Earlier this year, the SAIS Europe Journal sat down with Guido Sandleris, Argentina's former central bank president (2018-2019) under the administration of President Mauricio Macri. In the discussion, Mr. Sandleris explains the recent history of the current debt crisis and the challenges Argentina faces as it works to avoid another devastating default.

Europe Journal:
Let's start with the big thing right now: the current debt crisis. What would you say are the main causes? Is it a political problem? An economic problem? Both?

Guido Sandleris:
One of the things that is puzzling about Argentina is that when we look at the recent economic history of the country you see that systematically, almost every decade, we are hit with a financial crisis. Every financial crisis is due to a combination of factors. First, I believe that Argentina missed an opportunity to really change the fundamental underlying factors of the economy at a time of very high commodity prices, which are important for a big exporter like Argentina. This occurred under two Peronist governments: those of Presidents, Néstor Kirchner and then Cristina Fernández de Kirchner, his wife. Second, the Macri administration tried to correct the economic imbalances that it inherited, but it was

unable to achieve growth and low inflation at the same time.

Let me explain this in more detail, when you look at the economy that former President Macri inherited, you see a large fiscal deficit, and this was something that basically was the result of increased government spending for 12 years thanks to populist policies. In Argentina, it used to be the case for many, many years that the government's expenditure amounted to approximately 25% of GDP. Between 2003 and 2015, it went up to almost 41% of GDP. Basically, the windfall from high commodity prices was used to expand government spending and not in the most productive fashion.

On top of that, you had other distortions in the economy. The exchange rate was overvalued. That made Argentina's exports expensive, and

therefore, not competitive. And it imported more than it exported, so we had a current account deficit. The previous administration had to implement capital controls and import restrictions in part to deal with that. So, by 2015 there was a fiscal imbalance, an external trade imbalance, as well as some distortions in the price of utilities. This combination, plus some mistakes that the administration made, is what led to this crisis.

I mentioned the imbalances that the Macri administration tried to solve. If you look at where the economy was at the end of 2019, the fiscal deficit was gone. You have a balanced budget. The external imbalance is gone and some of the distortions in the price of utilities are gone. But the administration was not able to do that and at the same time usher in economic growth while keeping inflation down. That ended up costing Macri the election in 2019. We will probably see many of the market-oriented reforms that the previous administration tried to implement reversed.

Europe Journal:

What do you think are the main drivers of discontent in Argentinian society today? There's a lot of talk about the lack of mobility and being caught in the middle-income trap. Do you see that as unique to Argentina or more of a regional phenomenon?

Guido Sandleris:

Argentina is distinct from the region because I think we are in some respects, at least in the macroeconomic area, in a different situation. When you look at the last eight years, Argentina hasn't grown. You had inflation averaging 30%. When you look at the average for the region, inflation was below 5%. Most economies also grew, though only slightly. Latin America is one of the regions in the world, alongside the European Union, that has grown the least: around 1.2% on average in the last decade, with the world average at 3.5%.

So I think that part of the discontent we are seeing in Argentina is associated with the fact that when you look at the last decade, you have an economy that has grown very little. And when you look at the last 40 years, you see an economy that in only 5 of the last 40 years had two things happening at the same time: positive growth and inflation below 5%.

In Argentina we're not growing because the economy is hitting the wall of financial distress almost every decade. So it's in a worse situation although the starting point is probably better because the level of income is higher than most countries in the region. When you look at what's going on in the region, I think what we are seeing is there was a period, not in the last decade but the in the decade before that, in which high commodity prices allowed most of these economies to achieve stability. And they grew relatively fast. Chile did it a bit before. Mexico did it around the same time. Others like Peru, Bolivia, Uruguay did not this last decade but the previous one. That was fantastic for the region.

Then came this last decade in which things didn't go as well. The region

went from being a relatively high growing one to one of average growth: between one and a half and 2% depending if you include Venezuela or not.

So I think that part of what we are seeing in the region is discontent because we achieved certain things, but there is still a long way to go to lift many people out of poverty, to provide a better life for the new class. Also, although the triggers of social unrest vary across countries, there are some contagious effects. Globally, we are seeing a reshuffling of liberal institutions, from Brexit to Trump in the U.S. There is an underlying current of discontent that has led some countries to vote for what I think were traditionally political outsiders into office, some of whom are implementing more populist policies. I have yet to form a good view on what's going on and where this is going to lead us.

Europe Journal:

How closely have the current administration and Argentinians in general been watching the protests in Chile in late 2019 against austerity? Has that had repercussions in Argentina?

Guido Sandleris:

One of the lessons from what we saw at the end of last year, in Chile, Hong Kong, and in countries like France, is that there is a much higher sensitivity towards austerity measures. If you look at what happened in Chile, the tipping point for the social unrest was a very, very, relatively speaking, small increase in transport prices. We're talking about a 1-2% increase.

If you look at what happened during the Macri administration, as I mentioned, there were huge distortions in the price of utilities and transportation. When you were heating your house for a month, like my apartment for instance, that would cost as much as a croissant and a coffee. There were huge distortions. During the Macri administration, those distortions were corrected, and I think that should be given some credit. If you look at gas prices, they increased by over 100%. Electricity also increased on a similar scale. Of course, if we put together fiscal austerity and these kinds of measures, they don't make a government popular. I think the strategy of the government (the way in which it was done) allowed Argentine society to be able to weather those increases. They were painful for many people, but without the kind of social disruption that we've seen recently in other countries.

However, there is what I would call "austerity fatigue" in the country. In the initial months of the Fernández administration, they relaxed the fiscal stance but less than what many expected. Fernández adjusted public pensions but he also delayed utility price hikes. He has tried to achieve fiscal consolidation without threatening stability. Of course, I think that what has been going on in the region, and in the world, is affecting how policies have been shaped in Argentina.

Europe Journal:

Since you mentioned Vice President Cristina Fernández de Kirchner, there's an interesting dynamic in the government now where she represents the far-left populist wing of the Peronist party and President Alberto Fernández represents the center left. Recently, she appears to have preempted the government (and the president) by saying she wants Argentina's creditors to take a haircut. Do you think this was a tactical play on the part of the administration or is this evidence of the center-left vs. far-left dynamic in this government and will that be tenable?

Guido Sandleris:

I think it's a combination of both things. I agree with your description; Alberto Fernández is more moderate than Cristina Fernández in terms of economic policy and the negotiation strategy. I think what we are now seeing is Alberto Fernández and his economic team calling the shots. I think the Peronist government understands that the IMF doesn't take a haircut. Instead what they do is postpone some of the payments, and perhaps lower the interest rate below the market rate. So I don't think it is significant if Cristina Fernández is trying to push President Fernández into any one position by saying these things.

Europe Journal:

President Fernández has said there is no way the government will pursue austerity policies despite what the IMF has requested. Is that because of the midterm elections next year or do you think it's rhetorical – part

of his tough bargaining stance that will soften as the two sides work towards a deal?

Guido Sandleris:

When you look at what the Fernández administration has done in the first couple of months, you see that they relaxed the fiscal stance but not too much. They introduced some measures on pensions and increased some taxes. In a sense, the road that they've chosen on the fiscal front in the initial months is one that doesn't say, "we are going to spend like crazy." It says we are going to try to keep it more or less as it is.

Perhaps more worrisome is a recent statement by the economy minister, Martín Guzmán, who said the country would go into a primary surplus only in a few years. That came a bit as a surprise. I think the fiscal front has been the Achilles' heel of the Argentine economy. Systematic fiscal deficit has forced Argentina to do one of two

things in the past: when there is financing, it borrows. When there is no financing, it prints money, which leads to high inflation. That process has led to a roughly once-a-decade financial crisis. So I think that one of the things that will be crucial is that this administration is able to continue with the fiscal consolidation of the previous administration. If we achieve that – if we have two very different parties with very different views of how the economy works but can still agree on the fiscal front – I think it would be a big step forward.

Europe Journal:

Typically, when you see the IMF come into a country, it opens the floodgates for foreign investment. Has that been the case in Argentina? Do you think the multiple defaults have been a hindrance to sustained foreign investment?

Guido Sandleris:

No. In Argentina, it didn't happen. I don't think the reason is the history of the defaults. I think it's something that goes deeper in which the history of default is just one symptom of the lack of political consensus on some basic issues. If you look at Peru, Uruguay, Chile, or Colombia, even Bolivia with the recent unrest, you see economies where macroeconomic policies are more or less consistent. So, although the political system might be in a crisis, you don't observe a complete disruption of the fiscal economics. You don't observe inflation spiking, or a huge depreciation

of the currency. We still need to achieve that in Argentina. That is, I think, the biggest challenge for Argentine political leaders is to be able to achieve consensus. Once that consensus is there, we will be able to move on to more interesting questions. How do we grow? How do we make ourselves more productive? Most countries in the world have been able to reach this consensus. We haven't. It's insane how a presidential election in Argentina can cause the amount of disruption that it causes. That doesn't happen in other countries in which the political system is in a worse state of crisis than ours.

Europe Journal:

Argentina has been in ongoing negotiations with the IMF and we've seen widespread anti-austerity protests in recent months. How do you think these negotiations are going to shape the future of Argentina?

Guido Sandleris:

The IMF is not popular in Argentina. They are the ones who come in and lend to a country when it has lost market access. In exchange, they impose some conditions on reforms that they think would be good. People tend to resent that. Another issue with the IMF that may make it unpopular is that it tends to be bureaucratic. When you are making policy with real-world consequences, having to wait for 10,000 committees of the IMF to approve something is a bit frustrating. But I think that the IMF plays an important role in the world economy.

Argentina is a big debtor of the IMF right now. (Former President Mauricio Macri brokered Argentina's $57bn deal – the biggest in the IMF's history - originally set to be repaid by 2023). I think negotiations between the Argentine government and the IMF will continue, and it's likely Argentina will not have to start making payments until next year. So it's likely that those payments will be postponed until a new program is in place by next year.

Europe Journal:

By next year?

Guido Sandleris:

Maybe earlier. For sure, the payment deadline is before next year, but my guess is that the government will try to roll that payment over. So the way you go forward is with a new program. We are already seeing some negotiations with the Fund. I think that the process of the debt restructuring might benefit from some IMF involvement. So maybe we'll see some progress before next year.

Europe Journal:

Thanks for your time. A lot to watch in the coming months.

Guido Sandleris:

Yes. My pleasure.

4 MIDDLE EAST & NORTH AFRICA

Syria: A Climate War
The Gap Within International Refugee Protection

The current literature on the Syrian conflict focuses on different causes for triggering the disputes. Some blame the Assad regime, while others blame the "deep religious divides" within Syrian society, or economic factors.[1] [2] [3] However, qualifying the conflict as sectarian, or purely political, is not satisfactory. The conflict found its roots in a myriad of factors. Contrary to what is often portrayed, the diverse ethno-religious communities of Syria have accomplished a role of harmonization of the conflict throughout Syrian history.[4] Additionally, most research on Syria was conducted before the conflict started in 2011. The following years proved to be difficult for western researchers to access the country, impeding up-to-date and unbiased field research made during the conflict. Thus, this paper intends to share the most recent information directly from the field, from investigations ran during the conflict between 2017 and 2020 in Damascus, Malula, Homs and Aleppo.

In its first part, this article will focus on the effects of climate change that contributed to triggering the first rebellions in Syria by 2011, by investigating the deterioration of drought cycles in the country.[5] These droughts, specifically the one that took place between 2006 and 2010, led to the depletion of natural resources and arable land in the rural areas, as well as the displacement of the impoverished and rebellious peasantry to the outskirts of the main cities by the end of the decade. Consequently, the droughts, summed to other socio-political grudges, might be connected to an increase in popular disatisfaction and pressure on the government. In short, the article will investigate the correlation between the Syrian conflict and climate change.

In its second part, the research will analyze the 1951 Geneva Convention's scope of protection of refugees. As the effects of climate change become more apparent – rising ocean levels, more severe cycles of drought, diminishing precipitation levels, all contributing to populational tension – international organizations start considering it as a "threat multiplier" and holding countries accountable for the degradation of their natural resources. Furthermore, in January 2020, there was a groundbreaking precedent established on "Teitiota v Chief Executive Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment of New Zealand", opening the possibility of applying non-refoulement to individuals prevenient from regions affected by climate change. Non-refoulement is a key principle from the refugee protection framework that prohibits hostor transit countries to send asylum seekers and refugees back to their countries of origin. Ultimately, the research will aim to defend a potential expansion of the 1951 Geneva Convention's scope of protection to include individuals, or social groups, seeking asylum due to environmental reasons that pose an immediate threat to their lives.

