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TOWSON UNIVERSITY JOURNAL OF INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

LETTER FROM THE EDITORS

Dear Readers,

We are happy to present to you the Spring 2021 edition of the Towson University Journal of International Affairs. This is a special volume created to mark the launch of our inaugural, "TJIA Roundtables: Explorations in IR" discussions. Along with their corresponding video recordings, these articles are designed to provide insight into a variety of contemporary issues in world politics. The Roundtables themselves were organized around four distinct topics: Turkey's relationship with the West, social justice within marginalized communities, China's challenge to the contemporary global leadership, and how developing states have tried to address the massive crises of 2020. In this special issue, we are proud to publish the individual articles that each participant prepared in support their Roundtable presentation.

The "TJIA Roundtables: Explorations in IR" series will recur every semester, featuring analyses of current events like those included in this issue. (The talks are posted on the "Events" page in the "TJIA Roundtables" section of the journal's web site and on the TJIA YouTube channel.) The topics of each Roundtable will vary each semester to reflect the changing circumstances of world politics and the research interests of the Roundtable participants.

It is the journal's mission to provide a platform through which the curious and the scholarly can engage in a civil discourse that accords with disciplinary norms and standards. This issue is a unique reflection of that mission. Unlike other issues, its exclusive focus on urgent contemporary problems highlights the journal's spirit of intellectual engagement by undergraduate students with the world around them. While most issues also feature articles by graduate students and professors, in this issue we have chosen to emphasize the contributions that undergraduates can make to our understanding of the world. We, the editors of the Towson University Journal of International Affairs, are therefore especially pleased to present this special Spring 2021 issue, and we hope that readers find these articles useful in their own scholarly endeavors.

Sincerely,

Everett Shirtliff, Darius White, and Dwight Myvett

Editor-in-Chief Team

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Contemporary Chinese Economic Foreign Policy and its Implications for the Future*

David Niebel¹

Abstract: China's rapid growth and entry into the world economy has expanded China's influence, while its territorial claims and economic foreign policy indicate an increasingly assertive approach on the world stage. China has the capacity to continue its economic projects abroad, and it has sufficient room to grow for a considerable amount of time into the near future. Because of this, and because of its ambitions to counterbalance American economic influence, we can expect to see large scale economic projects by China on the world stage into the foreseeable future until China exhausts its capacity, it is effectively counterbalanced and outcompeted by the US, or it consolidates a role as the economic leader in Asian markets.

Key Words: Economics, Sino-American, China, United States, Foreign Policy, Trade

China's thrust into the global stage has allowed for a mesmerizing level of economic growth over recent decades. This growth, founded on Chinese integration into the international economy, has permitted China to begin exporting its industrial capacity as a means of achieving greater international influence. Chinese ambitions to elevate its status and influence as a world power through economic means have proven to be a headache for the dominant Western framework. This Western status-quo is led primarily by the US, and supported by IGOs such as the World Bank and the IMF. There are numerous contemporary, large scale economic foreign policy projects that have extended Chinese influence throughout the Asian continent into Europe. There is also dialogue concerning whether China can sustain its remarkable economic growth and what it would mean for the existing international economic leadership, which has to contend with China's rise. Basic economic models of output would indicate that China still has notable room for growth, and subsequently for more large-scale international projects. Whether China poses a serious threat of displacing the Western economic framework remains hotly contested. It would be a mistake, however, to assume that China's rise is waning and transient.

In 2013, China first announced its Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), which would allow for greater movement of capital across the Asian continent, through Europe and into North and East Africa. The maritime aspect of the project would establish sea routes through the South China

^{*}This article is taken from the TJIA Roundtable series

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Sea and across the Indian Ocean.² The projected total investment for the BRI would amount to \$1.4 trillion, making it twelve times today's equivalent value of the Marshall Plan following World War Two.³ The benefits of the BRI are not isolated to the greater economic integration for which it allows. The BRI is also a means to enhance China's role as a global power and achieve Xi Jinping's long-term vision of becoming the dominant power in Asia. 4 Programs under the BRI have effectively began extending Chinese economic influence into the Southern and Eastern portions of Europe

In 2016, under the BRI, Chinese firms constructed a thermal power plant in Bosnia which allowed the nation to transition to an export-oriented economy in European markets. Chinese firms are also constructing a photovoltaic power plant in Hungary that would produce 130 million kilowatt-hours of power, and Hungary agreed to purchase enough doses of the Chinese COVID vaccine to vaccinate 2.5 million people. The BRI has also allowed for the construction of a 2.4-kilometer cable bridge connecting the Croatian mainland to its Peljesac Peninsula. ⁵ In 2020, the value of China's imports and exports along the BRI route amounted to just under \$1.5 trillion. Chinese cooperation with states along the BRI extends past infrastructural projects into artificial intelligence, smart manufacturing and data collection.⁶

The various investment projects that entail the BRI are in part financed by the Asian Infrastructural Investment Bank (AIIB). The AIIB is an international investment bank primarily led by China since its creation in 2015. The AIIB currently has 100 members, and is considered a rival to the World Bank. The flow of capital and investment through AIIB institutions make the organization a primary financing mechanism for the BRI. 7 Around \$22 billion in investment funds for 108 projects were supported through the AIIB by the end of 2020, with one example being a \$180 million loan to Sri Lanka for COVID crisis recovery, including small and medium business support. 8 In the same year that the AIIB was founded, the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) was signed by its fifteen member states that constitute a combined population of 2.2 billion people. Notable member states include China, Australia,

² Bradford Betz, "What Is China's Belt and Road Initiative?," Fox News (Fox News, May 1, 2020), https://www.foxnews.com/world/what-is-chinas-belt-road-initiative.

³ Zhiqun Zhu, "China's AIIB and OBOR: Ambitions and Challenges," The Diplomat (The Diplomat, October 9, 2015), https://thediplomat.com/2015/10/chinas-aiib-and-obor-ambitions-and-challenges/.

⁴ Graham T. Allison, *Destined for War: Can America and China Escape Thucydides' Trap?* (Boston: Mariner

Books/Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2018). p. 109

⁵ Gao Lei, "China-CEEC Cooperation Becomes Role Model under BRI," Khmer Times (Khmer Times, February 15, 2021), https://www.khmertimeskh.com/50814235/china-ceec-cooperation-becomes-role-model-under-bri/.

6" BRI: A Review of Global Progress in 2020," Life of Guangzhou (Life of Guangzhou, February 20, 2021), https://www.lifeofguangzhou.com/knowGZ/content.do?contextId=13129&frontParentCatalogId=175.

Jonathan Barrett and Praveen Menon, "Pacific Island Nations Turn to Beijing-Backed AIIB as Pandemic Sinks Economies, "Reuters (Reuters, January 25, 2021), https://www.reuters.com/article/us-china-pacific-cookislandsidUSKBN29U00A.

⁸ Xinhua, "Five Years of AIIB: How China-Initiated Development Bank Helps Transform Lives a cross Asia," Khmer Times (Khmer Times, January 30, 2021), https://www.khmertimeskh.com/50808786/five-years-of-aiib-howchina-initiated-development-bank-helps-transform-lives-across-asia/.; "AIIB Approves USD 180 Mn Loan to Sri Lanka," Daily Mirror (Daily Mirror, February 26, 2021), http://www.dailymirror.lk/breaking_news/AIIB-approves-USD-180-mn-loan-to-Sri-Lanka/108-206670.

Indonesia, Japan, South Korea, Singapore, but not, surprisingly, the United States. ⁹ The RCEP's member states make up 30% of global GDP. The partnership reduces tariffs on 92% of trade between member states, requiring 65% of service sectors to eliminate ceilings on foreign shareholding limitations. These trade liberalization measures will be conducive to larger levels of Chinese investment, thereby making this geo-economic region more dependent on China. The RCEP also facilitates the internationalization of the Chinese Yuan and mitigates China's dependency on the US and Europe through granting greater access to other markets.¹⁰

The BRI, AIIB, and RCEP are all symptomatic of China's substantial economic growth in the 21st century intertwining with its ambitions to achieve world power status. China emerged into international markets when it joined the WTO in 2003, stoking hopes among the West that China would adopt Western norms of liberalism and free trade. This was not the case however, since the CCP maintained its autocratic legitimacy in its ability to create a prosperous economy for its populace and raise China into the status of a world power. Since joining the WTO, China has enjoyed consistent annual growth rates of 18% in international trade and almost 10% in GDP. Integrating the Chinese economy into the international markets allowed China to utilize its massive economic capacity, notably as the rapid urbanization of its near-billion working-age population has provided an enormous labor force to take advantage of China's manufacturing comparative advantage. The internationalization of Chinese markets actuated substantial inflows of foreign capital, sophisticated management practices, and Western technology, all of which bolstered the efficiency and productivity of the Chinese economy. 11

China's success in taking advantage of its comparative advantage has allowed for a shift in focus from export-oriented growth to outward investment. This shift was accelerated after the 2008 financial crisis that limited the West's ability to absorb Chinese exports, creating the need for economic integration with other global markets. 12 This outward shift has granted it the influence and capacity necessary to further its long-term geopolitical goals. These primarily include reemerging as a major regional power in the greater Asian sphere and receiving the respect and influence entitled to a world power. 13 The BRI serves to do just this through facilitating enhanced connectivity between China and the Asian and European economies. The RCEP furthers this regional integration, which bolsters China's economic influence within its sphere of interest. The AIIB, formed out of China's frustration with the unsatisfactory pace of

^{9&}quot; RCEP: APAC Mega-Pact Signed and Ready to Deliver," Financier Worldwide (Financier Worldwide), accessed February 28, 2021, https://www.financierworldwide.com/rcep-apac-mega-pact-signed-and-ready-to-deliver. Wendy Wang, "RCEP: A Major Driver to Boost the Chinese and Regional Economy EJINSIGHT," Ejinsight (Ejinsight, February 17, 2021), https://www.ejinsight.com/eji/article/id/2713780/20210217-RCEP:-A-major-driver-to-boost-the-Chinese-and-regional-economy.

11 Reuben Tang, "Chinese Economic Policy in the 21st Century: Growth, Imbalance, and Considerations for

Australia," Inquiries Journal (Inquiries Journal, August 1, 2013),

http://www.inquiriesjournal.com/articles/748/chinese-economic-policy-in-the-21st-century-growth-imbalance-andconsiderations-for-australia.

¹² Zhu, "China's AIIB and OBOR: Ambitions and Challenges,"

¹³ Allison, Destined for War. p. 109

reforms of Western institutions such as the IMF and the World Bank, rivals existing development banks and helps to consolidate international economic influence into Chinese hands. 14

Though China's growth, and the shift in power and influence that entails, is a thorn in the side of the West, many wonder whether this growth is sustainable and the implications that it would have for the West. This is dependent on China's economic capacity, which can be broadly explained by the Solow model for GDP output. This model contends that output is a product of capital, labor, and the innovation or technology of the population. As an economy becomes more efficient and sophisticated, there is less room for substantial growth since modern technological upgrades have already been implemented, and the economy has structurally adapted to operate at high rates of productivity. Growth will, therefore, plateau and stagnate over time. 15 This explains why the US, with a GDP per capita of over \$62,500, had a GDP growth rate of 2.16% in 2019. 16 China's growth rate in 2019 was over 6% with a GDP per capita of only \$16,100.17 After all, China has a labor force of 775 million people compared to the American labor force of 146 million people. 18 Should Chinese workers reach only half of the productivity level of American workers, China's economy would be double that of the United States. 19

To experience this growth, China needs capital and innovation. China is the world's largest exporter and runner up for the top global importer. Industry constitutes forty percent of its economy, and its industrial growth rate is roughly 6%, double that of the US. 20 These statistics indicate a substantial inflow of foreign capital from abroad. Concerning innovation, China is home to the world's best university for engineering, graduates four times as many university STEM students as the United States, and filed for twice as many patents as the United States. China's innovation is visible in its shift toward high-tech manufacturing, and is the world's leading producer in computers, communication systems and pharmaceuticals.²¹ China's lower GDP per capita indicates that large segments of the population still have room for sophistication and advancement. China's economy, therefore, retains the capacity for continued levels of growth to a degree that warrants attention from Western international economic leadership. This is because, given the integrated nature of the Chinese economy with global markets, Chinese

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¹⁴ Zhu, "China's AIIB and OBOR: Ambitions and Challenges,"

¹⁵"China: Global Trade and Comparative Advantage," Illustrated Curiosity (Illustrated Curiosity, September 28, 2017), https://www.illustratedcuriosity.com/economics/trade-china-and-comparative-advantage/.

¹⁶"The World Factbook-United States," Central Intelligence Agency (Central Intelligence Agency), accessed February 28, 2021, https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/united-states/.

¹⁷"The World Factbook-China," Central Intelligence Agency (Central Intelligence Agency), accessed February 28,

^{2021,} https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/china/.

The World Factbook-United States," Central Intelligence Agency; "The World Factbook-China," Central Intelligence Agency

Allison, Destined for War. p. 7

²⁰ The World Factbook-China," Central Intelligence Agency

²¹ Allison, Destined for War. p. 16-17

growth will coincide with greater international economic ambitions that the West must contend with.

China's foreign economic policy is rooted in competition with the existing, dominant Western economic framework. The sustained economic growth that China has enjoyed in recent decades has granted it the capacity necessary to project its economic influence abroad, bolstering China's standing as a global power. The Chinese economy still has substantial potential for future growth based on metrics including population, innovation, and capital. Given the intertwined nature of China's economic growth and its economic ambitions abroad, China can therefore be expected to remain a chief threat to Western economic power dominance throughout Asia and parts of Europe into the foreseeable future. Whether China will triumph in this competition is up for serious debate; in fact, there is convincing evidence to the contrary. The West must recognize, however, that China is not close to achieving its full potential, and that geo-economic competition is here to stay.

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India's Mental Health Epidemic: Deteriorating Amidst the Pandemic*

Amanda Ryan¹

Abstract: During the COVID-19 pandemic, mental health across the globe has declined and many developing countries are failing to effectively respond. If mental health needs are continuously unfulfilled, numerous short and long-term consequences will arise that will threaten the livelihood of society. By analyzing the psychological deterioration of citizens in India during the pandemic, as well as their government's inadequate response, the underbelly of this mental health epidemic can be recognized as a critical issue that is in dire need of a solution.

Key Words: Mental Health, COVID-19, Pandemic, India, Stigmatism, Developing Countries.

Introduction

During the COVID-19 pandemic, mental health across the globe is rapidly declining due to the additional stress and turmoil from the virus, especially in developing countries like India. Over the past year, the coronavirus pandemic has led to an increase in depression cases in India, with over 43 percent of Indians currently suffering. And with the recent spike in COVID-19 cases this past March, the country is undergoing yet another round of mental distress. Alas, numerous short and long-term consequences are likely to arise because India is failing to effectively compensate for this uptick in psychological issues. For instance, a few short-term consequences already visible are an increase in suicides and domestic violence cases, as well as an overburdened healthcare system. Likewise, experts predict a long-lasting effect might be seen through a substantial economic loss in India by 2030.

Possible solutions to India's mental health epidemic might include providing access to telehealth services to expand the reach of care and raising awareness to diminish the stigmatism surrounding mental illness. To navigate the erosion of mental health in India during the

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^{*}This article is taken from the TJIA Roundtable series.

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² Esha Mirta. "India Didn't Prioritize Mental Health before Covid-19. Now It's Paying the Price." *CNN*, Cable News Network, 7 Sept. 2020, www.cnn.com/2020/09/06/india/india-mental-health-dst-intl-hnk/index.html.

pandemic, this article will discuss the status of psychological burdens prior to COVID-19, compare how the pandemic has worsened these issues, highlight the Indian government's inadequate response, outline potential consequences of this neglect, and ultimately, recommend that India prioritizes mental healthcare, further educates its healthcare workers, and spreads awareness for mental health.

Condition of Mental Health Prior to the Pandemic

According to the United Nations, depression, anxiety, and various other mental health conditions were some of the "greatest causes of misery in our world," costing the global economy over \$1 trillion per year before the pandemic. However, countries around the world buried these issues under decades of neglect, underinvestment, and understaffing—leaving populations more vulnerable when the pandemic, emerged to exacerbate mental health stressors. In many developing countries across Asia, the number of mental health workers is typically lower than the World Health Organization's (WHO) preferred number of more than 3 per 100,000 people. India is no exception to this statistic, as their workforce has a significant shortage of healthcare workers, with around 0.3 psychiatrists and 0.07 psychologists to serve 100,000 people.

In 2017, India received the undesirable title of the world's 'most depressing country' by WHO, with one in seven people suffering from a severe mental illness. Indian culture also stigmatizes mental illnesses. Instead of feeling support in their battle against mental conditions, people who are open about their psychological struggles in India are greeted with disgrace and are often labelled as "lunatics" by society, which can drown their likelihood of seeking treatment beneath waves of shame and isolation. Notably, in India, avoiding social disapproval at any cost is embedded into the foundation of their culture. Thus, by being forced to live in this "tight-lipped, conservative society" emotions tend to build until they explode into bombs of depression

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³ "UN Leads Call to Protect Most Vulnerable from Mental Health Crisis during and a fter COVID-19 | UN News." *United Nations*, United Nations, 14 May 2020, news.un.org/en/story/2020/05/1063882.

⁴ The Lancet Infectious Diseases. "The Intersection of COVID-19 and Mental Health." *The Lancet Infectious Diseases*, vol. 20, no. 11, 8 Oct. 2020, p. 1217., doi:10.1016/s1473-3099(20)30797-0.

⁵Anna D. Bartuska and Dr. Luana Marques. "Mental Health and COVID-19 in Developing Countries." *Development Matters*, OECD, 6 Aug. 2020, oecd-development-matters.org/2020/08/04/mental-health-and-covid-19-in-developing-countries/.

⁶Anisha Bhatia. "World Mental Health Day 2020: In Numbers, The Burden of Mental Disorders In India |." *NDTV*, 9 Oct. 2020, swachhindia.ndtv.com/world-mental-health-day-2020-in-numbers-the-burden-of-mental-disorders-in-india51627/#:~:text=WHO%20also%20estimates%20that%20about,Indians%20suffer%20from%20anxiety%20disorders.

⁷Dr. Ramon Llamba. "What India Must Do to Solve Its Mental Health Crisis?" *ETHealthworld.com*, Economic Times, 26 Feb. 2020, health.economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/industry/what-india-must-do-to-solve-its-mental-health-crisis/74314862.

⁸ Llamba. *ETHealthworld*

and grenades of anxiety—showering a spray of shrapnel in every direction in a domino effect of psychological destruction. Because of these factors, India was unprepared to handle the added weight of the pandemic.

Mental Health in India has Declined During the Pandemic

While mental health was a serious issue neglected by the Indian government before the spread of COVID-19, the virus took that toll to a more potent level. According to WHO, the percentage of Indians who suffer from mental illnesses has grown over 12.5 percent this year due to the pandemic. ¹⁰ In a survey by the Indian Psychiatric Society, 40 percent of participants reported an increase of depression and anxiety directly linked to the virus. ¹¹ Likewise, a recent study was conducted to evaluate the need for mental healthcare amongst the adult Indian population during the pandemic. ¹² This online survey revealed that more than 80 percent of participants felt high-levels of anxiety pertaining to thoughts of COVID-19, leading researchers to conclude that there is a significant need to intensify awareness and address the mental health issues of people during this pandemic. ¹³ Yet, to properly understand why this issue is deserving of more governmental intervention, an observation of the factors leading to this uptake in cases is beneficial.

The implementation of non-pharmaceutical interventions (NPIs) in response to the virus, while necessary to slow its spread, has negatively impacted mental health. These governmental measures to ensure social distancing have disrupted people's daily routines through forced isolation, major shutdowns of social environments, financial struggles, and widespread unemployment rates. ¹⁴ Similarly, by enforcing a strict stay-at-home policy, India's domestic violence and child abuse rates have increased to a worrisome extent still unmeasurable in its fullest capacity. ¹⁵ Henceforth, women and children are experiencing a greater risk of developing mental health issues and a need for external support under NPIs. ¹⁶ In particular, because India

⁹ Neeta Lal. "Pandemic Worsens India's Mental Health Misery." *Nikkei Asia*, 23 Jan. 2021, a sia.nikkei.com/Life-Arts/Life/Pandemic-worsens-India-s-mental-health-misery.

¹⁰ Bhatia. NDTV.

¹¹ Mitra. CNN.

¹² Cristia no Codagnone, et al. "Assessing Concerns for the Economic Consequence of the COVID-19 Response and Mental Health Problems Associated with Economic Vulnerability and Negative Economic Shock in Italy, Spain, and the United Kingdom." *PLOS ONE*, vol. 15, no. 10, 2020, doi:10.1371/journal.pone.0240876.

¹³ Deblina Roy, et al. "Study of Knowledge, Attitude, Anxiety & Perceived Mental Healthcare Need in Indian Population during COVID-19 Pandemic." *Asian Journal of Psychiatry*, vol. 51, June 2020, p. 102083., doi:10.1016/j.ajp.2020.102083.

¹⁴ The Lancet. *The Lancet Infectious Diseases*, p. 8.

¹⁵ Leticia Linn. "Countries Must Expand Services to Cope with Mental Health Effects of COVID-19 Pandemic, PAHO Director Says." *PAHO/WHO | Pan American Health Organization*, 18 Aug. 2020, www.paho.org/en/news/18-8-2020-countries-must-expand-services-cope-mental-health-effects-covid-19-pandemic-paho.

¹⁶ "UN Leads Call..." United Nations.

experienced one of the worst lockdowns during the pandemic—with over 11 million COVID-19 cases collectively reported—the negative psychological effects on the population's mental health is predicted to match that severity. 17 Thus, while many Indians adapted to a new normal, that change in routine invoked a progression of small bouts of stress to develop into larger quells of depression and anxiety that need to be addressed. 18

India's Inadequate Response to the Pandemic

Unfortunately, despite this growing need for mental health services across the globe, many developing countries fall short on fulfilling those needs—India being one of them. Overall, the country is struggling against a multitude of issues, such as an absence of general health infrastructure, an overburdened and inefficient healthcare system, a scarcity of trained mental health professionals, a lack of advocacy for mental health, and limited funding. 19 Near the beginning of the pandemic, India came to an agreement with the United States in an attempt to mutually improve mental health services. ²⁰ However, the potential benefits were clouded behind the dubious intent of the Indian government since it contributes "less than 1 U.S. cent on a mental health sufferer in a whole year."21 Likewise, a 2016 study uncovered that less than 30 million Indians were receiving psychological intervention, while nearly 150 million in total needed it. ²² Additionally, although India is the world's sixth largest economy, their spending towards mental health is much lower than that of many low-income countries—0.05 percent of its health budget compared to the average 0.5.23 These statistics raise a question of India's motives—even in spite of the level of poverty limiting the country's efforts—as their responsibility and prioritization of mental health is falling short. Therefore, the agreement may actually be an attempt at establishing alternative endeavors, such as growing Indian businesses, instead of the assumed addressal of the impending mental health crisis.²⁴

On the other hand, the facilities that India does offer are vastly limited. According to a National Mental Health Survey, 83 percent of people in India with mental illnesses didn't have access to adequate treatment options.²⁵ One obstacle that many citizens face in receiving this care can be traced back to where they live. For instance, there is a substantial divide between the

¹⁷ Mitra. CNN.

¹⁸ Statista Research Department. "Topic: Mental Health in India--Statistics and Facts." *Statista*, 16 Sept. 2020, www.statista.com/topics/6944/mental-health-in-india/.

¹⁹ Adrija Roy. "Mental Health Implications of COVID-19 Pandemic and its Response in India." *Int J Soc Psychiatry*, NCBI, Pub. 1 Sept. 2020. doi: 10.1177/0020764020950769.

²⁰ Harshita Rathore. "How Committed Is India to Mental Health?" *The Diplomat/The Pulse*, The Diplomat, 22 Mar. 2020, the diplomat.com/2020/03/how-committed-is-india-to-mental-health/.

²¹ Rathore. *The Diplomat/The Pulse*.

²² Rathore. *The Diplomat/The Pulse*.

²³ Rathore. *The Diplomat/The Pulse*.

²⁴ Rathore. *The Diplomat/The Pulse*.

²⁵ Mitra. CNN.

urban and rural population in India as cities have more opportunities to seek support, whereas for some villagers in rural areas, it may take well over 30 miles to even reach a hospital or facility.²⁶ For many people, this added travel time and monetary guzzler is too much of a barrier to get the help they need.

Also, the level of awareness spread via campaigns and a proper education regarding mental health in India is lacking. ²⁷ For instance, there have not been any major awareness programs for mental health to reduce feelings of shame and humiliation clouding the issue—even on World Mental Health Day—whereas the country aggressively celebrates International Yoga Day, spending about \$4.5 million every year. ²⁸ Because there is a stigmatism against mental conditions in India, the implementation of such programs is vital to their future. Along with the excessive cost of treatment and inadequate staffing to support everyone, the healthcare available in India is unequally distributed and must be improved to take on the additional weight of the pandemic.