As sources to the article, the investigation relies on academic articles with in-depth weather analysis of the Levant, and reports from the United Nations. Also, the research will utilize the author's findings gathered on the field in Syria during the conflict.

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The Droughts of Syria and its Effects on the Peasantry – Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs)

In the last decades, the small country - though Syria is big, only 25% of its land is arable - became overpopulated. It faced a population growth from 3 million people in 1946 to almost 23 million in 2010. On top of that, Syria's economy became unstable, contributing to the tenuous situation. According to the World Bank, until 2011 more than 20% of the country's GDP consisted of agricultural output, while 17% of its population was employed in this sector. Therefore, with the cycles of droughts and their increased severity in the last two decades, the country's production and income suffered drastic variations.

Droughts are not uncommon in semi-arid Syria. For centuries, the peasants of the region have endured its endless cycles. As a rule of thumb, the peasants of Malula say that rainfall cycles would last four or five years, then drought would arrive, forcing the local population to resort to their previous years' savings and guarantee their subsistence. On top of the drought, farmers were also affected by constant sandstorms which, according to peasants interviewed in Chatel's article, would "burn their crops" and remove the crop's nutritious topsoil.[6] In addition to the environmental hazards, some farms would use diesel powered water pumps in century-old wells, draining them far more than their capacities to be replenished, and other farmers would herd their tribes of goats in overgrazed areas, both anthropogenic factors contributing to the desertification of the biome.

Fundamentally, the scarce resources, the aggressive grazing, the mechanical pumping of water from deep beds, the constant droughts and the exponential growth of the birth rate – creating populational stress over water, land and food – culminated in an over-exploitation of the available resources and their eventual exhaustion in certain areas. Quite often in contemporary Syrian history, due to droughts there were intense movements of migration of peasants from rural areas to the cities, and then back again to their farms.[7]

However, as time passed, and the effects of climate change developed, these pendular migrations became unbalanced. Droughts became longer and more severe, and the weather became more and more unpredictably.

The Droughts Triggering the Conflict

It is impossible to state that one factor caused the 10-year-old conflict. Different elements, namely the political, the ethno-religious or economic landscapes, have contributed to triggering the conflict and are deeply entangled in the historical circumstances that enabled the Syrian Crisis. Thus, it is difficult to isolate what started the Syrian Crisis. Having said that, this chapter will attempt to illustrate the context into which the droughts of 2006 to 2010 took place and allocate it within the broader cadre present in Syria by 2011.

Droughts have become more unpredictable during the last two decades. The drought of 2006-2010 saw precipitation levels plummeting. Also,

rainfall would often come in winter, when it is less favorable for crops. Other areas of the country would receive insignificant amounts of rain, and still be affected by constant dust storms, killing their crops.[8]

Fundamentally, the already scarce lands became scarcer, the population, however, grew exponentially, augmenting the stress on the access to natural resources. The country's poor peasants were especially vulnerable and fled to the outskirts of the big cities, where they remained unemployed, hungry and angry.

The country's breadbaskets were now dried up. On top of that, the strategic wheat reserves of the country were emptied, since they were all sold in the early 2000s due to the high international prices for wheat. Syria, a traditional net exporter of wheat,had to import it between 2007 and 2010, contributing to further weaken the country's economy.[9]

The country's agriculture fell apart, water beds dried, food was scarce, and millions of angry peasants were forced to live in tents nearby the main political and economic hubs of the country. The drought hit the hardest in areas such as Deir-ez-Zor, aj-Jazeera, and in the South in Dara'a.[10] Non-coincidentally, these were the main areas where the government lost its control the earliest, and were under opposition's control for longer, also the regions that fought the government the hardest.

The 1951 Geneva Convention

The four years of drought took a toll on the country. The main cities became social disasters, overcrowded outskirts with irregular makeshift tents, and the hungry, impoverished IDPs. The latter sparked the first protests in Dara'a in March of 2011. Today, nine years into this century's biggest humanitarian crisis, half a million people are said to have been killed, more than four million fled the country looking for refuge elsewhere, and many other millions are now internally displaced people.

As soon as the conflict started in 2011, Syrians sought for refuge in neighboring countries, and eventually were granted the status of refugee. The definition of refugee is given by the 1st article, paragraph 2 of the Geneva Convention of 1951 as an individual who "owing to wellfounded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country."[11] In short, it is about an individual who sees his eventual return to the country of his nationality as an immediate threat to his life or freedom.

The scope of protection for refugees is comprehensive, and it is based on the non-refoulement principle, that states that refugees cannot be returned to their country of origin. However, this framework only covers individuals, or social groups, persecuted due to race, religion, political filiation or nationality and who are unwilling to let their protection remain under the responsibility of the country they fled from. However, this limitation can fail to guarantee an overarching safeguard to other

migrants, as those impoverished in economic-crisis-stricken countries like Venezuela and Zimbabwe; and even migrants who fled their homes due to climate related life-threatening situations, such as pre-war Syrians who had their livelihoods affected by drought, desertification and soil erosion, as well as the case of Mr. Teitiota who fled the Island of Kiribati due to the threat posed to his livelihood and basic human rights by the rising sea level, which will be discussed in the next chapters.

Importantly, there are two key concepts within the definition of a refugee provided by the Convention. Both are of utmost necessity to even consider including climate refugees under the framework's protection. The first is persecution: The United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) states that this concept was deliberately left undefined in order to "be interpreted in a sufficiently flexible manner so as to encompass ever-changing forms of persecution". This allows expanding the interpretation of the current mainly political persecution,[12] to a more comprehensive form, where human-generated environmental factors are also considered a form of persecution. Secondly, the concept of "social group" provided by the convention, which could characterize a group of climate migrants, for example, unwilling to avail itself of the protection of its country of origin.

The Gaps in Protection

People forced to migrate across international borders due to climate change or environmental hazards do not find official definition or recognition under international law. Meaning that those who fled and were unable to prove political persecution from where they came from would fall through the gaps of the Convention's protection.

However, the Intergovernmental Panel on climate change (IPCC) attested that almost 10% of the world's population (600 million people), who live in low-lying coastal areas, called climate-hotspots, such as the south-eastern Asian mega deltas and islands, will be directly at risk of catastrophic threats of climate change during this century.[13] On top of that, by 2050, or earlier, initial predictions of mass migration point to 200 million people being forced to move due to climate change effects, namely in China (73 million), Bangladesh (26 million), India (20 million), Egypt (12 million) and small island states (31 million). On top of these migrants fleeing the rising sea levels, another 50 million people will be put at severe risk and be forced to move due to harsher droughts and other climate disruptions.[14]

Under our current international law's framework, these cross-border migrations would be afforded little to no protection or assistance mechanisms, as the first Syrian climate migrants could not find before and during the war. Mainly because these hordes of climate migrants crossing borders are nonexistent in today's international law, since they are not configured nor defined in our existing treaties and conventions. If the limitation is not sought after in the coming years, the potential of massive social disasters and breaches to very basic human rights is immense, due to lack of coordination and preparedness by the international

community to manage these communities. Hence the absolute necessity of expanding the scope of protection of the convention, aiming to guarantee a coordinated and human rights-based approach to this modality of migration. One can wonder whether the popular dissatisfaction of the Syrians of 2011 would have been as strong as they were, had they found international and national coordinated assistance and protection during the drought and desertification of their lands.

It is important to mention that climate change is not a natural phenomenon such as hurricanes or earthquakes, as the IPCC on 2013 has assessed that "it is extremely likely (90%) that human influence has been the dominant cause of the observed warming since the mid-20th century," Meaning that climate change is almost certainly human driven, therefore can be held up against governments to make them liable for unsustainable degradation of its environment.[15]

Accordingly, the United Nations Framework Convention on climate change (UNFCCC) established the concept of common but differentiated responsibilities, which posits that each state is responsible for combating climate change, according to its respective capabilities and resources.[16] Thus, each country is responsible for the degradation of their environmental resources, having an obligation to guarantee a safe environment for its citizens and counterparts. Whenever the government neglects its environment, it neglects its citizens, if this neglection is targeted to a certain community, it can configure persecution.

This idea that governments are responsible for the degradation of the environment will resonate with the following paragraphs and open a new perspective on guaranteeing international protection and assistance to climate-migrants.

Teitiota vs New Zealand – Threat Multiplier

In January 2020, an unprecedented decision took place in the case between Mr. Teitiota and New Zealand. In the case, the host country denied asylum to Mr. Teitiota and threatened to send him back to Kiribati, a Pacific Island in risk of being entirely submerged by rising sea levels. The rise in sea level, along with other climate distortions rendered the island uninhabitable. Teitiora witnessed violent disputes for land that became scarce, while degradation of the local environment rendered subsistence farming impossible, as the fresh water supply was being contaminated by fresh water. The UN, worried about the risks to the asylum seeker's life, proffered a non-binding ruling concerning the guarantee of non-refoulement to Mr. Teitiota.

The ruling stated that sending asylum seekers home when their lives are threatened by the climate crisis "may expose individuals to a violation of their rights. Given that the risk of an entire country becoming submerged under water is such an extreme risk, the conditions of life in such a country may become incompatible with the right to life with dignity before the risk is realized."[17] The ruling also stated that the asylum seekers are not required to prove that they would face imminent harm,

as there are sudden-onset events (flooding/storms) as well as slow-onset events (droughts, sea level rise, desertification) that can prompt these communities to cross borders and seek asylum from climate-change related issues. In short, the ruling posits that human rights would be breached in case individuals are sent back to their countries of origin affected by environmental hazards.

It is one of the first times that the international community is advising non-refoulement to a climate-migrant. According to the proposed interpretation of the Convention discussed above, Mr. Teitiota is part of a social group: the climate-migrants of Kiribati who found little support from their State fighting the causes and effects of climate change and is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country. In the future decades, if climate migrants are sent back to their submerged or drought ridden countries, they could face extreme poverty, famine, and find their lives threatened. Though Teitiota's request was denied, this ruling serves as a new standard that can streamline the success of future climate-migrants claims.

Syria: The First Large Scale Climate War and the First Climate Refugees

There is, as investigated above, a connection among climate change as a threat multiplier, the growing unsatisfaction within the peasant community, and the triggering of the full-fledged conflict that caused the mass migration – alongside other concomitant political, economic and geopolitical factors.

Most importantly, one must be reminded that on top of the destruction caused by warfare, the already scarce structure and resources of Syria have been further exhausted during the last ten years by over-exploitation, overpopulation, sanctions, and the increase of climate change effects on the country. Even with peace, returnees can find themselves in a worse situation than before and face immediate life-threatening dangers.

The first peasants who fled to the outskirts of the main cities in 2007, were already climate-IDPs. Lavandius Chaloub, a resident of the countryside of Syria who fled to the outskirts of Damascus and lived with other IDPs, said that their lands became deserts, their crops were ruined by sandstorms and drought, they had no water in their already deep wells, nor could cultivate food to feed their families. Famine and thirst were life-threatening factors surrounding their return, many could die of starvation or thirst in case they remained or were sent back to their lands.[18]

Can the Gap be Filled?

There are different paths to guarantee a comprehensive protection to climate-refugees. One must understand that reforming an international treaty depends on every signing party's agreement: it is a difficult, slow and multifaceted process, but is legally possible. Reform would mean that the signatory countries would reassemble and put the Convention under revision. However, this is politically quite impossible and might end up in more restrictions than expansion of rights, due to the populist agendas of many stakeholders, especially after the migration events in 2015 in Europe.

If reform is tricky, a second option would be for countries to reunite and draft a new convention focused on the protection of climate migrants. This, as difficult as it may seem, could officially put the concept of climate migrants and refugees in the annals of international law and guarantee assistance and protection to these communities in the future.

As a last resort, avoiding much political debacle or intergovernmental coordination, the international community could agree to a broader interpretation of the definitions of persecution and social groups, predicted on the Geneva Convention of 1951. As previously stated, persecution was left undefined to guarantee flexibility and encompass the new forms of persecution. The customary international law, based in UN rulings and multilateral findings (IPCC), starts to see persecution as a form human rights abuse - or serious harm – happening often, but not always, with a systematic or repetitive element; specially if targeted at a social group (climate migrants). Thus, a targeted systematic disrespect to life (caused by drought, famine, thirst, desertification, or rising sea level) rooted in human-caused climate change could be interpreted as persecution. Especially in cases where there is clear State negligence, namely failing to fight the causes and effects of climate change in favor of its most vulnerable citizens, to a determined social group, the climate migrants.