Consequences of Neglecting Mental Health Needs

By neglecting this rising need for treatment and adequate mental health services, various negative effects both to the Indian community and its citizens are likely to follow. Based on previous public health emergencies, short- and long-term consequences from disregarded mental health needs is known to be quite impactful if not tended to early on. For example, as seen during the Ebola epidemic, infectious diseases and viruses elevate a sense of fear that manifests as social ostracization of individuals and their communities.²⁹

Short-Term Effects

With the additional burden of pandemic-related stress on mental health, people in India are developing various addictive coping mechanisms, such as drug abuse, alcohol dependency, and gaming addictions. According to the UN, people who previously handled stress in a healthy manner—for instance through daily exercise or meditation—are quickly finding themselves overwhelmed during the pandemic with stressors simultaneously coming from too many directions. ³⁰ Additionally, unmet needs, particularly for depression sufferers, has led to a spike in suicide rates. Even before the pandemic, suicide was a major issue in India as they were known

²⁷ Lal. Nikkei Asia.

²⁶ Mitra. CNN.

²⁸ Rathore. *The Diplomat/The Pulse*.

²⁹ Manasi Kumar and Pushpam Kumar. "Impact of Pandemic on Mental Health in Lower- and Middle-Income Countries (LMICs)." *Global Mental Health*, Cambridge University Press, 3 Dec. 2020, www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC7750653/.

³⁰ Chara Malapani. "COVID-19 and the Need for Action on Mental Health." *Columbia University Department of Psychiatry*, 9 Oct. 2020, www.columbiapsychiatry.org/news/covid-19-and-need-action-mental-health.

for having the highest suicide rates in South-East Asia. ³¹ Globally, India accounted for over 36.6 percent of suicide reports before COVID-19. ³² In May 2020, the Suicide Prevention in India Foundation (SPIF) reported an upsurge of suicidal intent across the country, with nearly 65 percent of 159 mental health professionals indicating an increase in self-harm and suicidal thoughts among their patients. ³³ Also, the SPIF discovered that frontline workers in India are taking a direct hit from the surge in mental health conditions, with over 85 percent indicating they feel drained from their patients and 75 percent claiming that fatigue is affecting their work performance. ³⁴ With healthcare professionals impacted by substantial job-related stress—on top of their own personal health concerns regarding COVID-19—the entire system's ability to provide quality care to those in need diminishes. ³⁵

Long-Term Effects

As for potential lingering effects of unfulfilled mental health problems, researchers are predicting a substantial economic burden is soon to come. For India, their neglect of mental health is likely to create economic losses since the state of mental health in a country correlates positively with its economic growth. ³⁶ If people are forced to deal with mental illnesses independently, this ineffective level of care can lead to adverse outcomes, such as an inability to obtain or hold a job. On the other hand, being unemployed creates financial anxiety and stress, which contributes to a worsened mental stability—thus, throwing individuals and communities into an injurious repetitive cycle. ³⁷ The WHO estimates that between 2012-2030, the economic losses in India will total over 1.03 trillion; therefore, this is an issue that the Indian government should identify as a worthy investment. ³⁸

Because of the Pandemic, Should India Get a Free Pass?

Alternatively, some may argue that due to the additional stress of the pandemic, India and other developing countries are doing all that they can and should be given the benefit of the doubt. For instance, an obvious barrier impeding any significant hands-on involvement is COVID-19's overbearing presence on the healthcare system. In India, this system was overburdened before the pandemic, so add the weight of strained workers, inadequate amounts of staffing, facilities closing, and a limited supply of resources with an increased demand, and those

³¹ Mitra. CNN.

³² Bhatia. NDTV.

³³ Mitra. CNN.

³⁴ Mitra. CNN.

³⁵ Malapani. *Columbia University*.

³⁶ Statista Research Department. *Statista*.

³⁷ Rathore. *The Diplomat/The Pulse*.

³⁸ Bhatia. NDTV.

small cracks grow until they ultimately threaten to shatter under the pressure. ³⁹ Likewise, financial ramifications of the pandemic have demoted India from the world's fifth largest economy to sixth, once again falling behind the UK. ⁴⁰ With a strained budget, some services need to be held over others in order to benefit the most people possible. Even so, mental health has proved itself worthy of being prioritized—especially now. Not only should it be prioritized morally and logically, but legally as well. Under the Convention on Rights of Persons with Disability in 2007, India agreed that their government is obligated to look after people's mental health. ⁴¹ Also, WHO outlined that attending to mental health needs is fundamental to ensuring human dignity and quality of life—a right that is guaranteed to Indians in their Constitution as a 'Right of Life.' ⁴² Overall, the inclusion of mental health in pandemic response planning is a "critical component" in recovery. ⁴³

Solutions to Improve Mental Health Services

In order to alleviate this 'Mental Health Epidemic,' there are numerous solutions that India and other developing countries can introduce to their citizens. First and foremost, India needs to recognize the importance of maintaining good mental health. The physical difficulties of COVID-19 need to be fought simultaneously with the psychological distress in order to recover from this pandemic in a way that "leaves no one behind." ⁴⁴ By investing in accessible and sustainable mental health support, the response to the virus will be even more effective by assisting those in need. ⁴⁵ The United Nations released a policy to emphasize this point, claiming the "decades of neglect and underinvestment" in mental health has been exposed by the COVID-19 pandemic in a way that countries can no longer deny. ⁴⁶ For the Indian government, the best thing they could do is to run with this global momentum geared towards mental health, as everyone is in the same boat of "despair and despondency," and start prioritizing these services. ⁴⁷ To do so, India should develop policies that address poor mental healthcare, advocate about the issue and ways people can receive support and increase the amount of qualified mental health professionals on their staff. ⁴⁸

³⁹ Mitra. CNN.

⁴⁰ Llamba. *ETHealthworld*.

⁴¹ Rathore. *The Diplomat/The Pulse*.

⁴² Rathore. *The Diplomat/The Pulse*.

⁴³ Linn. *PAHO/WHO* | *Pan American Health Organization*.

⁴⁴ Dr Eliza Cheung. "How Can We Tackle a Growing COVID-19 Caused Mental Health Crisis? - World." *ReliefWeb*, OCHA Services, 19 Oct. 2020, reliefweb.int/report/world/how-can-we-tackle-growing-covid-19-caused-mental-health-crisis.

⁴⁵ Cheung. *ReliefWeb*.

⁴⁶ Malapani. *Columbia University*.

⁴⁷ Mitra. CNN.

⁴⁸ Llamba. ETHealthworld.

Similarly, another option is to further the development of the healthcare system. Especially in developing countries, mental health needs are overwhelming healthcare systems. 49 Regarding staff insufficiencies, an effective step forward would be to hire and train more health care workers to fulfill the increasing demand for services, as well as to integrate mental health training into primary care systems to tackle a larger population. 50 Also, to properly reimagine the system during the pandemic, the implementation of telehealth services is vital. These internet-based interventions and technologies, such as emergency hotlines and virtual therapy, can assist in bridging the gap between the supply and demand of services, thus diminishing a widespread inequality in the healthcare system. 51 While the accessibility of these services is more challenging in developing countries where technology is limited, innovative advancements—such as wireless internet balloons in Africa—are being developed to ease the brunt of this issue. 52

Most significantly, a solution especially applicable to India is decreasing the stigma surrounding mental health by raising awareness. ⁵³ To lower this stigma and elevate the demand for services, regulations should be enacted in order to educate and sensitize Indian communities about mental health conditions, the signs and symptoms to look out for, and treatment options that are available. ⁵⁴ For instance, pursuing a countrywide effort in spreading information through the mass media can mobilize endeavors in support of mental health and encourage individuals to reach out for therapy or medication. ⁵⁵ Likewise, the absence of widespread literacy about mental health must be addressed by introducing psychological topics into libraries and school curriculums. ⁵⁶ By integrating mental health education into India's school system, the younger generation will be more equipped to process their emotions instead of bottling them up, as they were taught, and this will help them better handle potential mental illnesses in the future.

Overall, these efforts of building mental health support should be integrated at all levels—including workplaces, healthcare systems, and in local communities—as the people in communities are the "first line of defense" in bridging the current resource gap. ⁵⁷ For example, educating the community can start by implementing the proper terminology to reduce any communication barriers. According to experts, even though India has over twenty-two languages, none of them have words that mean 'mental health' or 'depression,' because the

⁴⁹ Bartuska and Marques. *Development Matters*.

⁵⁰ Linn. PAHO/WHO.

⁵¹ Graciela Rojas, et al. "Improving Mental Health Care in Developing Countries Through Digital Technologies: A Mini Narrative Review of the Chilean Case." *Frontiers in Public Health*, vol. 7, 2019, doi:10.3389/fpubh.2019.00391.

⁵² Bartuska and Marques. *Development Matters*.

⁵³ Llamba. *ETHealthworld*.

⁵⁴ KS Jacob. "Repackaging Mental Health Programs in Low- and Middle-Income Countries." *Indian Journal of Psychiatry*, vol. 53, no. 3, 2011, p. 195., doi:10.4103/0019-5545.86798.

⁵⁵ Roy. Int J Soc Psychiatry. NCBI.

⁵⁶ Lal. Nikkei Asia.

⁵⁷ Cheung. *ReliefWeb*.

practice of psychiatry is largely Western. ⁵⁸ In order to transform conservative cultures like India's, mindsets need to be open for taboo topics like mental health to become normalized in discussions. ⁵⁹ Fortunately, one positive thing to come out of the pandemic to stimulate this receptiveness is a spotlight on mental health. Because more people have been affected, the conversation around psychological difficulties is more honest and empathic than ever before, which is a vital aspect to tearing down walls of stigma and misplaced judgement that all too often inhibit people from seeking help. ⁶⁰ Every time physical health is introduced in conversation, mental health shouldn't be too far behind; and every time COVID-19 is brought up, "we should talk about mental health" too. ⁶¹

Concluding Thoughts

Ultimately, these issues weighing down India's mental healthcare system have been decades in the making; the recent pandemic has just finally exposed them. This is a chance for countries to incite change rather than letting this be just another problem swept under the rug. Thus, proper response strategies to COVID-19 should be constructed to address mental health needs—such as sensitizing populations by raising awareness, shifting services to the community, and including mental health in universal health coverage. Most importantly, communities have lost the ability to think about our brain as an organ that can fail in some respects just like the rest of our bodies. ⁶² When you break a bone, the first thing someone will suggest is for you to go the doctor to fix it. Yet, when we feel anxious or depressed, people tell you to 'suck it up' or see it as an indicator that you're weak. But it should be the same reaction for both: when you're feeling depressed, you go to a therapist or psychiatrist to fix it. We need to normalize getting help for mental illnesses, just like any other injury, and spread awareness so people understand what they're feeling and can get the services they so desperately need. As the UN Secretary-General highlights as the core mandate of the global development agenda, there is "no health without mental health." ⁶³

⁵⁸ Mitra. CNN.

⁵⁹ Sarah Fielding, et al. "What America Can Learn from the Mental Health Care Systems of Other Countries." *Talkspace*, 06 Apr. 2020, www.talkspace.com/blog/america-mental-health-care-systems/.

⁶⁰ Kristen Rogers. "Mental Health Is One of the Biggest Pandemic Issues We'll Face in 2021." *CNN Philippines*, CNN, 5 Jan. 2021, www.cnnphilippines.com/lifestyle/2021/1/5/Mental-health-biggest-pandemic-issues-2021.html. ⁶¹ Rogers. *CNN Philippines*.

⁶² Dr. Luana Marques. "COVID-19's Impact on Mental Health and Developing Countries." *C-Span*, Washington Journal Primetime, 29 Apr. 2020, www.c-span.org/video/?471594-1/covid-19s-impact-mental-health-developing-countries.

⁶³ Kumar and Kumar. *Global Mental Health*.

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The Indian Farmers' Protests: From Local Strikes to a Worldwide Movement*

Eric Ports¹

Abstract: The Indian Farmer's Protests provide an example of the disharmony between the citizens of developing countries and their government caused by the economic turbulence of 2020. Although the roots of the issue are decades-old, new legislation passed late last year built upon the hardships farmers faced during the pandemic and created one of the largest protest movements in human history. This situation has led to an immense wave of unrest as this segment of the population loses faith in their government.

Keywords: India, Protests, Unrest, Public Policy

Introduction

In August of 2020, the Parliament of India announced three new agricultural acts which sought to reform India's farming industry. The so-called Farm Bills were made into law in the following September, prompting massive protests on behalf of farmers from several Indian states. The bills, in essence, deregulate certain aspects of the agricultural sector, such as minimum selling price and stockpiling limits, which were set up to protect the majority of India's farmers who rely on such protections to compete with large corporations. They also create the foundations of an electronic trade network, an amenity that few farmers can afford, emboldening national and global corporations. The farmers in several lesser-developed states saw the bills as an affront to their livelihood so that the Indian government could attract foreign private investment. Since these initial demonstrations, the protests have grown exponentially, and farmers' unions have put out a list of demands that would put an end to the tension. Among these demands are not only calls for the removal of the Farm Bills, but also new legislation that they believe will help farmers deal with the hardships they faced before the Farm Bills were passed. After several months, the protests continued to escalate, garnering attention from the international community. The protests grew in size and intensity, leading to clashes with law enforcement. These clashes have resulted in hundreds of injuries and several fatalities. Because of the staggering number of people protesting, and the lengths that the Indian government have gone to in attempts to shut down the protests, this topic warrants much attention. I believe that

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the ultimate solution to this problem is that the Indian government should revoke these bills and instead focus on remedying the hardships that India's farmers, who make up a significant portion of their population, have been facing for so long.

For many farmers in India, the Farm Bills act as a stab in the back after decades of increasing hardships. In the past, the Prime Minister of India, Narendra Modi, had promised to bring change to the agricultural sector, and claimed that the Farm Bills would actually work for the benefit of farmers. Despite this, many farmers, specifically those from regions such as Punjab, who have historically seen decreases in production and increasing costs, see the Farm Bills as a way to squeeze out the average farmer and give corporations free rein over India's agricultural sector. Protest leaders have noted that the Farm Bills come in at a time when farmers are at an extremely difficult time, citing an increasing number of suicides committed by farmers over the past several decades.² It can be safely said that many of India's farmers have been in need of more government assistance for many years, and that their concerns over the Farm Bills is a sign that they are in a very desperate situation. With a full understanding of the movement and its origins, it is apparent that for the sake of India's farmers, the government should walk back on these harmful laws and should make a strong effort to ensure the rights of farmers, ensure a system of fair trade, and focus on modernizing rural regions for the sake of easing their hardships instead of eroding their way of life.

The Three Farm Bills

When the Farm Bills were passed in September 2020, the Indian government claimed they would renew the agricultural sector and allow corporations to more easily participate in the market. Prime Minister Modi said that the news laws would help bring technological innovation to India's farmers that would increase production, calling the laws "a welcome step". In order to understand the justification for passing the laws, as well as what exactly prompted such a hostile response from farmers, a closer look at the three laws is necessary.

The first bill focuses mainly on the commerce aspect of the farming industry, amending the rules and regulations of how farmers are to trade and sell their produce, as well as proposing a new foundation of electronic based trade. The second bill creates a price assurance system and

² Yasmina Hatem, et al. "India Has a Farmer Suicide Epidemic - and Farmers Are Protesting New Laws They Fear Will Make Things Worse." *Business Insider*. January 7, 2021, www.businessinsider.com/india-farmers-protest-law-suicide-epidemic-2021-1.

³ Shankhyaneel Sarkar. "PM Modi Calls Passage of Farm Bills 'Watershed Moment' for Agricultural Sector." *Hindustan Times*, September 20, 2020, www.hindustantimes.com/india-news/the-farm-bills-passed-in-parlia ment-will-not-only-bring-radical-changes-in-agriculture-sector-but-will-a lso-empower-farmers-tweets-pm-modi/story-Wsi1df81nxjXQFeAHXPVtI.html.

expands on contract farming. The third bill, which came as a particular shock to farmers, removes limits on stockholding several different categories of produce, giving large scale agricultural corporations an edge when it comes to supply and shipping. Each of these bills sparked fear in regular farmers, specifically because the rights they guarantee only serve the purpose of aiding larger producers and offer rights that local farmers would not have much of a need for. Additionally, they create a framework in which corporations will have almost absolute control over pricing and supply, effectively squeezing farmers out of the market. Last but not least, the laws do away with the government-guaranteed minimum pricing for selling crops, a provision that helped farmers keep their heads above water in hard times. With the abolition of this provision, corporations will be able to sell their products for much lower prices which farmers will be unable to compete with, according to protestors. The main takeaway from these laws is that they would essentially give corporations the means to take control of India's agricultural sector by eliminating the role of local producers and their ability to compete with these large firms. With all of these alarming policies becoming law, it was only a matter of time before protesters spoke out about their grievances and demanded a fair deal.

The Birth of the Movement

It did not take long for farmers to take to the streets to protests with the earliest demonstrations occurring before the bills even passed. Following the passage of the bills in September, unions rallied farmers from several states such as Punjab and Haryana. The protests started out by being contained in individual states, with more local and contained demonstrations taking place. In many states, the main form of protest was blocking travel, such as shutting down Punjab's rail system. Not long after this however, protesters from all over the country started to converge around Delhi. Protesters began blocking off several of the main highways leading into the city, and with the capitol surrounded, the Indian government decided to crack down on the

⁴ PIB Delhi. Parliament Passes The Farmers' Produce Trade and Commerce (Promotion and Facilitation) Bill, 2020 and The Farmers (Empowerment and Protection) Agreement of Price Assurance and Farm Services Bill, 2020, Press Information Bureau, September 20, 2020, pib.gov.in/Pressreleaseshare.aspx?PRID=1656929.

⁵ Times of India. "Farmers' Protest Live Updates: It Is Our Duty to Ensure Farmers' Produce Gets Good Markets and Good Roads Aid in That, Says PM Modi in Puducherry." *The Times of India*, February 25, 2021, timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/farmers-protest-live-updates-feb-25/liveblog/81201471.cms.

⁶ Jessie Yeung. "Farmers a cross India Have Been Protesting for Months. Here's Why." *CNN*, Cable News Network, February 15, 2021, www.cnn.com/2021/02/10/asia/india-farmers-protest-explainer-intl-hnk-scli/index.html.

⁷ Jessie Yeung. "Farmers a cross India Have Been Protesting for Months. Here's Why."

⁸ Himanshu Shekhar Mishra, and Chandrashekar Sriniva san. "Massive Farmer Protests In Punjab, Haryana, Parts Of UP Over 3 Bills." *NDTV.com*, NDTV, September 25, 2020, www.ndtv.com/india-news/massive-farmers-protest-in-punjab-haryana-parts-of-uttar-pradesh-roads-rail-tracks-blocked-2300821.

⁵ Avishek G. Dastidar "Explained: The Railways Network in Punjab, and How It Has Been Impacted by the Ongoing Protests." *The Indian Express*, November 11, 2020, india nexpress.com/article/explained/the-railways-network-in-punjab-and-how-it-has-been-impacted-by-the-ongoing-protests-7046586/.

protesters. ¹⁰ With a minimum estimate of 150,000 protestors attempting to block off Delhi, police were ordered to use force. ¹¹ Blockades were erected, tear gas and water cannons were deployed, and fatalities started to be counted. ¹² With this show of force from authorities, unions from across the country called for a general strike, resulting in an estimated 250 million workers striking on November 26th. ¹³ This drastic move raised the stakes significantly, and soon after the government agreed to talks for ending the protests. Any hopes of an end to the demonstrations would be futile at this point, however, as the government's terms to meet were not accepted by farm unions. This stage of the protests continued for months, with highways being blocked, sporadic strikes occurring across the country, and the government using increasingly violent methods to try to send the protestors away.

The Movement Grows

January 26th is India's Republic Day, celebrating India's independence from Britain and the creation of a parliamentary republic. On January 26th, 2021 the protesters decided to hold a massive tractor rally, parading through the streets of Delhi. During this portion of the day's demonstration, one farmer died while driving his tractor into a police barricade. The police claim that his tractor overturned and crushed his head, but many present at the parade, as well as the man's family and the farm unions say that he had been shot in the head by police, showing evidence that they believe proves this. ¹⁴ Later in the day, protesters marched to the Red Fort, a historical landmark, fighting their way into the fort. This brawl led to hundreds of injuries on both sides. This heightening of tensions shook the nation, and the government followed by blocking the main protest sites and arresting farmers and journalists alike. ¹⁵

Following this event, the protests gained much more attention internationally than they had previously. Following the government's harsh response towards the demonstrators, other nations and international organizations issued statements condemning the government's actions

¹⁰ PTI. "Dilli Chalo: Farmers' Protest Enters Fifth Day." *The Hindu*, The Hindu, November 30, 2020, www.thehindu.com/news/national/dilli-chalo-farmers-protest-enters-fifth-day/article33211234.ece.

¹¹ Chandigarh Ians. "Farmers Protest: Two Lakh More Set to Reach Delhi in 40km-Long Cavalcade." *Business Standard*, Business-Standard, November 28, 2020, www.business-standard.com/article/current-affairs/farmers-protest-two-lakh-more-set-to-reach-delhi-in-40km-long-cavalcade-120112800158 1.html.

protest-two-lakh-more-set-to-reach-delhi-in-40km-long-cavalcade-120112800158_1.html. ¹² Tribune News Service. "Expired Tear Gas Shells Used in Haryana to Disperse Punjab Farmers." *Tribune India News Service*, November 28, 2020, www.tribuneindia.com/news/haryana/expired-tear-gas-shells-used-177431.

¹³ Shemin Joy. "At Least 25 Crore Workers Participated in General Strike; Some States Saw Complete Shutdown: Trade Unions." *Deccan Herald*, DH News Service, November 26, 2020, www.deccanherald.com/national/at-least-25-crore-workers-participated-in-general-strike-some-states-saw-complete-shutdown-trade-unions-920200.html.

¹⁴ Ismat Ara. "'Autopsy Doctor Told Me He'd Seen the Bullet Injury But Can Do Nothing as His Hands Are Tied'." *The Wire*, January 30, 2021, thewire.in/rights/autopsy-doctor-told-me-hed-seen-the-bullet-injury-but-can-do-nothing-as-his-hands-are-tied.

¹⁵ Aishwarya Paliwal. "Farmer Leaders Betrayed Delhi Police, 394 Cops Injured, 19 Arrests Made: Commissioner." *India Today*, January 27, 2021, www.indiatoday.in/india/story/farmer-leaders-betrayed-delhi-police-394-cops-injured-19-arrests-made-commissioner-1763329-2021-01-27.

and calling for the Indian government to enter into discussions with the demonstrators to bring the protests to an end. Condemnations of the government's policy by figures such as Indian journalists and Western celebrities led to effigy burning on behalf of pro-government counter protestors. ¹⁶ One recent development has been the arrest of Disha Ravi, a 21-year-old climate activist, who was arrested on charges of sedition after publishing an online toolkit designed to assist the farmers in their demonstrations. Her arrest has become a focal point for the international community's condemnation of the government's response to the protests, and even more protests have broken out demanding that she be released. ¹⁷ In light of this increased attention, the protests' organizers are putting much more of a focus on garnering international support. ¹⁸ At present, the situation remains unresolved, with neither side showing any sign of budging, and it is unlikely the protests will end any time soon.

Conclusion

In short, it is evident that the Indian farmers' protests have surged to become a nationwide movement that shows no sign of stopping until the farmers' demands are met. With the harsh government response, it is also evident that Modi's government has no plans to cede any ground to the protesters and fully intends for the laws to go into effect for the sake of revolutionizing the agricultural sector. Although the protests began in anger towards the farm bills, which would have an immense negative impact on the wellbeing of the average farmer, they have since become much more than protests against new legislation. They have come to be representative of decades of building anger by farmers towards a government that has failed to help them deal with growing hardship. The protests have become a way for groups that have felt alienated or even persecuted by the Indian government, such as Sikhs and Muslims, to push back against Modi's nationalist regime.

The protests stem from a widespread distaste for the way India's government have been treating disenfranchised groups, and it is for this reason that the protestors are so determined to not go home until their demands are met. With international pressure mounting for the government to enter into talks with organizers and reach an agreement, I believe it is time for the Indian government to not only repeal the laws, but also engage in further talks with these groups to find ways to make up for their preexisting grievances. By strengthening protections for

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¹⁶ Hannah Ellis-Petersen. "Greta Thunberg Effigies Burned in Delhi a fter Tweets on Farmers' Protests." *The Guardian*, Guardian News and Media, February 4, 2021, www.theguardian.com/world/2021/feb/04/greta-thunberg-effigies-burned-in-delhi-after-tweets-on-farmers-protests.

¹⁷ Sameer Yasir. "Indian Court Grants Bail to Activist Arrested Over Farmers' Protests." *The New York Times*, The New York Times, February 23, 2021, www.nytimes.com/2021/02/23/world/asia/india-bail-disha-ravi.html. ¹⁸ Times of India. "Farmers' Protest Live Updates: It Is Our Duty to Ensure Farmers' Produce Gets Good Markets and Good Roads Aid in That, Says PM Modi in Puducherry." *The Times of India*, Times of India, February 25, 2021, timeso findia.indiatimes.com/india/farmers-protest-live-updates-feb-25/liveblog/81201471.cms.

farmers in the market, the Indian government will be ensuring that farmers can at the very least sustain themselves and their livelihoods. Then, by refocusing the modernization efforts away from corporations and towards development in rural regions by investing in infrastructure, electrification, and mechanization, the government will be alleviating farmers of many of their systemic hardships and increasing their productive capability. It seems overly hopeful to assume Modi would ever take this course of action because of his stubborn attitudes and his fervent support from many of India's citizens, and thus I think that ultimately the international community should offer assistance to the farmers in any way possible. If a solution is not soon reached, it is likely that tensions could boil up even more than they did on Republic Day, which would be detrimental for stability in India.