Conclusion

Nevertheless, the ruling of the UN over Teitiota's case, as well as the work scholars who research on the situation of climate migrants and the assessments of the developments of climate change made by multilateral groups, such as the IPCC and the UNFCCC, demonstrate a certain predisposition of the international community to work in favor of climate migrants. The main goal of these stakeholders, one can say, is to avoid unmanageable and uncoordinated migration issues and massive breaches to human rights in the near future, where hordes of climate migrants cross international borders fleeing famine, drought, or the invading sea.

On a specific tone, due to the lien correlating climate change and the triggering of the war, the conflicts of Syria can be considered one of the world's first large scale climate's conflict. Potentially, an overarching protection and assistance framework rooted on an international convention could have diminished the popular anger and unsatisfaction of the first Syrian climate IDPs and migrants in 2007, thus diminishing the violence of the revolts of 2011. To avoid "ifs" in history, this article emphasizes the utmost importance of guaranteeing a comprehensive framework of climate related protection and assistance to returnee Syrian migrants who will resettled on climate change affected areas, in order to avoid the breach of human rights by sending them to desertification ridden and overgrazed lands.

On a general tone, based on the predictions made by the IPCC for the coming years, a more inclusive migration policy is of the utmost necessity. Before the century is over, 600 million climate migrants all over the world will be forced to flee their lands due to the rising of sea levels and other climate distortions. Our current legal framework lacks reach and agency to deal with that magnitude. By today's legal standards, these peoples would find themselves in a legal void, within extremely threatening situations lacking guidance or protection, and risk being sent back to their submerged or famine-stricken countries. If not expanded, the current framework of protection would give space for disastrous humanitarian crises to take place.

Ultimately, putting the Convention under revision is virtually possible, however politically impossible as it risks bringing more setbacks than expansions to refugee's protection. On the same note, drafting a new Convention that defines climate-migrants legally and guarantees their own set of protections, though ideal, demands an unprecedented level of intergovernmental coordination to guarantee its universality. Therefore, to avoid much political debacle and interstate coordination, the fastest solutions for the issues at hand can come with a broader interpretation of the terminology proposed by the 1951 Geneva Convention, namely "persecution" and "social group", to include a comprehensive protection to climate migrants.

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Mahra
The Eye of Geopolitical Storm

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The Arab Spring came to Yemen in January 2011 and over the course of the year the Yemeni state slowly weakened as various tribal confederations and political movements turned against President Ali Abdullah Saleh. Saleh rejected various deals to transfer power until an assassination attempt in June forced Saleh to flee to Saudi Arabia. By February 2012, elections were held which inaugurated Vice President Abdrabbuh Mansur Hadi as the new President. However, Yemen's problems were only beginning.

The Yemeni state continued to disintegrate and the country is now convulsed by numerous conflicts and political movements. From the conflict between the Houthis and the internationally recognized government led by Hadi, to the conflict between Hadi and the Southern Transitional Council (STC), each province faces a unique political situation. Many local political actors continue to agitate for local autonomy, furthering the proliferation of armed political groups. For some, such as the STC, this extends to full scale independence; other political actors want a transition to a federal system within a united Yemen.

One of the most intriguing and complex cases is Mahra. Located on the eastern end of Yemen, Mahra lies at the intersection of Saudi and Omani influence, as well as along important trade routes. Isolated by vast deserts and mountains, it maintains a unique culture and language that shares more in common with Dhofar, western Oman, than with the rest of Yemen. However, its population is small, estimated at

some 120,000. Until 1967 Mahra and the island of Socotra had existed for hundreds of years as an independent state.[1] As the British withdrew from Yemen after 1967 this state was forcibly incorporated into the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen, a Marxist state aligned with the Soviet Union.[2] Since the dissolution of the central government in Yemen in 2011-2012, local politics have reasserted themselves in these distinct regions.

In 2012 local sheikhs from the General Council of the People of Mahra and Socotra appointed Sultan Abdullah bin Essa al-Afar, son of the former Sultan of Mahra, as head of the council.[3] In May 2018 Sultan al-Afar returned to Mahra from exile in Muscat, Oman. From the beginning Saudi Arabia tried to limit his reception but this was thoroughly rebuffed by local Mehri sheikhs and instead al-Afar was received by thousands of Mehris. Al-Afar's speech calling for the Saudis to withdraw from Mahra galvanized anti-Saudi sentiment and led to a list of demands which included amongst other things; the empowerment of local authorities in matters of governance, security, trade, and the transfer of the al-Ghaydah airport to civilian control.[4] As a traditional tribal leader, al-Afar is typically subdued in his rhetoric in order to preserve unity amongst the sheikhs in the General Council. On November 27th 2019 when al-Afar switched from calling for a federal system to calling for independence, he represented the opinion of the General Council.[5]

Another important local political leader is Ali Saleh al-Hurayzi, a former deputy governor of Mahra and an ally of Sultan al-Afar, who has emerged as one of the main opposition leaders to the Saudi presence in Mahra. Like al-Afar, al-Hurayzi receives support from Oman. In September 2019, al-Hurayzi established the Southern National Salvation Council (SNSC – also called Southern Salvation Council SSC) and urged the people of Mahra to resist Saudi forces.[6] The level of support for the SNSC is unclear, while it includes groups across Southern Yemen, it differs from the STC in that it supports Yemeni unity. It is primarily shared cultural ties and an opposition to foreign forces in Mahra that unites al-Afar and al-Hurayzi.

Due to its geographic isolation, Mahra has so far been relatively untouched by the Yemeni Civil War. From August 2015 to late 2017, the UAE operated limited military forces in the region, and attempted to create local security forces under its direction.[7] This has been a common policy which the UAE used to build influence in other regions in South Yemen and the Security Belt Forces, which make up the military wing of the STC, were created under similar programs.[8] After securing cooperation from Governor Bin Kuddah, the UAE offered increased food assistance and financial aid as a way of gaining support within the province.[9] In response, Oman increased its financial support to local tribal leaders, providing generators to resolve an electricity shortage, and mobilized the General Council to force the UAE to follow local tribal authorities. Instead the UAE withdrew from the region. Subsequent UAE efforts to involve their proxy forces, the STC, were resisted by both al-Afar's General Council and al-Hurayzi's SNCS.

However, in late 2017 Saudi Arabia began to replace the UAE and deploy military forces to Mahra. They swiftly occupied the capital, al-Ghaydah, the port of Nishtun, and border crossings at Shahin and Sarfait. By November Saudi influence over Hadi prevailed and Governor Bin Kuddah was replaced with Governor Rajeh Bakrit who is more amenable to Saudi interests.[10] So far only a few violent skirmishes have occurred and casualties were minimal. The deployment by Saudi Arabia of Apache helicopters to al-Ghaydah in June 2019 indicates Saudi Arabia is digging in and prepared for further violence.[11]

The Hadi government remains resistant to Saudi advances in Mahra, stating on May 5th 2019 "[we want] our allies in the coalition to march with us north, not east… not manage liberated areas". But Saudi support remains vital for Hadi's government, therefore Hadi will be forced to reaffirm his support for Saudi Arabia's position in Mahra. This could shift support in Mahra from the central government towards independence.

Mehri Grievances

Mehris view the deployment of Saudi and UAE troops as a violation of their sovereignty and frequently protest the construction of Saudi military facilities. In particular, locals protest the usage of the only major airport in the region, al-Ghaydah airport, as a Saudi military base which is presently closed to civilian traffic.[12] Likewise, in Nishtun, Saudi troops closed nearby waters to local fishermen, jeopardizing their livelihoods.[13]

Border restrictions implemented by Saudi Arabia also limited local trade networks across the border into Oman.[14] So far local protests have not significantly constrained the growth of Saudi military installations in Mahra.

Finally, the arrival of hundreds of Salafists from Dammaj, Saada to Qishn has attracted intense protests by Mehris who worry that the Salafists will disrupt the traditional Mehri culture and their Sufi faith. Protests in Qishn were organized by local women and led by Fatima Saiid Sa'dan who demanded a halt in construction of the Salafist centers.[15] After a meeting with Governor Bakrit, Sa'dan secured a commitment from the governor that no Salafist center would be built in Qishn. In certain cases, Saudi Arabia is willing to back down in the face of local protests, but when these protests threatened core Saudi interests, they are far less accommodating.

Efforts by the UAE and Saudi Arabia to bypass local authorities in Mahra have consistently resulted in pushback by local elites, represented by the General Council. While Saudi Arabia has promised to construct hospitals, power plants, wells, and universities in Mahra, this has brought few sheikhs to their side.[16] Many Mehris see this infrastructure as designed to compromise their sovereignty. Since Oman has no military designs on the region, they will continue to be a more attractive patron for many local leaders.

Oman's Interest in Mahra

Oman's interest in Mahra dates back to the 1970s during the Dhofar War. Partially due to shared linguistic, cultural, tribal connections, and partially due to support by the South Yemeni government, Mahra served as a safe haven for rebels fighting against Oman.[17] Since the war, Oman has viewed Mahra as strategically important to Oman's security and cultivated friendly ties with local leaders to project their influence.[18] While Oman does not seek to stoke this conflict and consequently has rejected requests for heavier weapons by al-Hurayzi, they will continue to provide other support to local groups in order to maintain their position in the region.[19]

For Oman, there are several strategic issues in Mahra. First, it is a useful buffer which keeps the Yemeni Civil War from spilling over into Oman. Secondly, the presence of Salafists and Salafi centers in Mahra present an ideological and cultural threat not only to locals in Mahra, but also to Oman's predominantly Ibadi populace.[20]

Saudi Interests in Mahra

Saudi Arabia has two primary strategic objectives in Mahra. The primary issue is to secure an alternate route to export oil that bypasses both the Bab Al-Mandab Strait and the Strait of Hormuz. Both straits present an enormous vulnerability to Saudi Arabia's ability to export oil and recent attacks by Iran have only heightened those fears. Secondly preventing the smuggling of arms through Mahra to the Houthis is vital for Saudi Arabia's war effort.

While Oman has denied allowing the smuggling of weapons through its borders to Mahra, this area has long been known for informal smuggling. An important part of the economy in Mahra relies on trade, both licit and illicit. In 2017, the UN Panel of Experts on Yemen determined that Iranian made ballistic missile components were smuggled through Mahra, either through the border with Oman or by sea to Nishtun.[21] Despite Oman's denials it is likely they are tacitly aware of this smuggling and their attempts to remain neutral implicitly offer support to Iran.

Saudi Arabia – Oman Relations

Oman's traditional foreign policy has relied on a delicate balancing act between Saudi Arabia and Iran. In light of Iranian attacks against oil tankers and Saudi oil facilities in Abqaiq, maintaining neutrality is becoming increasingly difficult. Oman's refusal to join Saudi Arabia's embargo against Qatar and its refusal to support the coalition against the Houthis in Yemen aggravates Saudi Arabia.[22] However, if Saudi Arabia responds forcefully to Al-Afar, it will further alienate the people of Mahra and risk violently escalating the current protests. Any escalation in the conflict risks forcing Oman to increase its support for local protest movements in Mahra.

The Impact of Oil

Currently Saudi Arabia is beginning construction on an oil export

terminal in Nishtun and plans to connect it with an oil pipeline to Al Kharkhir, Saudi Arabia. Initially, the port of Nishtun would have an export capacity of 2,000 tons of oil per day, or some 15,000 barrels per day, and an import capacity of 200 tons of commercial freight per day.[23] Previous plans indicate that Saudi Arabia plans for the pipeline to Nishtun to have a capacity of 500,000 barrels per day, so further expansion of port infrastructure in Nishtun is likely once this pipeline infrastructure is in place.[24] Since Saudi Arabia continues to invest significant military forces in the region, it is clear that they are planning to remain in the region for the long term.

Saudi Arabia's oil production fell by half, or some 5.7 million barrels of oil per day, after the Abqaiq attacks in September 2019.[25] Saudi oil exports eventually recovered, but these attacks give added impetus for Saudi Arabia to find alternative ways of exporting their oil. The pipeline to Nishtun will still be vulnerable to drone or missile attacks by the Houthis, as well as by local rebels, so it will reduce but not eliminate the risk from transporting oil through the Strait of Hormuz. The primary impact will not be on the oil market, but on the local people living in Mahra who will continue to be opposed to what they see as an infringement on their sovereignty.