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Ghana in a Health Crisis: Striking a Balance Between Saving Lives and Preserving Livelihoods*

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Abstract: Ghana's actions exemplify the impact of pandemic related regulations within developing countries in light of underdeveloped health systems. Through differing levels of government regulations, the government of Ghana had to find a balance between saving lives and preserving livelihood. Lockdowns and other regulations direly affect underdeveloped economies, causing developing nations such as Ghana to implement pandemic related policies accordingly.

Keywords: Developing Countries, Africa, Economy, COVID-19, Health, Government Restrictions

Introduction

On January 30, 2020, the World Health Organization declared a public health emergency of international concern. Since this announcement, the 2019-nCoV outbreak, better known as the COVID-19 pandemic, has swept across the globe, leading to over 113 million confirmed cases and over 2 million deaths. In response, nations have enacted lockdowns and mask mandates. They have encouraged social distancing and frequent hand sanitation. Domestic health systems have mobilized to provide COVID-19 testing kits and vaccines, as well as ventilators and proper resources for hospitals in combating the health crisis. The story of the United States in the COVID-19 pandemic is one of a struggle to enforce public health regulations despite a developed economy, government, and health system. What, then, is the story of nations lacking in economic development? How are nations with underdeveloped government structures and weak health systems combating a global pandemic?

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² World Health Organization. "Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) - events as they happen." July 31, 2020. https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/events-as-they-happen.

³ World Health Organization. "WHO Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) Da shboard." February 28, 2021. World Health Organization. https://covid19.who.int/.

The United Nations currently classifies 46 nations as least developed countries and 126 nations as developing economies. In low-income countries, limited resources can result in less access to health care and clean water. Resources may not only be less available to citizens, but also to the government when drafting policy in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Governments of developing nations must find a way to mobilize attainable resources in order to save lives, even in the face of little economic flexibility. The heightened economic impact for developing countries, which are reliant on economic growth, also affects what regulations are implemented. Consequently, as circumstances impact policymaking, regulations enacted in developing countries must differ from those of developed countries.

Each state's health policies will have a direct impact on its citizens health, well-being, and livelihood. Governments struggled to prioritize public safety while maintaining a stable economy during the COVID-19 pandemic and the balance between public health and economic stability has been pursued differently depending on the state. The outcomes to date reflect these choices. For example, Ghana, a country classified as a developing economy, has a COVID-19 death rate of 1.91 deaths per 100,000 people. 5 Compared to the United States' 152.46 deaths per 100,000 people, its death rate is quite low. 6 Ghana's government regulations have decreased the level of confirmed cases of the virus in part because of its initial partial lockdown, widespread testing, and other regulations that limited public gatherings and traveling were pursued more vigorously than in the US. Yet, due to its economic challenges, Ghana could not sustain its strong initial measures and confirmed cases began to rise. To explain the low death rates within Ghana, one can take an in depth look at the government responses to the pandemic. Ghana offers a clear example of how vigorous government regulations can compensate for an underdeveloped health system. By instituting a partial lockdown, mass testing, and restrictions on travel, Ghana demonstrated how these regulations would work even though they subsequently had to be eased to preserve livelihoods given the limited economic mobility of a developing state.

External Factors Impacting Death Rates

It is important to note factors other than government regulations that may also lessen the COVID-19 death rate. The COVID-19 virus puts members of certain population groups at heightened risk, such as the elderly and those with pre-existing conditions. Thus, for example, the average age of the population affects the overall death rate, as populations with higher concentrations of elderly citizens are more vulnerable to COVID-19 related deaths. In order to

⁴ United Nations. "World Economic Situation and Prospects." 2020.

https://www.un.org/development/desa/dpad/wp-content/uploads/sites/45/WESP2020_Annex.pdf

⁵ World Health Organization. "Ghana: WHO Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) Dashboard." February 28, 2021. https://covid19.who.int/region/afro/country/gh.

⁶ World Health Organization. "United States of America: WHO Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) Dashboard." February 28, 2021. https://covid19.who.int/region/amro/country/us.

account for the effect of the virus on the population, life expectancy prior to the pandemic must also be considered. In developing nations, individuals with cardiovascular disease, diabetes, and other pre-existing conditions are less likely to survive. As a result, the populations of developing countries are less vulnerable to the virus, as there is less of a concentration of those with pre-existing conditions. Consequently, countries with younger average populations, higher mortality rates, and lower life expectancies prior to the COVID-19 pandemic have lower death rates. ⁷ As a developing country, this is true for the population of Ghana as well.

In Ghana, the average age of the population is 21.1, compared to the United States' average age of 38.3. Similarly, the life expectancy in Ghana is 64.1 years, while in the US it is 78.9 years. The actions taken by the Ghanaian government have had an impact on reducing the COVID-19 deaths by limiting the spread of the virus. However, a comparison between death rates of developed and developing states risks overstating the effectiveness of government regulations, as environmental factors and the condition of existing health systems must be considered. Rather, the rate of confirmed cases should be noted. While the United States has over 8,000 confirmed cases per 100,000 individuals as of March 2021, Ghana's confirmed cases per 100,000 people are within the 200s. The stark difference in death rates may not reflect on government regulations but the rate of cases does. Similarly, unreported cases may skew existing data, as reported cases are often lower than existing ones. Still, analyzing a county's reported cases allows for an understanding of the effectiveness of government regulations, especially in the presence of an underdeveloped health system.

Ghana's Initial Response

Established in 1996, the Ghana Health Service is relatively young. ¹⁰ An arm of the Ministry of Health, the Ghana Health Service is responsible for administering medical services provided by the government, as well as implementing health care policy. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Ghana Health Service's focus was on developing and maintaining programs to control HIV, malaria, and tuberculosis. ¹¹ Over the last two decades, the health system in Ghana has undergone major reforms with the purpose of creating a health care system that is equitable, efficient, accessible, and responsive. The reforms, however, have proven to be more expensive than the government's initial projections, limiting the scope of the reforms. When the first case

⁷ Yakubu Lawal. "Africa's low COVID-19 mortality rate: A paradox?" *International Journal of Infectious Diseases*, 102, 118–122. 2021. https://doi-org.proxy-tu.researchport.umd.edu/10.1016/j.ijid.2020.10.038

⁸ Yakubu Lawal. "Africa's low COVID-19 mortality rate: A paradox?"

⁹ World Health Organization. "United States of America: WHO Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) Dashboard." February 28, 2021. https://covid19.who.int/region/amro/country/us.

¹⁰ Ministry of Health. "Ghana Health Service." *Ministry of Health Republic of Ghana*. August 7, 2019. https://www.moh.gov.gh/ghana-health-service/.

¹¹ Ghana Health Service. "Latest on Health." *Ministry of Health Republic of Ghana*. N.d. https://www.ghanahealthservice.org/.

of COVID-19 reached Ghana, only around 40% of the Ghanaian population had access to health care. 12

Ghana's initial approach to the pandemic involved a partial lockdown, social distancing measures, travel restrictions and widespread testing. In fact, Ghana's mandatory mass testing of citizens has been acknowledged as a large contributor to the country's low death rate. The testing, which began during the partial lockdown, was largely conducted on those who had recently traveled outside of Ghana or those who had been contact traced to an individual testing positive for the virus. The first case of COVID-19 was reported on March 12, 2020. 13 On March 16, the government introduced regulations to slow the spread of the virus. Public gatherings were limited to 25 people, schools and universities were indefinitely closed, and a mandatory two-week self-quarantine was imposed for citizens who had traveled to a country with over 200 cases. On March 23, Ghana closed its borders. 14 Then, on March 30, President Nana Akufo-Addo enacted a partial three-week lockdown, in which Ghanaians could only leave their residence for essential purposes. 15 During the lockdown, the Ghanaian government conducted mass testing and contract tracing in order to contain the spread of the virus.

Post-Lockdown Ghana

On April 20, 2020, Ghana ended the lockdown. The government loosened restrictions, citing a better understanding of the virus, success in containing the spread of the virus, the establishment of a reliable testing system, the identification of potential hot spots, and the expansion of isolation and treatment centers as reasons to reopen society. ¹⁶ Ghana's borders remained closed and the Ministry of Health recommended the use of social determinants of health such as wearing masks, social distancing, and the frequent sanitation of hands. Additionally, schools remained closed and religious and social gatherings remained restricted. Beginning in June, religious gatherings of less than 100 people maintaining social distances were permitted, in addition to schools and universities reopening. In August, tourist sites were

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¹² Mary-Russell Roberson. "Ghana: Healthcare for a Country in Transition." *Duke Global Health Institute*. March 15,2020. https://globalhealth.duke.edu/news/ghana-healthcare-country-transition#:~:text=Among%20sub.

¹³ Daniel Kwame Afriyie, George Awuku Asare, Seth Kwabena Amponsah & Brian Godman. "COVID-19 pandemic in resource-poor countries: challenges, experiences and opportunities in Ghana." *The Journal of Infection in Developing Countries*, 14(08), 838-843. August, 2020. https://doi.org/10.3855/jidc.12909

¹⁴ International Monetary Fund. "Policy Responses to COVID19." 2021. https://www.imf.org/en/Topics/imf-and-covid19/Policy-Responses-to-COVID-19.

¹⁵ Daniel Kwame Afriyie, George Awuku Asare, Seth Kwabena Amponsah & Brian Godman. "COVID-19 pandemic in resource-poor countries: challenges, experiences and opportunities in Ghana."

¹⁶ Daniel Kwame Afriyie. "COVID-19 pandemic in resource-poor countries."

reopened and restrictions of religious gatherings were eased further. In September, international flights were permitted. 17

The day the lockdown was lifted there were only 1,042 confirmed cases and 9 deaths in Ghana. Yet, confirmed cases kept increasing, reaching 40,000 in August, 50,000 in November, and 60,000 in January of 2021. ¹⁸ On January 31, 2021, many restrictions were re-implemented, including limits on gatherings and the elimination of indoor dining. ¹⁹ As of February 27, 2021, Ghana has 82,586 confirmed cases and 594 COVID-19 deaths. At 265.78 confirmed COVID-19 cases per 100,000 individuals, Ghana has the highest rate of cases among neighboring states, and the second highest rate of cases within the region of Western Africa. ²⁰ With rising cases in Ghana, the effectiveness of initial government regulations in containing the spread of the virus has been brought into question. The consideration of whether or not the measures should have been reintroduced sooner requires an understanding of the economic impact of government lockdowns on the Ghanaian people.

Economic Impacts of Response

Government regulations such as lockdowns and restrictions on restaurant dining affect more than public health and safety, they also affect the economy. Similarly, setting up care facilities with proper equipment and tests also places a financial burden on the government. In order to fund necessary improvements to medical facilities and obtain essential resources, Ghana spent around \$104 million USD. Around \$1.9 billion USD have been pledged by the government to combat the crisis. In order to utilize these funds, Ghana must cut spending on goods and services, financial transfers, and capital investment, affecting the government's ability to fulfil responsibilities elsewhere. Additionally, Ghana has pulled from its stabilization fund and borrowed from the Bank of Ghana.²¹

The economic impact of restrictive regulations is exacerbated in developing countries as they must strike a balance between preserving lives and protecting livelihood due to decreased financial mobility. All states are concerned with economic downturns in the face of an international health crisis, however, developing states cannot provide the same financial support to their citizens. The United States was able to issue a \$1.9 trillion USD stimulus package to aid citizens in relief as a result of the economic downturn.²² Ghana cannot offer the same financial

¹⁷ International Monetary Fund. "Policy Responses to COVID19." 2021. https://www.imf.org/en/Topics/imf-and-covid19/Policy-Responses-to-COVID-19.

¹⁸ World Health Organization. "Ghana: WHO Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) Da shboard." February 28, 2021. https://covid19.who.int/region/afro/country/gh.

¹⁹ International Monetary Fund. "Policy Responses to COVID19."

²⁰ World Health Organization. "Ghana: WHO Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) Da shboard."

²¹ International Monetary Fund. "Policy Responses to COVID19."