Conclusion

Calls for independence in Mahra are not universally supported, but may become more popular over time. There is an ongoing debate, with some groups, such as those led by al-Hurayzi calling for a united Yemeni state, while other sheikhs in the General Council call for a federal system in Yemen. What unites the protest movements in Mahra is opposition to the foreign military presence in the region. This military presence will not end so long as Saudi Arabia sees Mahra as strategically important. If Mehri demands go unaddressed it is possible that an initially peaceful protest movement may turn to violence. Irrespective of external actors' attempts to control the politics of Mahra, the local people will continue to advocate for their own interests and maintain their own distinctive identity.

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The UN Legitimacy Crisis
Analyzing the UN's Role and Challenges in a Time of Dissent

Earlier this year, the SAIS Europe Journal talked to Martin Kobler to discuss the United Nations' role and challenges it currently faces, its use of force and effects on legitimacy, and the underlying factors of recent dissent in the DRC, the CAR, Mali, Iraq among others. The following transcript has been edited for brevity and clarity.

Europe Journal:

Starting with the Democratic Republic of the Congo, we've seen protests occurring over the past months against both France's presence in the region and the UN in general. Local populations have questioned the legitimacy of the UN's stabilization mission MONUSCO (since 2010) and its ability to ensure security and stability in the Congo. You probably experienced similar situations working in the DRC in 2013. How might the UN ensure its legitimacy in such circumstances and how would you assess the present situation in the DRC?

Martin Kobler:

The core of the problem is that people tend to think that it's the responsibility of the UN to solve their problems. The first thing, therefore, is expectation management: you have to tell them what the UN can and cannot do. The second is to communicate, communication is 90% of the whole work. The message must be: this is the Congo, those are Congolese problems, and these must be your solutions. We (UN) are here to assist but we cannot take over, we cannot replace your political elites to solve the country's problems but we can moderate. We have a covening power, but it is your government that has to solve the problem.

As for expectation management, what could we have done with, say, 20,000 troops during my time? Also keep in mind the Congo is a subcontinent; if you look at a map, with 20,000 people and only 3000 fighting, it is just not feasible to be everywhere. There were of course exceptions such as Cambodia (UNTAC), Namibia (UNTAG), and Kosovo, where the UN was running the countries and the elections. But usually countries arrange elections themselves and the UN ensures that nothing goes wrong. These are the basics to guarantee the UN's legitimacy.

Another way is to improve the performance of the UN. I do not want to

An interview with Martin Kobler

Martin Kobler is a former German diplomat who most recently served as German Ambassador to Pakistan. Martin Kobler was Head of UN Support Mission in Libya (2015-2017), Special Representative for the UN Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (2013), UN Special Representative and Head of UN Assistance Mission for Iraq (2011-2013), and Deputy Special (Political) Representative for Afghanistan (2010-2011). He has also served as an Electoral Observer for UN missions in Haiti, Nicaragua and Cambodia.

say that everything is up to those countries, it's also the procedures of the UN and the way we perform with regard to the protection of civilians. The civic unrest in Beni (DRC) was a protest against the UN; we partly do not perform well. Protection of civilians used to mean that when rebels attacked a village, in particular the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) rebel group in the Beni area, the UN would open its base camp gates for people to seek refuge.

Protection of civilians now means that when rebels attack a village we ask the villagers to stay in their houses whilst our limited personnel (100 people) goes out to chase the rebels. We had a relatively good experience changing the UN's tactics towards the rebels in the DRC. But I must say that in principle, traditional troops are risk averse. They often have instructions from their own country not to have casualties. When I started in the Congo there were neither night patrols nor foot patrols. The Force Commander and myself changed this. He instructed them to go out at night, on foot, and to leave the armored cars and the safe APCs . I think this made a very good impression on the people. The Force Commander and myself went with the troops even on midnight foot patrols in the middle of rebel areas. If you show that you are taking risks, including the Force Commander and perhaps also the Special Representative of the Secretary-General (SRSG), then even if you don't succeed you show that you do your best. If you manage to communicate the 'do your best' philosophy and do not hide behind barriers, this enhances the credibility of the UN.

Europe Journal:

Did you experience any dissent first-hand against UN personnel and, if so, what kind of dissent? We've also seen unrest in 2019 in the CAR and in Mali where UN missions are drastically losing legitimacy. Do you see any parallels from your time there?

Martin Kobler:

There is no 'one-size-fits-all' in the CAR, DRC, and elsewhere. One important form of action is disarming rebels and transforming rebel groups into a civil kind of structure, what we call DDR (Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration). One technique we tried in the DRC, and this is ongoing but not very successful, is the force intervention brigade: 3000 soldiers from Tanzania, South Africa, and Malawi. This was a trial and error during my time, it was never done before: a first in modern UN times. The UN got the mandate from the Security Council to use force actively. It was a highly disputed concept within the UN itself. The UN headquarters in New York told the new Force Commander and myself: 'we give you the means for an intervention brigade but it should work by deterrence, better not to use it'.

In the CAR, there is no intervention brigade, we want to increase the pressure to make rebel groups voluntarily abandon their weapons. However, very often, we become complicit with the rebel groups. There is no black and white in this area. You have to solve a problem: you want to disarm rebel groups and integrate them into state run military struc-

tures. For this, you might be tempted to make a deal in order to avoid violence. My theory is, it doesn't work.

We should never be complicit with the rebel groups, we have to draw a clear line. My favorite motto in this area is 'yes the UN is neutral, but we are not impartial'. The UN is neutral in a sense: whoever wins elections doesn't matter to us, we are interested in the election process. Yet we are not impartial. We represent the values of the UN: human rights, democracy, the fight against impunity etc. The respect for the dignity of every human being is an imperative. If you become complicit with rebel groups, you might compromise on the values of the UN.

Europe Journal:

The idea of complicity is particularly interesting when you look at Mali where people have demanded that UN personnel take on the role of fighting terrorism, complicated by the fact that many actors operate on the ground: UN mission MINUSMA, French army, EU Training Mission in Mali etc. How do you see these situations play out in terms of defense: is the lack of cooperation between the UN and other actors on the ground an issue?

Martin Kobler:

Anti-terror fighting is a difficult task of the UN. Of course, you could do it because of what we call the 'Christmas tree mandate': the mandates are very broad, they allow for vast activities. However, the 2015 High-Level Independent Panel on Peace Operations (HIPPO Report), the last on improving the efficiency of peacekeeping, says clearly that anti-terror fight is not a task the UN should take on. There are also risk averse states: Many troops in Mali rarely leave their camp to avoid casualties. The UN cannot do anti-terror fight with this kind of risk averse mentality.

Secondly, the UN needs to cooperate with other forces on the ground. We have seen it in Afghanistan where we had a civilian mandate to work together with the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF): ISAF tried to do the military job and the UN did most of the civilian work. It's important that the players sit around the table and combine a mix of anti-terror, protection of civilians, and in particular the civilian follow up. It's very important not to limit the UN to the military but also to have a follow up centered on civilians.

So, there is the military, and within the military what the UN can do, but the follow-up is also part of the game. Most discussions focus on how effective the military is, but what happens after they have proven effective? What happens between the liberation of a rebel-held area and

the start of real development programs? This is often overlooked because UN agencies have determined planning cycles. It's difficult to coordinate and harmonize with the military agenda of the UN.

Europe Journal:

There seems to be a strong risk diversity mentality in the Congo but also in Mali. Do you think a leadership issue would also help explain this or rather a structural problem associated with these peacekeeping missions?

Martin Kobler:

The UN faces a structural problem in that the SRSG or even the best leader can't do everything. But never give up! Say you have between 25 and 30 agencies, funds and programs in the Congo. The coordination between these, as well as bringing the political, military, and development perspectives together is something which is almost impossible. As a leader you can say it's a structural problem and therefore choose not to address it. This was never my approach; I am very interested in the UN legitimacy conundrum. The UN has to take care of the civilian follow up and include civilians, even roughly, in the military planning at an early stage. But the issue is that within the country teams, the political/military part and the development agencies want to be separate. Afghanistan is a typical example, where even the cars are painted differently: you have the UNAMA cars painted in black, and the development and humanitarian organisations painted in blue. This separation is a structural issue. But it is indeed also about leadership. It is up to the leadership to compensate for the structural deficits of the system.

Europe Journal:

Iraq has also been an interesting case recently. We' could be interested to hear your opinion on the recent protests observed in the country, and whether you think they have had traction and impact on the current politics in Iraq.

Martin Kobler:

The civil unrest we've seen in Iraq is directed against the government. Iraq has a serious governance problem. This is the result of the failure of the Western coalition there, but also of the UN. We are too often complicit with governments. We've spoken about UN complicity with groups and non-state actors, but the UN can also be complicit with governments. In Afghanistan, millions of US dollars of development aid are ending up in Dubai in real estate projects. The government's corruption, and corruption in general, is a huge problem. Despite international assistance, the government does not provide basic services for the people like wastewater management, electricity, clean water. This has driven recent unrest in Iraq. Going back to the UN, putting more stress on governance, anti corruption, and not being complicit with the government is one thing. The second is impunity. An inefficient or absent legal system frustrates the population and sooner or later people are going to rebel. The failure to be held accountable for corruption is one of the major issues in these countries, and the UN should work with governments to

not tolerate this kind of behavior.

Europe Journal:

I would argue governance issues are very much linked to the perception of outside influence. Iranian influence in Iraq is clear. Where would you place the role of the UN Assistance mission in Iraq in addressing these concerns?

Martin Kobler:

Iranian influence in Iraq can't be disputed, but if there is no basis for popular dissatisfaction it will not work in the long run. In Libya, for example, you can "buy" civic unrest, so to say, but you cannot do so in Iraq. Yes there is Iranian influence in Iraq, but Iran relies on Iraq's popular dissatisfaction with its own Shia government. The civic unrest we've seen is a popular reaction to the Iraqi government which is not in a position to cater for the most basic needs of the population.

I remember in Kosovo in 1998 the electricity plant did not work. Ten years later the power plant in Kosovo still did not work, I hope it works today! These kinds of things have angered local populations, rightly so.

Europe Journal:

What is your take on this? Do you place any blame on UN missions that run these kinds of projects?

Martin Kobler:

It depends on the mandate. Let's take the example of the United Nations Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK), where the UN had executive power. As head of the mission you must cater to the needs of the people. Security is of course the first priority because you need to guarantee security to allow people for example to go out and do their work without fear of being shot at. The UN together with the host governments have to address the questions of a peace economy. People have to earn their living! There is usually a general clause in the mandate to get the economy up and running. Promoting private companies is probably not explicitly mentioned, but it is so important to promote framework conditions for private companies.

Europe Journal:

One of the reasons why the missions are not necessarily proactive is that UN actions on the ground do not have backup from UN headquarters in New York. The UN does not have the capabilities to be more proactive, and failure could result in the termination of a mission.

Martin Kobler:

The Heads of Mission are responsible to the UN Security Council. The UN Secretary General and the Secretariat support the mission. The SRSG justifies what is done on the ground to the UN Security Council once every three months. The SRSG goes to the UN Security Council in New York to have an internal discussion on what has been done and what should be done. If you tell the Security Council you want to get a

power plant up and running within three years in Kosovo, for example, nobody would object. So it is possible to get the backing. It´s up to the Head of Mission. I put a lot of emphasis on economy, education and humanitarian action so people can live a decent life in peace. If the people need an electricity plant for this, so organize it! If there are no funds, look for funding. I have never experienced reasonable projects not being funded. There is so much money for military purposes which destroy infrastructure during conflict; there must also be money to rebuild a destroyed country.

Europe Journal:

What you mentioned about UN personnel staying in their bases and having no or very little contact with local populations on the ground, do you see that as the fundamental problem? Do you think dissent or civic unrest could be avoided if UN personnel were more in touch with these populations, showing that they are engaging with them to protect them. Where do you factor this lack of contact in episodes of dissent we're seeing today around the world?

Martin Kobler:

This is one of the main problems in high risk environments. If you send a member of UN personnel to a tribal meeting in Libya, for example, you need to finance their security. In Iraq, personnel stays in the green zone designing projects; there is often a real detachment from the people. Many colleagues are not exposed to direct contact with local populations. What I tried in Libya, and left to my successor, was to send political messages via tweets. I started in the Congo, where I used Twitter to spread political messages to become at least virtually closer to the people. My successor in Libya arranged 70 conferences all over the country with people from all across the country. This was direct democracy, a little bit like local Loya Jirgas (legal assembly) in Afghanistan. This brings UN personnel into contact with tribal leaders, albeit mostly men. It gives the people the opportunity to talk. We need to know what they think and what they want, we should not focus on the views of the governments only. I took many colleagues from my mission with me just to listen. But you are right: in high risk environments it's much more complicated.

There is no short term solution for it. That's why security is the most important task at the beginning in countries where UN missions are deployed. In Afghanistan, for example, UNICEF had polio vaccination campaigns. Vaccinating children in Taliban controlled areas proved difficult, but colleagues managed to organize vaccinations even under the most difficult circumstances and being very close to the population. Building schools and wells, delivering humanitarian aid are other examples where the UN cooperates very closely and directly with the people.

Europe Journal:

It seems like local contact may occur more effectively on a more micro level rather than it being institutionalized in a way that wouldn't necessarily have much of an effect.

Martin Kobler:

Indeed, let me emphasize one more thing: we have spoken at length about the problems of the UN in achieving their aims. We must not forget that there were also very successful missions: UNTAG in Namibia, the missions in Cambodia, some West African missions or in Timor-Leste. If people, governments, the international community and the UN work hand in hand and there is a political will and consensus to find solutions, a Peace Process will definitely work. If there is no consensus between the stakeholders – which is definitely not the mistake of the UN – it is much harder to make progress. The last mission I had the honor of serving – UNSMIL in Libya - is a typical example of such a lack of consensus.

5 CROSS REGIONAL

Communities as Radical Acts
A Review of "Ecology or Catastrophe: The Life of Murray Bookchin"

Charlie Lawrie recently completed the first year of a SAIS MA over Zoom. He previously worked in Lebanon, which has over one thousand municipalities.

"Almost every major revolution has been a conflict between the local community and the centralised state…"

(Murray Bookchin, Limits of the City)

In 2020, human societies face ecological pandemonium, yawning economic inequality and a rural-urban divide. Forests burn in Australia, California, and Brazil. Glaciers melt. According to the U.S. Department of Commerce's own National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, January 2020 was the warmest on record.[1] Economic contradictions become starker: Credit Suisse reports that the top 1 percent of the population owns 45 percent of all global personal wealth, while the bottom 50 percent owns less than 1 percent.[2] Insurance companies have begun to factor in the expected cost of climate change into their models, with the expectation that insurance premia could become unaffordable.[3] The gap between the urban rich and the rural poor is complicated by the emergence of a respiratory virus, which afflicts metropolitan areas hardest.[4]

Recent climate protest movements have focused on the need to achieve social and economic justice as well as effect a successful transition away from fossil fuels. Campaigning groups such as Extinction Rebellion and Fridays for Future have highlighted the systemic conditions that underpin global warming, while the Green New Deal campaigns in the U.S. and Europe have called for mass employment in green jobs as well as the decentralisation of the democratic process. All advocate the creation of 'citizens assemblies', groups of individuals making decisions at the community level.

It would be difficult to credit a single person with the development of these concepts. Indeed, the one figure to whom much of the credit is due would likely have been reluctant to claim it. Mortimore 'Murray' Bookchin (1921-2006), father of the social ecology movement, seems to have been as modest as he was dogged. Foundry worker, union rep, writer, community organiser, professor, speechmaker: Bookchin played a whole series of roles during his life, movingly documented in Janet Biehl's Ecology or Catastrophe: The Life of Murray Bookchin. The definition of an 'outsider' activist, he eschewed mainstream political life, choosing instead to agitate through his writings, speeches and teaching.

Ecology or Catastrophe darts in and out of Bookchin's life, interspersing biography with an account of contemporary political developments. The book is as much a wistful chronicle of 20th century radicalism as it is of Bookchin's life. We learn of mass Communist support in interwar New York, the anti-war and anti-racism movements in the U.S. and Europe, and the growing green movement towards the end of the 20th

century. In turn, today's climate movement owes much to Bookchin, who was the first to identify the environmental crisis as a structural contradiction, produced by the very ways in which our modern lives are organised.

The Limits of Marxism

Born in East Tremont, New York City, Bookchin was the son of first-generation Russian Jewish émigrés. His grandmother, Zeitel Carlat, had been a member of the Socialist Revolutionary Party and smuggled guns into Russia during the 1905 Revolution. Following Tsarist police raids on the family home in 1913, Zeitel left the Pale of Russia for the Netherlands with her two children, Rose, and Dan (her husband, Moishe, had already died of bladder cancer) and set sail for New York. Rose grew up to work as a milliner and had Murray with Nathan Bookchin, whom she met at a Communist youth summer camp. Nathan ultimately abandoned the family, leaving Murray's rearing largely to Zeitel.

Zeitel's revolutionary spirit was, if anything, bolstered by what she saw as the inferior, materialistic American culture of the 1910s. Thanks to her, Murray Bookchin received his first education in revolution. According to Biehl, he learnt about Lenin, Rosa Luxembourg and Karl Liebknecht before he ever did Washington and Lincoln. The 1917 October Revolution was at the forefront of his child's mind and, following his grandmother's death, he joined the Young Communist League (YCL), the youth wing of the Communist Party USA (CPUSA).

It was as a young revolutionary that Bookchin developed the rhetorical skills that would come to define his later career. More fascinated by revolution than schoolbooks, he dropped out of public school and was given a job as a street-corner orator by the CPUSA. Yet Bookchin became increasingly alienated by the Marxist-Leninists during his teens and into his twenties. While key tenets of Marxism – principally, Hegelian dialectic – were valuable in laying the foundations for his systemic critique, Bookchin questioned the YCL's doctrinaire support for Stalin's increasingly authoritarian tendencies and was finally expelled from the League. Over the course of his life, Bookchin would come to see Marxist movements as principally concerned with obtaining and consolidating power for themselves. Crucially for Bookchin, who came to be concerned with questions of ecology, Marxism treated the environment as something to be tamed and exploited by workers themselves. In other words, its desire to achieve man's mastery over the natural world was no less chauvinistic than capitalism's.

Moreover, as Biehl reminds us, Marxism had failed to predict capitalism's enduring success. The end of the Second World War was staring Bookchin in the face; carried by the surge of wartime production, the American capitalist economy was booming. The moment for revolution, it seemed, had passed. Bookchin cast around for alternative theoretical foundations and settled on an altogether different set of principles.

Beyond Hierarchy

Bookchin is best known today as the father of libertarian municipalism; the belief that authentic politics is done at the local level. Yet his initial writing was motivated by the negative relationship between urban and rural in the contemporary United States. Inspired by William Vogt's *The Road to Survival, Fairfield Osborn's Our Plundered Planet* and Lewis Mumford's The Culture of Cities, he spent much of the 1950s writing and researching the impact of pesticides and fertilisers on human health. This work ultimately became Our Synthetic Environment (1962).

The radicalism of Our Synthetic Environment stemmed not so much from its systematic examination of agrochemicals and their harmful effects on humans but from its diagnosis of the underlying issue: the organisation of modern life. Bookchin explicitly linked human health to the contemporary mode of economic and social organisation. Cities– debilitating to human health and impossible to live in–were a necessary precondition for modern capitalism. The megalopolis had to be dismantled and replaced with smaller, self-sustaining communities, which Bookchin described as 'eco-decentralism'. This big-picture argument set the book apart from Rachel Carson's Silent Spring, which largely eclipsed Our Synthetic Environment. While Silent Spring was doubtless the more popular book, its failure to address the social and economic structures promoting pesticide use meant that, in the words of historian Yaakov Garb, it "...brought its readers to the threshold of difficult questions...but Carson's avoidance of politics, abetted by her conceptions of nature, helped lead them away again".[5]

Our Synthetic Environment reflected Bookchin's growing interest in anarchism as a model for political organisation. His love affair with Marxism-Leninism was over, as it had erroneously predicted that economic and social forces would inevitably lead the world to socialism. The classical workers' movement had ended because, in Bookchin's words, "[it] never really had the revolutionary potential that Marx attributed to it... the factory, [...] in fact had created habits of mind in the worker that served to regiment the worker".[6] Marxism, in other words, simply reproduced hierarchy. Anarchism, on the other hand, explicitly interrogated it: in families, sexual relationships, schools or ethnic groups. Anarchist theory, Bookchin believed, would place the responsibility firmly in the hands of individuals to create societies free from domination. The idea of domination, derived from anarchist theory, was central to his distinction between environmentalism, which sought to instrumentalise the environment, perpetuating domination over nature and ecology, a form of social organisation which removed dominance from humanity's relationship with the natural world.

For these societies to be achievable, however, they would need to be self-sustaining. Bookchin's subsequent work was the product of this intellectual fusion of anarchism and ecology. In his next book, Crisis in Our Cities (1965), Bookchin argued that the decentralisation of cities would require newly created, small-scale communities to grow their own food, generate their own power and heat their own houses. Technol-

ogy would play an essential role: solar, wind, and geothermal energy could provide electricity, while small-scale rotating fields could provide sustainable, pesticide-free sources of food. Ecology and Revolutionary Thought (1964) argued that only an ecological movement could create the social transformation required to avert ecological crisis.

Be Realistic, Do the Impossible

Bookchin spent the 1960s and 1970s writing, organising and teaching. He joined the New York branch of the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE), a non-violent movement that had fought racial segregation in the American South. He would become a field organiser for CORE and was arrested for non-violent civil disobedience at the World's Fair in 1964. These non-violent movements were quickly replaced, however, by groups such as Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) inspired by Franz Fanon, Herbert Marcuse, and Mao. In late 1967, they deployed 'mobile tactics', smashing windows and entering direct confrontation with the police during Stop the Draft Week. Bookchin took part in Stop the Draft Week as a peaceful protester but was aghast at what he saw as the increasingly Marxist tendencies of the student movements. In Biehl's words, Bookchin believed that revolutionaries should act as catalysts, but never as commissars.

The early 1980s saw green movements make substantial gains across Europe. In particular, the West German Greens (Die Grünen), founded in January 1980, championed ecological and social issues in their four pillars: ecology, social justice, grassroots democracy and non-violence. At the same time, Bookchin's work was being translated into Italian, French, Greek, and German. He was invited to speak at various European venues, where he was exposed to the complexities of anarchism in contemporary Europe: in Italy, where anarchist movements had been consigned to irrelevance due to their refusal to participate in the political process, and in Germany, where the Greens were fiercely debating whether to go into coalition with the Social Democrats (SPD). Bookchin, convinced the Greens should avoid parliamentary politics at all costs, gave a series of speeches alongside figures such as Jutta Ditfurth, arguing that the Greens should instead create citizens assemblies at the neighbourhood level.[7] To Bookchin's dismay, the Greens eventually went into coalition with the SPD. Once again, the dream of municipal organising had been sacrificed at the altar of party politics.

Returning to the U.S., Bookchin saw an opportunity to put his anarchist vision into practice. Burlington, where he had lived since the early 1970s, had just elected Bernard Sanders on a platform of local community interests. But Sanders proceeded to pursue a smorgasbord of unpopular measures, including a wood-chip power plant, a major development on Burlington's waterfront and support for a local General Electric factory that manufactured the Gatling gun.[8] What was more, Sanders seemed to be intent on centralising power in the mayor's office, contrary to the Neighbourhood Planning Assemblies that had been proposed only months earlier. Of most concern was the January 1983 proposal by the Senate Operations Committee to extend Vermont's two-year legislature

election terms to four years, threatening to professionalise the political class and consolidate its power.

Bookchin, recently retired from his professorship at Ramapo and with The Ecology of Freedom (arguably his magnum opus) just published, leapt into action. With a group of local activists he formed the Burlington Environmental Alliance, bringing together local citizens to articulate an alternative vision for the waterfront. However, Bookchin did not stop there, going into battle against the four-year term proposal, writing articles, giving interviews and even storming into the office of the editor of the Burlington Free Press, Dan Costello, to remonstrate with him. Costello duly revised the paper's initial support for the proposed four-year reform and backed the two-year term.

The issue of the waterfront development had not been settled, however. The development planners, backed by Sanders, proposed a $6 million bond issue to fund the hotel and the marina, to be approved in a referendum. Bookchin and the Burlington Greens condemned the issue and used a series of tactics to mobilise local opposition: letters to newspapers, press conferences, educational forums, and nature walks along the waterfront. To pass, the referendum needed a two-thirds majority, but only received 53 percent. The Greens and their allies had won this time.