²² Adam Taylor. "How the \$1.9 trillion U.S. stimulus package compares with other countries' coronavirus spending." *The Washington Post.* April 5, 2021. https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2021/03/10/coronavirus-stimulus-international-comparison/.

relief to its citizens, as the US has a GDP of \$87.732 trillion USD.²³ In contrast, Ghana's GDP was recorded at \$57.316 billion USD in 2019.²⁴ A good portion of Ghana's economy is dependent on oil, with 20% of total revenue from exports in 2018 resulting from the international trade of crude oil.²⁵ With lockdown restrictions in countries around the world, the demand for oil has fallen, negatively impacting Ghana's economy. In addition to decreasing oil prices, the partial lockdown and various restrictions within Ghana have weakened the domestic economy further. The restrictions placed on in-person workplaces and travel have resulted in an economic downturn. The economic growth for 2020 was forecasted at 6.8% prior to the pandemic. In the midst of the partial lockdown, it was recalculated to be 1.5%.²⁶ In reality, the GDP growth for 2020 was .9%.²⁷ In wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, Ghana recorded its lowest rate of growth in 37 years.²⁸

Ghana's most recent poverty rate was recorded in 2016 at 23.4%.²⁹ With a population of 30,779,000 people, 7,202,286 Ghanaians are living below the poverty line, increasing their vulnerability to economic downturns and the effects of lockdowns.³⁰ According to projections by the National Bureau for Economic Research, a twelve week lockdown in developing nations would result in a decrease in GDP of 2.5%, while saving about 19 lives per 100,000 individuals.³¹ This raises the question of whether or not a lockdown causes more lasting benefits or harm to the lives of these 7,202,286 Ghanaians.

Ghana Going Forward

The initial lockdown, regulations, and proactive measures taken by the Ghanaian government limited the spread of COVID-19 within Ghana's borders. Increased testing capacity and vigorous contact tracing helped the government to isolate incoming cases and control the pandemic in its early stages. The three-week partial lockdown in March and April of 2020 was instrumental in helping Ghana get a handle on the virus. Following the lockdown, Ghana was

²³ World Bank Group. "GDP (current US\$)." *The World Bank Data*. 2019. https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.MKTP.CD.

²⁴ World Bank Group. "GDP (constant 2010 US\$) - Ghana." *The World Bank Data*. 2019. https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.MKTP.KD?locations=GH.

²⁵ Michael Danquah & Simone Schotte. "Covid-19 and the Socioeconomic Impact in Africa - The Case of Ghana." *United Nations University*. May 2020. https://www.wider.unu.edu/publication/covid-19-and-socioeconomic-impactafrica-1

²⁶ Michael Danquah & Simone Schotte. "Covid-19 and the Socioeconomic Impact in Africa - The Case of Ghana.".

²⁷ International Monetary Fund. "Ghana and the IMF." N.d. https://www.imf.org/en/Countries/GHA.

²⁸ Michael Danquah & Simone Schotte. "Covid-19 and the Socioeconomic Impact in Africa-The Case of Ghana."

²⁹ World Bank Group. "Poverty headcount ratio at national poverty lines (% of population) - Ghana." *The World Bank Data*. 2016. https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SI.POV.NAHC?locations=GH.

³⁰ International Monetary Fund. "Ghana and the IMF." N.d. https://www.imf.org/en/Countries/GHA.

³¹ Titan Alon, Minki Kim, David Lagakos, & Mitchell VanVuren. (2020, May). "How Should Policy Responses to the Covid-19 Pandemic Differ in the Developing World?" *National Bureau Economic Research Working Paper Series*. https://www.nber.org/system/files/working_papers/w27273/w27273.pdf.

relatively successful in containing its spread and preserving lives. Yet, in recent months, cases have surged in Ghana, leading to the reinstatement of certain regulations and begging the question of if the government should enforce another lockdown.

Another partial lockdown within Ghana would have detrimental effects for Ghanaian citizens. Where states such as the United Kingdom have the financial ability to enforce a lockdown despite harm to its national GDP, Ghana does not. Over the last three decades, Ghana has made great strides in development and economic growth, from a GPD of \$12.056 billion USD in 1990 to \$57.316 billion USD in 2019 as previously mentioned. ³² While maintaining regulations, social distancing measures, mask recommendations, and frequent testing, Ghana should avoid a second lockdown. Doing otherwise would allow the COVID-19 pandemic to threaten Ghana's economic progress thirty years in the making. Furthermore, another lockdown would threaten the most vulnerable of Ghana's population, affecting the more than 7 million Ghanaian's below the poverty line as well as the rest of the population. It would decrease economic growth, affecting unemployment and hunger, as well as driving an increase in deep poverty.

Conclusion

Ghana is only one of 126 countries classified as developing economies. While Ghana can serve as a case of relative success through mobilization of resources within a developing country, each developing nation has a story of its own. Issues such as the communication systems in place, the distribution of population density, the nature of the economy, and the prevalence of health care facilities all affect a country's ability to respond to a health crisis. During Ghana's three-week partial lockdown, the Ghanaian government took necessary steps in order to obtain the needed supplies and designate certain facilities to treat the virus. Still, these steps have not been fully re-enforced despite a dramatic increase in cases, likely due to the government's understanding of the undoubtable economic impacts of lockdowns. The government regulations put into place to protect the lives of Ghanaian citizens proved taxing on both the domestic economy and Ghana's government spending. Although COVID-19 related restrictions are meant to protect the lives of citizens, they can have harmful long-term effects through decreases in economic growth.

In developing countries around the world, a balance between protecting health and preserving the economy must be in the mind of policymakers. Government decisions and regulations have a direct impact on the livelihood and health of their citizens. With the mindset of saving lives, government officials in developing states must also remember the impacts

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³² World Bank Group. "GDP (constant 2010 US\$) - Ghana."

economic well-being have on a population of people. When combating the COVID-19 pandemic, developing nations should implement safety measures such as mask mandates and social distancing requirements while avoiding the large-scale economic closures and downturns that come with lockdowns and similar government regulations. While governments of developing nations should make an effort to promote public health and safety, these decisions should not come at the cost of citizen's long-term livelihood.

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Macron's Crackdown on Islamist Separatism*

Carolyn Reid¹

Abstract: French President Emmanuel Macron was hailed as the savior of liberal democracy after defeating Marine Le Pen in the 2017 French presidential election. Now, four years later, Macron's hero status has been revoked due to his recent Islamophobic and quasi-autocratic initiatives. Macron has introduced a new bill designed to increase government oversight of religious minorities, specifically Muslims.

Keywords: France, Islamist Separatism, Islamism, Islamophobia, Terrorism, Republicanism, Secularism

Introduction

After the Brexit referendum and election of Donald Trump in 2016, centrists and leftists revered the electoral success of Emmanuel Macron and his centrist La République En Marche! (En Marche) party in the 2017 French presidential election. Macron seemed to embody the promise of centrist fortification against rising xenophobia, racism and other prejudices in the Western world. Now, four years later, the hero status initially bestowed upon Macron has come under scrutiny due to his recent Islamophobic and quasi-autocratic initiatives.² This is not to say that France, or any other developed Western nation, fostered full equality before the events of 2016. On the contrary, the contemporary social, economic and political oppression of French Muslims is a product of France's long and rather complicated history with Islam (e.g., the Crusades and French Colonialism in the Middle East and Africa). Ergo, this culturally internalized Islamophobia is part of the daily discourse in French society and has been for centuries.³ That said, the on-going War on Terror has been instrumental in intensifying anti-

^{*}This article is taken from the TJIA Roundtable series

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² Karen Attiah, "Macron's Centrist and Tolerant Facade Is Crumbling." The Washington Post, December 3, 2020, https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/2020/12/03/macrons-centrist-tolerant-facade-is-crumbling/

³ Muhammad Mahmood, "Macron's Mission to 'Liberate" Islam: A Long Continuing French Colonial Enterprise?", countercurrents.org, October 12, 2020, https://countercurrents.org/2020/10/macrons-mission-to-liberate-islam-a-long-continuing-french-colonial-enterprise/

Muslim sentiments from the government and French society, especially since France is a popular target of Islamic terrorist attacks.

Following the decapitation of French schoolteacher, Samuel Paty, in October 2020 by an Islamic extremist,⁴ Macron announced his proposal for harsher anti-terrorism laws, called the Charter of Republican Values. This Charter encompasses a series of policies and procedures that will supposedly protect French secularism and republican values from the threat of "Islamist separatism." Coined by Macron, Islamist separatism refers to religious sub-societies within France that are prone to radicalization. The Charter has attracted significant controversy, both domestically and internationally, due to highly Islamophobic provisions and the motivations behind them. Although France is justified in implementing stricter anti-terrorism laws, Macron's anti-separatism plan is more concerned with increasing the marginalization of French Muslims than of actually combatting terrorism.

The Charter of Republican Values

All things considered, the Charter of Republican Values has been a long-time coming. Over the past decade, France has borne the brunt of terrorism in Western Europe. Nearly 300 French citizens have died from over 50 Islamic terrorist attacks, including the deadly 2015 Paris attacks, the 2019 Lyon bombing, the 2015 Charlie Hebdo shooting, and the 2020 Nice stabbings. Macron inherited the consequences of successive Islamic terrorist attacks and failed integration, and has struggled to reconcile centrist solutions with mounting Islamophobia. Considering how there have been public demands for more aggressive anti-terrorism policies throughout the entirety his presidential tenure, it is surprising that Macon waited this long to reveal the Charter.

On February 16, 2021, the Charter passed through France's National Assembly—the lower house of French Parliament—and is now under review in the French Senate. This highly controversial bill makes two major pronouncements: (1) it affirms that Islam is a religion, not a

⁴ Lucy Williamson, "Samuel Paty: Beheading of Teacher Deepens Divisions over France's Secular Identity," bbc.com, BBC World News, October 20, 2020, https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-54602171

⁵ "France's Macron vows to fight 'Islamist Separatism,'" bbc.com, BBC World News, October 3, 2020, https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-54383173

⁶ Cailey Griffin, "Why Has France's Islamist Separatism Bill Caused Such Controversy?," foreignpolicy.com, Foreign Policy, February 23, 2021, https://foreignpolicy.com/2021/02/23/why-france-islamist-separatism-bill-controversy-extremism/.

⁷ Ga ëlle Fournier, "A Painful Project for France: A Museum on the Ravages of Terrorism," nytimes.com, The New York Times, March 30, 2021, https://www.nytimes.com/2021/03/30/world/europe/france-terrorism-museum.html. ⁸ Emre Ongun, "France's Demonization of Muslims is Getting Worse," jacobinmag.com, Jacobin Magazine, October 22, 2020, https://jacobinmag.com/2020/10/france-islamophobia-secularism-macron-marine-le-pen

political movement and (2) prohibits foreign interference in French-based Muslim entities. ⁹ By declaring that Islam is a religion rather than a political movement, this charter distinguishes between Islam and Islamism. "Islam" is, in and of itself, just another Abrahamic religion, like Christianity and Judaism. "Islamism" is a totalitarian-style political doctrine that considers Islam and government to be the same—religion is politics and politics is religion (Sharia Law). ¹⁰ The prohibition of foreign influence is portrayed as a preventative strategy designed to combat radicalization at the domestic level. It is premised on the notion that French Muslims, including those born and raised in France, may radicalize if influenced by foreign extremists. ¹¹ Consequently, each policy describes the mechanisms by which foreign influence can be reduced.

Provisions in the Charter include restricting homeschooling, criminalizing online hate speech, and strengthening government oversight of religious practice and associations. ¹² The logic of homeschooling restrictions assumes that Muslim children will be less susceptible to radicalization if they receive a secular education. ¹³ Since online hate speech can potentially endanger the lives of individuals by inciting terrorist attacks, the charter will make it punishable by three years in jail and a fine of up to 45,000 euros. ¹⁴ In terms of religious practice, the charter will force religious groups to declare foreign donations of 10,000+ euros to the government and grant local authorities the federal right to shut down Mosques accused of suspicious activity—over 70 Mosques were shut down in December 2020. ¹⁵ In order to ensure that state funds are not financing terrorist activity, any club that applies for state subsidies will have to sign a contract promising to respect French republican values. Violations of this contract will result in the confiscation of all federal funds. ¹⁶ Therefore, the charter will expand government oversight of associations by increasing federal 'power of the purse.'

Macron's Charter has had domestic and international repercussions. Domestically, French Muslim are questioning their place in France as the demonization of their religion

⁹ "France's Macron Asks Muslim Leaders to Back 'Republican Values' Charter," bbc.com, BBC World News, November 19, 2020, https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-55001167

¹⁰ Mehdi Mozaffari, "What Is Islamism? History and Definition of a Concept," *Totalitarian Movements and Political Religions* 8, no. 1(2007): 17-33. doi:10.1080/14690760601121622.

¹¹ Roger Cohen, "France Takes On Islamist Extremism with New Bill," nytimes.com, The New York Times, December 9, 2020, https://www.nytimes.com/2020/12/09/world/europe/france-islamist-extremism-bill.html?action=click&module=RelatedLinks&pgtype=Article

¹² Alice Tidley, "Here's All You Need to Know About France's Controversial Separatism Law," euronews.com, Euronews, February 16, 2021, https://www.euronews.com/2021/02/16/here-s-what-you-need-to-know-about-france-s-controversial-separatism-law

¹³ Williamson, "Samuel Paty: Beheading."