But this early success was undermined by subsequent events. In a March 1990 city council election, collusion between the Green and Progressive candidates tainted the election; the Greens consequently disbanded. Shortly afterwards, Bookchin announced his retirement from politics. His hopes of securing tangible political change had come to an end.

Death of an Ecologist

How might the success of an activist's life be measured? Despite everything, Bookchin died in 2006 believing that his project had ultimately failed. The writing, the book tours, the speeches, the teaching, the conversations had, in his view, come to nothing. Capitalism continued to wreak havoc on people's bodies, dull their brains and destroy their natural environments. A sense of melancholy, even anguish, thus permeates Ecology or Catastrophe. We watch as Bookchin, constantly on the lookout for self-organised local movements that could launch the beginning of the new ecological community, gradually came to accept that the time of revolution had come to an end. Clear-eyed about Marxism's mistaken faith in the inevitability of revolution, he never forgot that it would require individual effort to persuade others of the urgency of his task. When anarchism failed to translate into a mass political project in his lifetime, the failure must have felt personal. For someone whose life's work centred on the belief that social and economic relations could –and, in the face of impending ecological disaster, had to– be transformed into decentralised communities based on rationality and kindness, capitalism's continued triumph at the end of the millennium must have felt cataclysmic.

In her portrayal of Bookchin's miserable final years, Biehl does not sim-

ply point the finger at capitalism. Bookchin's detractors are lined up for inspection, too. In the later stages of the book–with three hundred pages of Bookchin's heroism firmly in our minds– Biehl presents various critics, mostly Leftists, who launched barbed attacks against Bookchin's writings. Individual readers will have to draw their own conclusions as to the validity of these critiques, though it seems Bookchin attracted a bewildering amount of invective, largely on the grounds of jealousy. There is a slight sense that the book has a chip on its shoulder; Biehl presents Bookchin not simply as a hero but a tragic one, betrayed by his supporters, let down by history, and failed by ideology.

Biehl's vital supporting role in Bookchin's later years must have eased the pain considerably. The two first met in 1986 during a summer course taught by Bookchin. The age difference–Bookchin was sixty-six, Biehl thirty-three– was irrelevant and they would go on to spend thirty years together until Bookchin's death.[9] Biehl became secretary, publisher and editor, as well as primary caregiver. She was well placed to perform the role of biographer, then, which on balance she performs well, with rare personal interjections and a biographer's critical tone. She quietly hints at the extraordinary amount of care and labour that she was required to provide Bookchin, who suffered from osteoarthritis in his old age. The relationship was nonetheless a two-way street and clearly gave Biehl the confidence to forge her own career as an author and campaigner. Intriguingly, she has distanced herself from the social ecology movement in the years since Bookchin's death. A self-defined social democrat, she wrote Ecology or Catastrophe as a final ex voto to her beloved. The book's melancholy is doubly reinforced by the impression of Biehl as an increasingly reluctant standard-bearer.

Protest as a Crisis of Modernity

It is curious to think what Bookchin would have made of life in 2020. His belief in the radical transformational potential of technology might be disappointed by the increasing atomisation and polarisation facilitated by the Internet and social media. Capitalism remains the dominant mode of social and economic relations; catastrophe seems to have triumphed over ecology. But not only have new groups used technology to achieve mass mobilisation in the name of averting ecological catastrophe, they have done it in Bookchin's terms: agitating for the creation of citizens assemblies, reducing power to the level of the municipality and achieving social justice through environmental means. Doubtless, Bookchin would have maintained his healthy suspicion of mainstream attempts to co-opt the climate narrative, but there is a chance he would have been delighted by Extinction Rebellion's unrepentantly anarchist mode of organising and its emphasis on devolved, autonomous organising. After all, this was the only way Bookchin believed societies could ever effect true change: by restoring decision making to local communities, to the human level.

Bookchin's ideas have found their way into unexpected places. Witness the final pages of Ecology or Catastrophe, where Biehl reveals that Abdullah Öcalan, leader of the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK), read

Bookchin's work while in solitary confinement and developed a political movement known as 'Democratic Confederalism' based explicitly on Bookchin's ideas. The Kurdish autonomous area in Rojava, northern Syria, was founded in 2012 on the core principles of assembly democracy, ecology and a cooperative economy. The strength of Bookchin's ideas lies in their versatility; different communities across the world have been able to adapt them to their specific needs and contexts. Though Bookchin never lived to see them, citizen movements across nations and continents have put his ideas into practice.

Today's protest movements continue to grapple with the fundamental tension, explored by Bookchin, between the overlapping echelons of political action. The truth, they argue, is that modern, global problems–climate change, the refugee crisis and automation inter alia– pose threats to the fabric of local communities. In turn, their structural critiques articulate the problem as a crisis of representation and make the familiar argument that the political class is ignoring the interests of the demos. The solution, echoing Bookchin, is more power for citizens at the local level. Organisations like Extinction Rebellion insist that it is precisely the failure of government to listen to local communities that has exacerbated the climate emergency, and make an urgent call for the establishment of citizens assemblies to "determine the wide-ranging policy changes needed to transition to net zero greenhouse gas emissions and halt the extinction of species".[10]

Two assumptions are made here. The first is that citizens assemblies will take more enlightened, progressive decisions than the representatives in whom decision-making power has traditionally been vested. This has proven to be the case in several scenarios: citizens assemblies have been responsible for passing pro-abortion laws in Ireland, electoral reform in Canada, city planning in Australia and labour issues in Belgium. The second related assumption is that these assemblies will limit their ambit to exclusively 'progressive' issues, however defined. It is easy to imagine a scenario where other interest groups also demand direct forms of democracy. If there were to be citizens assemblies on climate change in the UK, why not on migration policy?[11] Even on climate change, it must be remembered that many citizens in eastern European countries remain considerably concerned with the threat posed to fossil fuel-linked industries. Such angst creates strange bedfellows. At the end of 2018, the Polish union Solidarity issued a joint statement with conservative U.S. think tank The Heartland Institute that expressed extreme scepticism at the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change's view that the world stands at the edge of a climate catastrophe.[12]

As for technology's role in activism, Bookchin, of course, did not have Greta Thunberg's Twitter followers. All protest movements are in part defined by the technology at their disposal. The speed and energy with which Extinction Rebellion and Fridays for Future have been able to mobilise would undoubtedly have been impossible without digital technology. Bookchin would have surely been delighted at the use of technology in pursuit of human freedom; a 1965 article, 'Towards a Liberatory Tech-

nology', celebrates the radical potential of technology to free humans from onerous labour and, one presumes, exploitative capitalist relations. Extinction Rebellion, for its part, makes use of social media and email to engage its supporters, but focuses much more of its time making sure those supporters meet regularly and face-to-face. It may use 'analytics' and 'metrics' to measure its success–how much media attention it has received, for example– but is much more concerned with fostering strong bonds and a so-called regenerative culture among its members.

Of course, the current pandemic lockdown has rendered much physical organising impossible. Activists may be moving online, #climatestrike is slowly being replaced by #climatestrikeonline, and, in countries where physical gatherings remain possible, protestors are still mobilising on the street, two metres apart. The longer the lockdown continues, however, the more momentum is lost. Physical disobedience also risks a loss of credibility; the pandemic has imbued the state with a moral authority that is difficult to contradict. Climate activists, often sceptical of national governments, are urging people to stay at home. Indeed, the protests that have attracted the most attention have been those organised by right-wing libertarian movements in the U.S. Yet the lockdown has also served as a visceral reminder of the importance of communities, with mutual aid groups organising in the absence of the centralised state.

Key Takeaways for Love and Rage

Even if we all suddenly find ourselves inhabiting Bookchin's preferred modus vivendi, none of this is to suggest his was the better project. His steadfast refusal to engage with mainstream party politics, which he saw as corrupted, corrupting and opposed per se to his vision of the ideal society, clearly and drastically limited his programme's potential for change. His anarchist model would require not just a vast collective effort but a collective ability to imagine a world after capitalism, hierarchy and domination. Simply put, it would require ongoing politicisation on a vast scale, a kind of Trotskyite permanent revolution. Bookchin would retort, perhaps, that such a transformation would be necessary in any event for humanity to avoid ecological, existential disaster. But it is difficult to see how this transformation would take place without the willingness of political activism to agitate for change in the mainstream. Had Bookchin been more willing to grit his teeth and lobby the mainstream for change, he might have ended his life in a state of less profound gloom.

What lessons can be learned from Bookchin's project? We identify three. First, that the local cannot be neglected as a site of politics. Not only are communities vital for our individual survival, they allow us to negotiate power, articulate collective interests and solve shared problems without the inevitable alienation involved in the removal of politics to external centres of power. Secondly, Bookchin's personal failure to achieve change in his lifetime reminds us of the enduring tension between the local and the national in the age of the nation-state, and the fact that the local must remember the national if it is to survive. Last of all, Bookchin's work is a reminder that change takes time, and that activists may not live

to witness the change they work to achieve. But who would be willing to contemplate that possibility?

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[6] "Murray Bookchin Explains Anarchism". YouTube. Accessible: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rwp3CQVzzak (accessed on 26 October 2019).

[7] "Bookchin, "Parteipolitik oder populistische Politik: Anmerkungen eines in Deutschland reisenden Amerikaners," Kommune 1 (Jan. 18, 1985)." Cited in Biehl, p. 617.

[8] Not only did Sanders refuse to endorse protests against the GE factory, he also supported the arrest of demonstrators.

[9] One of Biehl's footnotes delightfully cites the "thirty-six florist note cards, 1991-2002" that Bookchin sent her.

[10] Extinction Rebellion, "Our Demands." Accessible: https://rebellion.earth/the-truth/demands/ (accessed 16 February 2020).

[11] While attitudes appear to have softened following the 2016 referendum result, one poll suggests 44 percent of Britons remain in favour of reduced migration. See: Blinder and Richards, "UK Public Opinion toward Immigration: Overall Attitudes and Level of Concern", The Migration Observatory, 20 January 2020. Accessible: https://migrationobservatory.ox.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/Briefing-UK-Public-Opinion-toward-Immigration-Overall-Attitudes-and-Level-of-Concern.pdf.

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# Beyond Inequality
Protests and Politics

In 2019, people across the world took to the streets to express anger at their governments for economic and political reasons, including the rising cost of living and a perceived lack of representative policymaking. While protest movements have had different causes, the UN argues "[a] connecting thread (…) is deep rising frustration with inequalities".[1] The United Nations Development Programme's (UNDP) Human Development Report (HDR), released in December 2019, was presented as a manual to help leaders "understand why people take to the streets in protest and what leaders can do about it".[2] The 2019 HDR's analysis of inequality and policy recommendations echo protesters' grievances about entrenched power imbalances.

The annual HDR provides "independent, analytically and empirically grounded discussions of major development issues, trends and policies" with a subtheme each year.[3] This report supplements and informs the UN's Human Development Index (HDI), which "is a summary measure of average achievement in key dimensions of human development: a long and healthy life, being knowledgeable and have a decent standard of living".[4] Together, the HDI and HDR aim to capture quantitative and qualitative trends in human development.

The 2019 HDR, 'Beyond Income, Beyond Averages, Beyond Today', focuses on how to capture the qualitative dimensions of inequality. The report uses a capabilities approach to elaborate on how inequalities manifest in people's lives beyond their paychecks. This approach refers to the theory, first presented as a framework by Indian economist and philosopher Amartya Sen, that inequality should be measured by gaps in people's freedoms to do and be what they want. Another way to think of capabilities theory is to examine how systems of oppression can limit the choices people make and what outcomes they can achieve.

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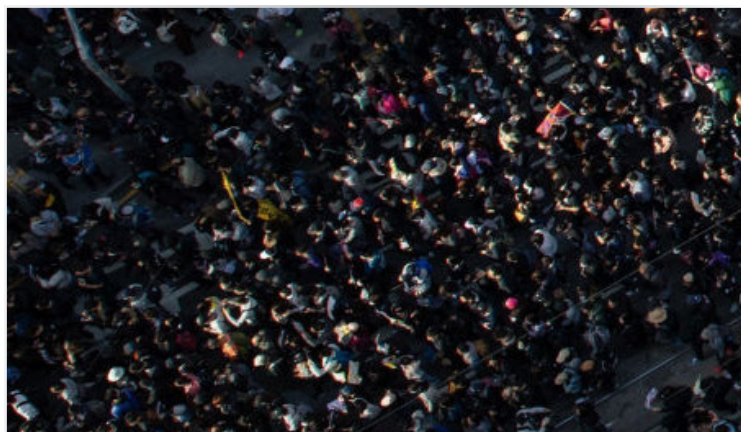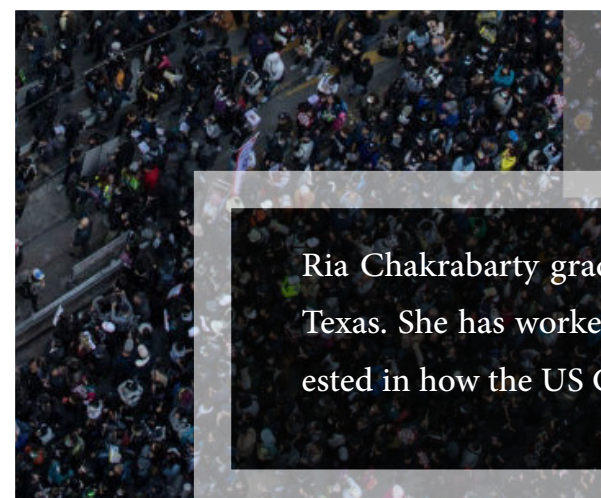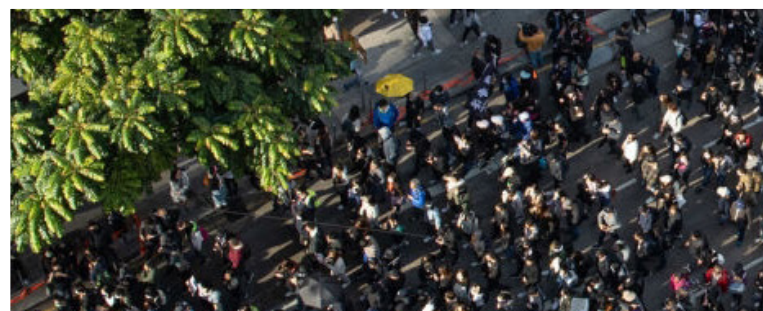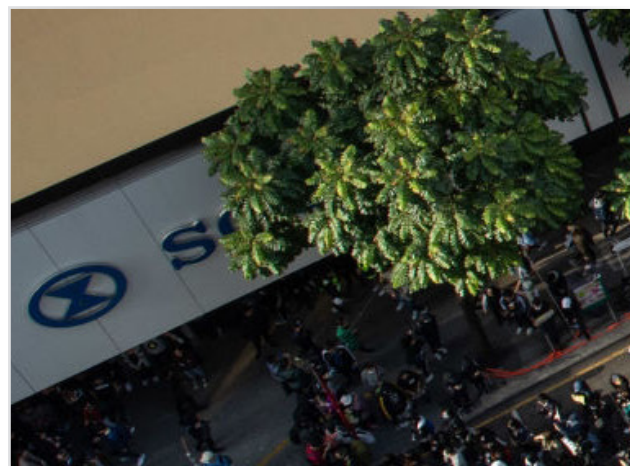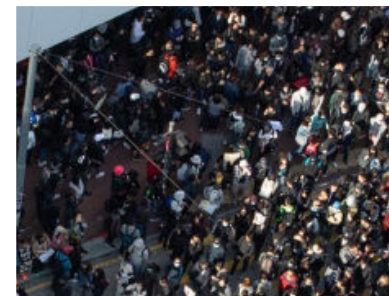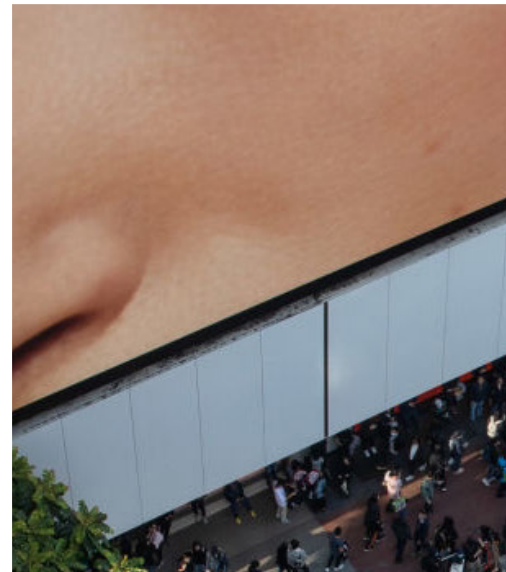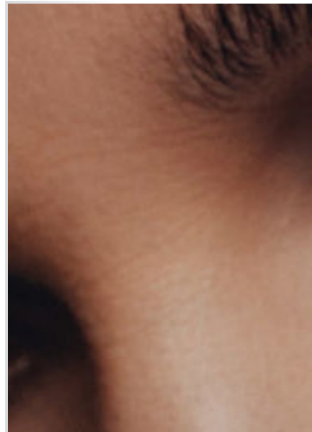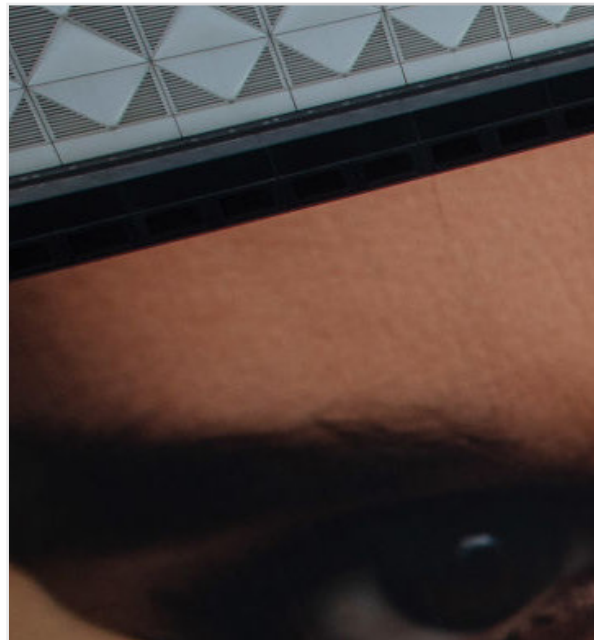
The report conceptualizes these systemic barriers through three dichotomies: horizontal versus vertical inequality, convergence versus divergence of achievement, and basic versus enhanced capabilities. Horizontal inequality relates to inequality among groups, for example based on race, gender, orientation, caste, whereas vertical inequality relates to inequality among individuals. The report also discusses convergence and divergence to refer to decreasing versus increasing inequality in capabilities – the inequality in people's freedom to make life choices. Finally, it defines basic capabilities as those that allow people freedom from "extreme deprivation", including primary education and the right to vote.[5] On the other hand, enhanced capabilities reflect people's desire for "greater agency in [their] lives", which include high-quality education at all levels and greater political participation.[6] The move from basic to enhanced capabilities "mirrors the evolution from the Millennium Development Goals to the Sustainable Development Goals".[7]

The report finds that while many countries are slowly achieving convergence in basic capabilities, they are rapidly experiencing divergence in enhanced capabilities. These divergences have increased horizontal inequality.[8] For example, while more people around the world have access to primary education, regardless of income or human development, people's access to university education continues to be determined by their human development group. Further still, the gaps between those who are able and unable to access tertiary education continue to widen.

These widening gaps reflect power imbalances in society, which become institutionalized as those with less power are trapped and unable to access enhanced capabilities. In turn, power imbalances become more entrenched and a cycle of widening inequality continues. The report notes that this widening inequality is directly linked to deepening power imbalances. As the cycle evolves, people become frustrated and channel their anger through protests.[9] To break the cycle of inequality and disempowerment, the HDR proposes that policymakers identify and address these inequality traps.[10]

Analysis

The report provides a useful framework to explain a sense of dissatisfaction or unfairness that unifies various protest movements around the world. Indeed, it describes how inequality traps can institutionalize power imbalances and skew political incentives to serve the powerful over the many; inequality-driven clientelism sits at the heart of many of the protests. For the UN, the solution to unrest is to take steps to resolve socioeconomic inequality. However, its report does not provide leaders with policy solutions to change or improve the political institutions that make citizens feel powerless. On the surface, protests may respond to a gas tax or fare increase, but the anger driving the protests existed long before these measures were enacted. The protests seize on incremental policies that exacerbate inequality to underscore that governments are not responsive to people's basic needs nor do they represent their citizens' interests.

The HDR recommends that leaders of a country embroiled in protest design policies to address inequality or distribute power equitably. The report notes that these policies will require political will. Unfortunately, its recommendations for policy change would not be enough for many protesters who have explicitly demanded that leaders step down or fundamentally reshape their governments. In France, for example, protesters have appealed for specific electoral reforms and the restructuring of political institutions. In that country and elsewhere, policymakers have yet to address the demands for expanded and responsive democracy.

French Protests Go Beyond Inequality

The report's analysis on widening inequality and its argument that inequality is at the root of political anger cannot adequately explain why France has seen protests since 2018, when President Emmanuel Macron first proposed a carbon tax rise. According to the report, since the 1980s, "in Norway, Spain, France and Croatia the difference [in incomes] is close to zero: The bottom 40 percent saw their incomes grow at a rate similar to that of the average income. In Norway and France, however, the top 1 percent of incomes grew more than the average, meaning that the income share of the groups in between was squeezed".[11] However, in the last ten years, the top one percent of incomes in France actually shrunk while average and lower incomes rose slightly at approximately the same rate. France is one of four countries in Europe where income distribution has not been associated with rising inequality.[12] France is categorized as a highly developed country, and despite its lower HDI relative to OECD and other countries in that category, it has a lower inequality coefficient. Nonetheless, it has experienced waves of protests for over one year.[13]

The first wave, started by the Yellow Vests, demanded a set of economic reforms, including raising the minimum wage and tax reform. However, some demands were related to governance and participatory democracy through a proposed citizens assembly and increased mechanisms for popular input into law-making.[14] Subsequent protests have ignited over proposals by the Macron government for pension reform and pressured the leader of the pension reform agenda to resign. In January 2020, protesters still took to the streets, and for some nothing short of Macron's resignation will do.[15]

As indicated by the HDR, a sense of clientelism helps explain protesters' deep discontent with the French government. They are angry that Macron seems out of touch with the working class, especially outside of Paris. Thus, exclusively addressing factors of inequality, as the report recommends, would address only part of people's demands. The protests press for a restructuring of French democracy that allows for more popular input, particularly to implement economic reforms that reflect the interests of citizens.[16] Arguably, France has made significant improvements in human development in the past ten years. Yet to answer current protesters' frustrations, the French government will have to grapple with rising expectations and more difficult questions surrounding participa-

tion at the heart of its political institutions.

Political Demands are Important

Similar demands for expanded and responsive democracy are at the core of other protest movements. In Hong Kong, protesters have reacted specifically to the prospect of encroachment by the Beijing government.[17] Hong Kong is more prosperous than mainland China; the territory is ranked fourth in human development where China is 85th.[18][19] However, Hong Kong has experienced rising inequality, and protesters would argue that 'mainlandization', or an increased mainland Chinese political, economic, and cultural presence in Hong Kong, has contributed to higher costs of living with stagnating incomes. Although inequality may have had a role in motivating protesters, it can also be viewed as integral to the broader set of political concerns stemming from the perception that Hong Kong is ceding its autonomy to the Beijing government. The 2019 protests began as a response to a bill that would allow the Hong Kong government to extradite criminals to the Chinese mainland. Protesters saw this legislation as the latest development in 'mainlandization'.[20] Indeed, researchers have argued the fears of mainlandization have 'fuelled' the protest movement.[21]

Hong Kong demonstrators' five main demands focus on improving governance and justice. Namely, these are for the Hong Kong government to: withdraw the extradition bill (now formally withdrawn as of September 2019); provide amnesty for all arrested protesters; stop classifying the protests as riots; conduct an independent investigation into allegations of police brutality; and implement new elections for Chief Executive and all Legislative Council positions with universal suffrage. Though the first four demands center on the protests in the immediate sense, the fifth calls for reform of Hong Kong's political institutions and processes. For protesters concerned with mainlandization, the ambitious aim of direct elections reflects the basic desire for political representatives beholden to Hong Kong's interests rather than to Beijing's.