¹⁴ Tidley, "France's Controversial Separatism Law"

¹⁵ Kim Willsher, "France Cracks Down on 76 Mosques Suspected of 'Separatism," the guardian.com, The Guardian, December 3, 2020, https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/dec/03/france-crackdown-76-mosques-suspected-separatism

¹⁶ Tidley, "France's Controversial Separatism Law."

intensifies under the crackdown. ¹⁷ Internationally, protests broke out against Macron in Libya, Bangladesh, Pakistan and the Gaza Strip. ¹⁸ Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, an outspoken critic of Macron, has even called for a boycott of French goods in order to express solidarity with French Muslims. ¹⁹ That said, Turkey and other Islamic countries do not necessarily possess the moral high ground on matters of religious freedom. All Islamic nations, even the relatively tolerant ones, impose harsh restrictions on their non-Muslim citizens. ²⁰ Macron's crackdown is worthy of disdain, but the hypocrisy of Muslim majority nations in this context should not be ignored or discounted.

While the Islamic world reacted to France's treatment of Muslims in an uproar, the governments of other European and North American countries have been oddly quiet. Even the United Nations and European Union have refrained from commenting on the Charter. British and American news outlets have acted as the primary source of criticism against France in the Western world—something Macron has expressed his contempt for on numerous occasions.²¹ Nevertheless, restricting minority rights and increasing government power have explicit autocratic implications,²² which concerns the political integrity of liberal democracy in the West.

Macron v. Islam

Despite Macron's insistence that the proposed legislation is intended to reinforce French secularism and republican values, not facilitate Islamophobia, he has made no effort to stop the social marginalization of French Muslims.²³ Systemic racism plays a significant role in radicalization—a fact that Macron has publicly acknowledged yet consistently declines to address. But, instead of improving housing, education and access to healthcare in Muslim majority neighborhoods, Macron is determined to reform an ancient religion with billions of nonviolent followers.²⁴ Additionally, Macron's rhetoric towards and regarding Islam is

¹⁷ Ali Saad, "Islamophobia: Macron's Desperate Bid for Re-election," a ljazeera.com, Aljazeera, October 28, 2020, https://www.aljazeera.com/opinions/2020/10/28/islamophobia-as-an-integration-strategy-in-france

¹⁸ Lucy Williamson, "France Targets Radical Islamism Amid Turkey Row," bbc.com, BBC World News, October 27, 2020, https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-54692802

¹⁹ "Turkey's Erdogan Urges French Goods Boycott Amid Islam Row," bbc.com, BBC World News, October 26, 2020, https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-54692485

²⁰ Doug Bandow, "Religious Persecution Rising: Islam Threatens Religious Minorities, Especially in Middle East," forbes.com, Forbes, June 15, 2015, https://www.forbes.com/sites/dougbandow/2015/06/15/religious-persecution-rising-islam-threatens-religious-minorities-especially-in-middle-east/?sh=4b7db475572c.

²¹ Ben Smith, "The President Vs. The American Media," nytimes.com, The New York Times, November 15, 2020, https://www.nytimes.com/2020/11/15/business/media/macron-france-terrorism-american-islam.html.

²² Karen Allen, "French Muslims Fear State Aims to Control Their Faith," bbc.com, BBC World News, August 23, 2016, https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-37155043

²³ John Lichfield, "What Macron Forgot About 'Islamist Separatism," politico.eu, Politico, November 30, 2020, https://www.politico.eu/article/what-macron-forgot-about-islamist-separatism/

²⁴ James McAuley, "France Insists It's Targeting Islamist Extremism...," The Washington Post, November 2020,

reminiscent of the language used throughout French imperialism and colonialism.²⁵ Macron publicly denounced Islam as a "religion in crisis all over the world" and declared his intention to create an "Islam of the Enlightenment."²⁶ These comments are not only offensive to Muslims, but also quite patronizing because Macron basically called Islam a flawed religion that needs to be reformed by Europeans.

Considering how Macron started off as a liberal centrist icon, his seemingly overnight transformation into an Islamophobic conservative drew suspicion. There is nothing wrong with implementing harsher anti-terrorism policies but, as previously mentioned, Macron's Charter will not have the desired effect. Even though Macron is undoubtedly aware of this fact, the French political order is shifting to the right as a result of growing demands for stricter practices of law and order. ²⁷ Macron's rapid embrace of right-wing rhetoric and Islamophobic policies mirrors this development, ²⁸ which has increased speculation about the true motive behind the crackdown. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, economic downturn and successive Islamic terrorist attacks, Macron has lost the majority of his original electorate. ²⁹ According to Politico polls, Macron currently holds a national 60% disapproval rating and 30% approval rating. ³⁰ With the 2022 election fast approaching, many have accused Macron of pandering to the far-right with the Charter in a desperate attempt to take conservative votes away from Marine Le Pen. Marine Le Pen is the populist leader of the far-right National Front (FN) party. ³¹ As a radical right-wing politician, Le Pen would be even worse for French Muslims, but that does not excuse or justify Macron's actions.

Final Remarks

Macron's crackdown is premised on the notion that Islamist separatism presents an inherent threat to French secularism and republican values. ³² This is a false assertation. Islamist separatism presents a threat to national security, but it has no bearing on the political sanctity of French republicanism. Quite oppositely, the government's response to Islamist separatism is what presents the greatest threat to French secularism and republican values. State secularism

²⁵ Mahmood, "Macron's Mission to 'Liberate" Islam."

²⁶ McAuley, "France Insists It's Targeting Islamist Extremism"

²⁷ Adam Nossiter, "A Hard-Line Minister Proves Indispensable to Macron," nytimes.com, The New York Times, December 2020, https://www.nytimes.com/2020/12/12/world/europe/macron-france-terrorism-darmanin.html

²⁸ Attiah, "Macron's Centrist and Tolerant Facade Is Crumbling."

²⁹ Saad, "Macron's Bid for Re-election."

³⁰ "POLITICO Poll of Polls — French Polls, Trends and Election News for France," politico.eu, Politico, 2021, https://www.politico.eu/europe-poll-of-polls/france/.

³¹ Saad, "Macron's Bid for Re-election."

³² Myriam Francois, "France's Treatment of Its Muslim Citizens Is the True Measure of Its Republican Values," time.com, Time Magazine, December 8, 2020, https://time.com/5918657/frances-muslim-citizens-republican-values/

can be fortified without oppressing religious minorities, and republican values encompass freedom of religion, privacy rights, and equality. By excluding Muslims from enjoying the rights and privileges of a democratic republic, Macron's crackdown is endangering everything it promises to defend.

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Imperial Evolution: The Putin-Erdogan Quandary*

Everett Shirtliff¹

Abstract: Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan's blooming relationship with Russian President Vladimir Putin may signify a tipping point in the "East v. West" relationship that has been brewing since the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991. The recent developments between the two leaders could be seen as Turkey aligning itself with its neighbors to the East—a move that may prompt the formation of an "Eastern bloc" comprising states that have grown increasingly dissatisfied with the West.

Keywords: Turkey, Russia, Alliances, European Union, Missile Defense, Natural Gas, Eastern Blocs

The Evolution of Two Empires

From the Treaty of Hunkar-Iskelesi in 1833, to a recent deal for the S-400 missile defense system, history has proven that Russia and Turkey are willing to sublimate their imperialist instincts when national progress is at stake. As the epoch of divine rule and absolute power drew its last breath, these once-great empires struggled to find their place in the emerging world order, one distinguished by an emphasis on popular consent and international organizations. For much of the twentieth-century, Russia-Turkey relations were at a low point; both nations found themselves at odds with one another throughout the Cold War, and also during the Korean War. However, with the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991, Turkey could now turn its gaze eastward without fear of reprisal from Western allies. In the last three decades alone, trade between the two states has grown exponentially, generating an atmosphere of trust that has permeated other areas of diplomacy. As the West fears a recurrence of the bipolarity present during the Cold War, the improved relations between Turkey and Russia have become a recent source of consternation to the West.

^{*}This article is taken from the TJIA Roundtable series

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The Strongman Brotherhood

The critical role of national leadership in facilitating these relations cannot be overstated. Since the turn of the century, Russia has been under the (direct and indirect) rule of President Vladimir Putin, and President Recep Tayyip Erdogan has ruled over Turkey since 2003. The historical relationship between the two states is heavily steeped in conflict, certainly sufficient to color diplomatic behavior towards one another. However, the commonalities of the two leaders have pushed any harsh sentiments that may have been garnered over the last five centuries to the background. Through the fomentation of anti-Western sentiments and generously-applied populism, President Putin and President Erdogan have cemented themselves as thorns in the side of the West. As emperors in a world that forbids conquest, Putin and Erdogan seek not expansion, but the degradation of Western influence. This shared goal has united the two leaders, both of whom now comprise an informal "strongman brotherhood.1"

Although not explicitly classified as an ally of Turkey, Russia's status as a "strategic partner" has generated considerable economic, military, and trade benefits for the Mediterranean state. In 2017, Turkey purchased two Russian-made S-400 missile systems, one of the most effective air defense systems currently available on the market. Russia has also begun construction on Turkey's first-ever nuclear power plant, which will likely be crucial to Turkey's sustainable energy program in the future. To further reinforce the extent of this mutually-beneficial relationship, Turkey has approved the construction of pipelines through which Russian natural gas may flow. By opening Turkey's borders to Russian gas, President Erdogan has relieved Russia's previous dependency on an increasingly West-aligned Ukraine.

As a "bridge" to Europe, the Middle East, and Eurasia, Turkey's geographic location creates a bottleneck for the flow of natural gas across the continents. The construction of new pipelines across Turkey could become an incredibly valuable bargaining chip, especially since the EU imports roughly forty-percent of its natural gas from Russia. Even if Europe decreases their dependency on Russian gas, Turkey's prime location on the Mediterranean Sea guarantees that no matter which country succeeds Russia as a primary exporter, they will play at least *some* role in the trade process. The improved relationship between the two states has also prompted each to lift trade barriers previously placed on the other, a reversal which has caused a forty-

¹ Siri Neset and Arne Strand. 2019. "Turkey's International Relations." CMI.

² Neset. "Turkey's International Relations." *CMI*

³ "Turkey and Russia Cosy up over Missiles." The Economist. The Economist Newspaper May 4, 2017

⁴ Neset. "Turkey's International Relations." CMI

⁵ Andrew Mora vcsik, "Power of Connection: Why the Russia–Europe Gas Trade Is Strangely Untouched by Politics." Nature News. Nature Publishing Group, December 2, 2019.

seven percent increase in Turkish exports to Russia, and a thirty-six percent increase in Turkish imports from Russia.⁶

From 2017 to 2018, President Erdogan and President Putin met one-on-one a total of sixteen times, and spoke via telephone on thirty separate occasions; during that same period, President Erdogan met one-on-one with President Trump only five times, and spoke to him just eleven times via telephone. Despite a remarkably similar strongman attitude to President Erdogan, with regard to the aforementioned "strongman brotherhood," President Trump was given the "three's a crowd" treatment. The recent cooperation between Turkey and Russia, as well as the significant amount of contact between the two leaders, may signal not only the beginning of Turkey's departure from the West, but also the erosion of past commitments to democratization and liberalization. However, with a new incumbent in the White House, only time will tell how U.S.-Turkey relations are to develop.⁷

An Uphill Battle

In addition to its boost to the Turkish economy, recent developments with Russia have granted Turkey access to military technology, specifically to the S-400 missile defense system. Although Turkey has been a member of NATO since the 1950s, the West has been reluctant to provide the Mediterranean state with adequate defensive weaponry. This reluctance has not curried favor with a state focused on an overhaul of its defense sector, and as a result, Turkey has sought out new suppliers to their East.

While not nearly as formidable as the United States' Terminal High Altitude Area Defense (THAAD) nor as adaptable as the Aegis missile defense system, the S-400 is certainly a strong countermeasure to ballistic missiles and hostile aircraft. Its missiles have a maximum range of 400km, and can reach speeds upwards of Mach 3 while maintaining an altitude of 100,000 feet.⁸ Additionally, its on-board radar system can simultaneously monitor up to 300 planes, helicopters, laser-guided missiles, drones, and ICBMs within 600km.⁹ Turkey has only purchased four units, which are not nearly enough to cover every square mile of Turkish airspace; however, a fleet of these systems would be able to provide blanket security. These units would likely only be deployed to areas that would be well-served by reliable protection, such as Turkey's largest cities (Istanbul, Ankara, Izmir), vital military installations, and crucial sites of infrastructure and industry. ¹⁰ However, considering that the S-400 finds strength and

⁶ Neset. "Turkey's International Relations." CMI

⁷ Neset. "Turkey's International Relations." *CMI*

^{8 &}quot;S-400 Triumf." Missile Threat. Accessed February 28, 2021. https://missilethreat.csis.org/defsys/s-400-triumf/.