In France, Hong Kong, and elsewhere, leaders should take seriously the demands for democratic reform. Some demands, such as those for executive resignations or full independence for an autonomous region, may be unrealistic. However, leaders can meet protesters half-way and create new pathways for citizens to effect change within their governments. These could include more referendums at the national and local level and the creation of citizens assemblies, as proposed by protesters in France.[22] Another could involve participatory budgets, which in Brazil, for instance, have increased the democratic participation of marginalized communities in local policymaking and have helped redistribute resources to poorer areas.[23] Participatory budgets were also adopted in the Black Lives Matter policy platform as a tool to strengthen inclusion in the American political process.[24] Reforms to expand democratic participation, however measured, can allow for better citizen-to-leader interaction and respond to the central request for policymaking that represents public interests.

Conclusion

The 2019 Human Development Report attributes global protests to growing inequality and its resulting power imbalances. Likewise, its recommendations focus on combating inequality as a way to empower people within a country. However, the report does not fully address the political frustrations that protesters have harbored – namely that governments are not sufficiently responsive to citizens' concerns. The report argues that good governance measures, including specific anti-corruption measures, can help alleviate inequality. As countries address corruption and clientelism, policymakers are more likely to implement economic reforms that reflect the interests of their citizens rather than of entrenched special interests. Nevertheless, leaders should expand their scope of good governance measures and respond to broader demands for more and better participatory mechanisms. To address protesters' frustrations, they should embrace available political solutions for expanding participation and alleviating the power imbalances that prompt people to take to the streets in the first place.

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Why Do Advocacy Groups and Actors Build Transnational Networks?

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As an exponential growth in technology in recent decades has facilitated the acceleration of communication across the world, advocacy campaigns appear increasingly transnational. However, building transnational networks has been an important aspect of successful advocacy campaigns for centuries. In this article, I will review some of the key literature on transnational advocacy groups and networks and compare various case studies to analyse the key factors underlying the building of transnational networks. I refer to advocacy groups and actors as organisations or individuals who advocate for a change in both public opinion on an issue, and/or a change in government or corporate policy. The target of such advocacy movements can therefore be the national or international public, national governments, or transnational corporations.

For the purpose of this article I will use the definition of transnational networks from Margaret Keck and Katherine Sikkink in their seminal 1998 work: a "transnational advocacy network [is] a set of relevant organizations working internationally with shared values, a common discourse, and dense exchanges of information."[1] Therefore, the main factors that will define a transnational network in my work are: 1) a shared aim and discourse within the network; and 2) a clear and relevant exchange of information. This article will argue that there are three main conditions in advocacy movements that drive the creation of trans-

national advocacy connections: 1) the existence of a block between a domestic advocacy group and its national or colonial government; 2) a sense of moral responsibility from a social group in one state to impact the lives of a group in another state; and 3) a target or issue which is transnational in nature.

The Boomerang Model: Circumventing a Block Between Domestic Advocacy Groups and National or Colonial Governments

A significant proportion of both current and previous advocacy campaigns moved to develop transnational networks in response to blocked access to local governing bodies. This limits their ability to domestically change public policy. Keck and Sikkink describe this process as the "boomerang model."[2] This model argues that often local advocacy groups petition their colonial or national government (State A), however, they are blocked from having an impact. As a result, they turn to transnational allies and international advocacy groups who will either directly put pressure on State A to change policy, or will pressure their own government (State B) to put pressure on State A. In her opposition to government plans to build on Nairobi's Uhuru Park, activist Wangari Maathai first wrote letters to her government to petition them to stop, and to the local press to garner support for the movement. However, she was blocked by the Kenyan government, so she reached out to her connections in the international community, UNESCO, the UNDP, and the British High Commission, and to the international press. Through these channels she was able to both put pressure on the British shareholders of the Uhuru Park project and threaten the economic and political support of the international community to the Kenyan government.[3] As academic Richard Price comments in his article analysing seminal works on transnational advocacy, campaigns are successful if they can show the government (State A) that there is a cost, economic or reputational, in blocking the campaigners. Building strong transnational connections with influential international parties, as Maathai did, legitimised the threat of such a cost.[4]

Blocks between campaigners and domestic governing bodies can take many forms in driving campaigns to become transnational. In the case above, Maathai was blocked by a lack of support within the ruling party, however she was also blocked financially when the government stopped funding to the public body supporting her movement. Furthermore, threats to Maathai's personal safety during the end of Moi's presidency also strengthened her connections with international NGOs and bodies who helped her go into hiding. The threat to personal safety is a block still used today, and, as we see with the protesters in Hong Kong currently, it motivates campaigners to build transnational connections to gain the protection of observation by the global community.[5] Finally, blocks can often also come from what Bloomfeld terms "anti-preneurs" or those advocating for an opposing continuation of the status quo against progressive advocacy groups either inside or outside government.[6] Particularly during the global fight for female suffrage, the strength of the opposition groups in many countries served to strengthen the transna-

tional connections between different national suffrage parties to share tactics and ideas.[7]

Adaptations of The Boomerang Model: Neo-Colonialism and Neighbourhood Solidarity

Academic and peace campaigner Alex De Waal considers a similar framework to the boomerang model in which colonised countries turn specifically, to Western governments.[8] However, as we can see through the female suffrage movement, transnational networks are not only established from developing countries to developed countries. De Waal brushes over the transnational connections built between movements in neighbouring countries in the Pan African Movement which were important for building popular local support for independence in addition to sharing tactics.[9] Similar connections were also seen during the 2011 Arab Spring revolutions, where citizens fighting for increased democracy in the Middle East were blocked from their government and as a result built dense exchanges of information and tactics between neighbouring countries. Particularly in recent times with the rise of digital activism, pressure no longer has to go through international organisations or other states. Activists blocked from impacting their own government can build transnational networks through social media pages to share tactics and publicly shame their government into action. However, I would argue this often still follows the traditional boomerang model because campaigns, such as Fridays for Future, the recent transnational student movement campaigning for stronger policies against climate change, frequently do not gain traction until legitimised by international organisations. Greta Thunberg rose to fame after her iconic speech to the UN, showing while the boomerang model can be applied to regional solidarity, traditional global power structures are still prevalent.

Colonial overtones are also still relevant in the analysis of transnational advocacy campaigns when established advocacy activists or organisations reach out to perceived oppressed peoples to advocate for them. In De Waal's work, in addition to his "anti-colonial" and "anti-neo-colonial" solidarity models, he considers humanitarian solidarity with or for "faraway oppressed" peoples as the other determinant for transnational advocacy campaigns. A number of transnational campaigns can be traced to this approach, particularly the Kony2012 campaign to support the Ugandan government in capturing militant leader Joseph Kony. However, as De Waal critiques, it is unsurprising that they garnered notable support in Uganda as they brought significant funding from the US government, yet arguably due to a lack of understanding of local realities, the campaign was unsuccessful.[10] As a result, such cases can not only represent humanitarian solidarity, but also a residual neo-colonial influence where Western organisations appear to continue to impress their values on ex-colonies.

The thin line between humanitarian solidarity and neo-colonial influenceis particularly noted in the campaigns to end foot-binding in China, and female genital mutilation (FGM) in Kenya. While De Waal presents a timeline of advocacy movements from supporting people's right to sovereignty to supporting their human rights under that post-colonialist

sovereignty, transnational advocacy in the form of Westerners taking on the cause of oppressed peoples traces back centuries, through religious missionaries. In China, the missionaries were able to build on strong relationships with both the women affected and the Chinese establishment on the issue, and from an early stage, there was Chinese leadership within the movement. In comparison, in the campaign against FGM, the missionaries were unsuccessful in building supportive networks amongst the Kikuyu population or the increasingly influential Kikuyu Central Association. Particularly in Kenya the campaign was therefore perceived as a neo-colonial attempt by the missionaries and Western powers to continue to impose their values on Kenyan people. Both campaigns were to stop damaging maltreatments to women through the cultural practices, and the transnational networks between the missionaries and local communities, were both driven by a form of humanitarian solidarity. However, in Kenya this was also perceived as neo-colonialism and was, as a result, much less successful.[11] As International Relations scholar Thomas Risse-Kappen's work describes, countries have very varied domestic power structures, and this impacts the success of transnational campaigns.[12]

Transnational Issues: The Future of Transnational Advocacy?

Finally, if the target or issue of an advocacy group or actor is transnational by nature, transnational support is often seen as vital to legitimise the movement. As with both the female suffrage and Maathai's environmental campaigns, their focus on a transnational issue, was also crucial to building their transnational network. A transnational target could be both a societal norm or public policy that transcends borders, such as environmental degradation or the issue of land mines, or a corporation that works across borders. In recent campaigns against transnational corporations, movements such as "SumOfUs" and "Avaaz" have built large online transnational networks through online petitioning. As their target corporations, such as Nestle or Coca Cola, have a wide transnational customer base, they must demonstrate support for change from this base. While they focus extensively on "information politics", the movements do not need extensive norm change to succeed, but sufficient support from the perceived customer base to influence key stakeholders in the business. This is reminiscent of the campaign to stop Nestle selling baby formula to vulnerable women in Africa in the 1970s, but the speed with which information can now be disseminated has facilitated a boom in anti-corporate campaigning.[13]

In the public campaigning sphere, however, successful global policy change is often also preceded by challenging the related established transnational norm and challenging the different definitions of success. Where success is reliant on normative change in international opinions, campaigns focus on building transnational networks that can run wide information campaigns to challenge transnational perceptions. In comparison where success relies solely on policy change, transnational networks focus on targeted campaigns and conferences towards policymakers. In the case of the campaign to ban land mines, Price describes in detail the campaign first to change public opinion through a global

information campaign against the mines, and then to influence policymakers through international conferences.[14] The multinational nature of growing support for the movement allowed them to make use of what Finnemore and Sikkink termed a "tipping point" in the adoption of a new norm, where once key states had signed up to the land mine ban, other states were more supportive and as Price argues, more susceptible to "shaming" into support.[15] The ban on landmines is a transnational issue because the use of landmines was prevalent in many countries, therefore united transnational campaigning was vital in banning their use. Transnational networks are built and used in very different structures dependent on how a movement defines success and how to get there.

Conclusion

In conclusion, Keck and Sikkink's boomerang model is still a useful tool with which to analyse why advocacy groups build transnational connections, however, to be relevant in today's increasingly digital world, the model should be broadened. The proliferation of digital communication methods means domestic advocacy groups have increasingly direct access to changing public opinion and to shaming governments into action. However, despite the internet being a valuable tool for information dissemination and gaining support, transnational norm change and policy change is predominantly only cemented with significant international organisation and government support. Moreover, the varied nature of possible blocks between domestic advocacy groups and their government defines the varied nature of the transnational networks built.

Humanitarian advocacy remains a key part of transnational advocacy campaigns where established groups, often in the West, will reach out and build transnational connections to campaign for groups often without a pre-existing consolidated movement. However, the success of such movements lies significantly in whether their support is perceived as neo-colonial and whether local groups take up the campaign.

Finally, transnational advocacy networks are seen as fundamental to legitimacy in a campaign against a transnational corporation, global public policy, or a transnational norm. Yet the nature of these transnational networks differs significantly based on the definition of success for the movement. Where success is changing the policy of a transnational corporation, the network can often be more superficial as it is simply designed to show enough support for the movement in that corporation's customer base to threaten board members into action. However, for transnational norm change a much more comprehensive and engagement focussed network is needed, while global policy change requires a strategic network of influential players in international power structures and at international conferences. Many transnational advocacy networks demonstrate a combination of these key determinants and as the digital world changes how the public and policy makers interact with advocacy, campaigners will continue to adapt how they build transnational networks.

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[2] Keck and Sikkink, 46.

[3] Wangari Maathai, Unbowed (New York: Knopf, 2006), 164-204.

[4] Richard Price, "Transnational Civil Society and Advocacy in World Politics" World Politics 55, no.4 (2003): 593.

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[7] Keck and Sikkink, 56.

[8] Alexander De Waal, "Genealogies of Transnational Activism", in Advocacy in Conflict (Croydon: Zed Books, 2015), 25-26.

[9] Alok Choudhary, et.al. "Social Media Evolution of the Egyptian Revolution" ACM 55, 5 (2012), 74-80.

[10] De Waal, 18-22.

[11] Keck and Sikkink, 59-71.

[12] Thomas Risse-Kappen, Bringing Transnational Relations Back In: Non-State Actors, Domestic Structures, and International Institutions (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 22.

[13] Keck and Sikkink, 14.

[14] Richard Price, "Reversing the Gun Sights: Transnational Civil Society Targets Land Mines." International Organization 52, no.3 (1998), 635.

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