⁹ "S-400 Triumph Air Defence Missile System - Army Technology." Army Technology, February 23, 2021.

¹⁰ Mustafa Kibaroğlu. "On Turkey's Missile Defense Strategy: The Four Faces of the S-400 Deal between Turkey and Russia." *PERCEPTIONS: Journal of International Affairs* 24, no. 2 (2019): 159-174.

effectiveness in numbers, the risk incurred by a relatively weak air-defense fleet is significant. In the event of an actual conflict, the limited quantity of S-400s currently possessed by Turkey is not sufficient to deter attacks from, or defend against a technologically superior adversary.

Even still, Turkey's purchase of the S-400 system has been rebuked by the U.S., which cited the acquisition as a violation of the Countering America's Adversaries Through Sanctions Act (CAATSA), which "bars America's allies from using Russian radar technologies." 11 As a result of this breach, the U.S. has removed Turkey from the F-35 program, and has halted domestic training for all Turkish pilots. ¹² In response, Turkey has opted to improve their F-16 program, a process which will increase the lifespan of Turkey's F-16s from 8,000 flight hours to 12,000 flight hours. While these jets from the late-1980s lack the stealth capabilities and speed of their twenty-first century counterparts, with just under 250 F-16s in active service, Turkey's fleet is the third-largest in the world, just behind the U.S. and Israel. ¹³ A relatively inferior air force notwithstanding, with 700,000 active personnel, the Turkish Armed Forces (TAF) is the secondlargest standing army in NATO, surpassed only by that of the U.S. 14 Twenty years ago, the circumstances were different. Turkey has since become a major player on the world stage, and above all, a nation determined to carve her own path. While President Erdogan undoubtedly realizes that war with the West is unwise, Turkey's economic and military strength allows him a little wiggle room when interpreting treaties and abiding by other international agreements. As long as Turkey continues to align concurrently with the West and Russia, this back-and-forth of button-pushing is likely to continue.

Western Shortcomings

When considering Turkey's past attempts at Western integration, this recent splintering should not come as a shock. In 1989, the European Commission (EC) outlined various economic, social, and political preconditions which were to be fulfilled before Turkey's accession to the European Union (EU) could be formalized. In 2000, the EU designated Turkey as a "candidate state," and accession negotiations began in 2005, where they remain today. Although negotiations are currently at a standstill and show no sign of progressing further, Turkey continues to attend summits and conferences. Turkey's geographic ambiguity has prompted statements from leaders like German Chancellor Angela Merkel and former French President Nicolas Sarkozy, who have questioned "whether Turkey is a European country and therefore has

¹¹ Cem Birol. "Turkey's S-400 Missile Crisis: Four Possible Outcomes." *Issue Brief* 6 (2019).

¹² Phil Stewart. "Turkish F-35 Pilots No Longer Flying at U.S. Base: Pentagon." Reuters. June 10, 2019.

¹³ Thomas Newdick. "Turkey Prepares To Extend The Life Of Its Massive F-16 Fleet After F-35 Embargo." The Drive. February 4, 2021.

¹⁴ Statista Research. "Number of Military Personnel in NATO Countries 2020." Statista. November 26, 2020.

the right to join the EU."¹⁵ The EU has not necessarily been operating in good-faith—if integration truly is the goal, by applying the novel concept of "absorption capacity," the EU has failed in this endeavor spectacularly. Even if all of the preconditions are met, "absorption capacity" allows the EU to summarily deny Turkey's membership "if [the EU] judged that it was not ready to take in a new member."¹⁶ If the "prize" (entry into the EU) is not guaranteed, accession talks are no longer negotiations, they are a blind leap of faith. Understandably, Turkey hasn't taken kindly to the finish line being moved after the starter pistol has been fired. As a result, Turkey has detached itself from the EU process, and sought out alliances which lie further east.¹⁷

President Putin has certainly kept this back-and-forth in mind, and he has been playing the long game. Immediately following the 2016 coup attempt in Turkey, President Putin reached out to express his strong support for President Erdogan. Putin's olive branch was graciously accepted, and the Turkish Foreign Minister said that "we have received unconditional support from Russia, unlike other countries"—seemingly a dig at the "half-hearted" shows of support from Western nations in the coup's aftermath. 18 President Putin saw a crack in NATO's wall, one which he will likely continue to exploit. Unbeholden to the EU or NATO, Russia is free to pursue her national interest, unhindered and in plain sight. While NATO may have once been able to keep Turkey in line with the threat of sanctions and withdrawal of aid, the deterring ability of these ultimatums has diminished considerably. Gas pipelines have bestowed Turkey with a degree of leverage, and a formidable military makes calling bluffs an inadvisable course of action for the West.

The West has been hesitant to cooperate militarily with Turkey, whose main reasoning behind their acquisition of the S-400 was this reluctance in providing Turkey with defensive weaponry. Turkey has sought ballistic missile capacity for decades, but has been repeatedly stopped by the threat or imposition of sanctions. Turkey's options are limited, and with regard to the S-400 missile system, Russia "offered no co-production, offsets, or tech-transfer" for the sale—all of which were present during U.S.-Turkey negotiations for the Patriot missile system. ¹⁹ The lack of consensus reached during these negotiations has pushed Turkey away, and unless they are brought back to the table by better incentives and/or technology, this divide will likely continue to expand. The United States' chief gripe with the S-400 acquisition was that it would provide Russia direct access to the various technologies onboard the F-35 While blacklisting

¹⁵ Christian W. Haerpfer, Patrick Bernhagen, Christian Welzel, and Ronald Inglehart. *Democratization*, 2nd ed., 65-69. Ox ford: Ox ford University Press, 2019.

¹⁶ Haerpfer. *Democratization*, 2nd. ed.

¹⁷ Haerpfer. *Democratization*, 2nd. ed.

¹⁸ Neset. "Turkey's International Relations." CMI

¹⁹ Neset. "Turkey's International Relations." CMI

Turkey from the F-35 program assuaged the concern that classified technology might fall into the wrong hands, it has only driven the wedge between the West and Turkey deeper.

As mentioned previously, President Erdogan seems to be playing both sides. On one hand, he is aligning Turkey's national interest with that of Russia, but never going so far as to jeopardize Turkey's standing in NATO or risk military intervention by another state. In this frightful game of tug-of-war, the West employed both incentives and sanctions to bring Turkey back onside. By cancelling Turkey's order for 120 F-35s, the United States hoped that an immediate dismantling of the S-400 system would follow. When this proved unsuccessful, more drastic measures were taken.

In December 2020, U.S. sanctions targeted the Turkish defense sector, and these seem to have had some impact. Defense Minister Akar has called for an open dialogue between the U.S. and Turkey, one which has been closed since Turkey's acquisition of the S-400 systems. Turkey has backpedaled, and "insists it is not planning to integrate S-400s into its NATO armaments," and that "it might not keep the S-400s operational at all times." While Turkey has shown a willingness to compromise on the S-400 issue, they also have expressed that they no intention of being backed into a corner. Earlier this year, Defense Minister Akar said that "[Turkey] can find a solution for the S-400s in our negotiations with the U.S....[but] if we cannot find a solution, we cannot go anywhere in relations with the U.S."

Planning for the Future

There is a line which must be walked—harsher sanctions will exacerbate tensions between Turkey and the U.S., widening the already cavernous divide present in U.S.-Turkey relations. If this turbulence goes without remedy, a codified alliance with Russia becomes increasingly attractive, and perhaps the only option for Turkey, a state that wishes to issue its military, economy, and defense sector an update fitting for the twenty-first century. The realities of the post-war period no longer apply; the benefits that prompted Turkey to join NATO in 1952 are no longer sufficient to evoke loyalty from President Erdogan, and by extension, commitment from the organizations' second-largest fighting force.

Considering the four centuries of conflict during the Ottoman-Russian Wars, the relationship cultivated by President Erdogan and President Putin over the last decade marks a turning point in Turkey-Russia relations. If Russia and Turkey are able to prove that they are able to stand firm against Western influence despite any heavy sanctions which may be thrown their way, states from the Caspian Sea to the Baltic Sea will take notice. If a sustainable Eastern

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²⁰ Neset. "Turkey's International Relations." CMI

²¹ Al Jazeera. "Turkey Signals Compromise with US over Russian S-400 Missiles." Turkey News. Al Jazeera, February 9, 2021

bloc is revived that is able to promise greater incentives than those currently offered by the West, bubbling Euroscepticism could spread across latitudes and significantly alter the current geopolitical landscape of Europe and Eurasia. Although the Soviet Union fell in 1991, its dissolution did not eliminate Russia's ability to influence former Soviet satellite states. The "brotherhood" of President Putin and President Erdogan is one of ruthless, unbending, and unabashed pragmatism; however, the presence of other authoritarian, self-interested leaders in the region (such as Hungary's Viktor Orban and Belarus' Alexander Lukashenko) makes the already-formidable duo ripe for expansion.

Since the end of WWII, the United States and Europe have been the principal drivers of global policy. International organizations like the EU bestow upon their member-states a degree of influence as well; entry into the EU should be selective, but accession agreements cannot be conducted in bad faith. While the West has enjoyed a nearly eighty-year reign as the dominant global power, a haughty and distrustful attitude towards admitting new member-states may prove disastrous to its continuing in this role. This "Eastern bloc" may present a legitimate challenge to Western dominance, and its establishment should be prevented. Unfortunately, recent attempts to reel Turkey back in seem to have had the opposite effect. By denying Turkey access to tools critical in updating their economic, energy, and defense sectors, the West has effectively cemented Turkey's alliance with Russia. If other nations follow suit, the adversary of the twenty-first century will likely be an alliance of well-armed authoritarian states. States in this alliance would no longer require goodwill from the West to survive, and with this dependency absent, they would no longer have to temper their nationalist or imperialist desires.

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A Dysfunctional Marriage*

Dwight Myvett Jr.¹

Abstract: A combination of increased authoritarianism and military aggression against allies has rendered Turkish accession to the European Union a pipe dream. As Europe attempts to configure an alternative to Turkish membership via the prospect of a "privileged partnership," Turkey instead turns eastward to cultivate new alliances. If no alternative to EU-membership can be found and agreed to by both parties, the EU and West as a whole must begin thinking about how it will deal with an adversarial Turkey and emergent Eastern Bloc.

Key Words: Turkey, European Union, International Affairs, NATO, Accession

The Republic of Turkey suffers at once from both excess of pride and vacillation. We should expect no less from the heir of the Ottoman Empire. Like that empire, Turkey straddles the junction of four different regions. But at reduced square mileage, influence and impact, Turkey must ask who it truly is. Is the Republic of Turkey European or Middle Eastern? Is it a friend to the West or a foe? With outsized ambition and contentious geography, Turkey wrestles to grasp and define its identity – as do the states surrounding it. Concern regarding its intent and actions are justified. Turkey may be a far cry from the empire it claims lineage to, but its potential is massive, and it remains to be seen if it's an ally to the West or an enemy.

Ties with Turkey were deepened through the North Atlantic Treaty Organization back in 1952. NATO added Turkey to its ranks in a pragmatic ploy to hedge the USSR but there was reason to believe the newly minted republic was truly westernizing. The Kemalism that emerged from the Turkish War of Independence (1919–1923) rapidly democratized and modernized Turkey. This was cause for optimism. Tensions with Greece and Cyprus had already been long standing but here stood an anomaly: a secular-Muslim democracy that was strategically cooperating with NATO.

Undoubtedly, Turkey's firmest connection to the West today lies in its relationship with the European Union. The swift admittance that defined Turkey's entry to NATO has not been replicated in its EU accession. Turkey's actions as a so-called NATO member have been anti-European, ranging from streaks of authoritarianism to outright violence against allies, so refusal to admit Turkey is not at all surprising. What is surprising is the EU response to stalled accession talks and souring relations. Everything revolves around talk of a "privileged partnership." This special status is meant to replace Turkish membership in the EU and comes equipped with many

^{*}This article was taken from the TJIA Roundtable series

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bells and whistles. A closer look, however, reveals it to be a lazy strategy. One that is likely to exacerbate bad Turkish behavior, culminating in closer ties with adversarial states in the east.

We know, first and foremost, that almost every European elite wants to maintain good relations with Turkey very, very badly. This may come as a surprise to outside observers. Relations between the European Union and Turkey have not been easy and have even degraded to a juvenile insults. One such example is Erdogan's comments back in 2017. When a minister was stopped from entering the Turkish Consulate, he referred to Dutch officials there as "Nazi Remnants." Prime Minister Boris Johnson, unprovoked, wrote a rude and sexually explicit poem about Erdogan and a goat. When Turkey and the EU are not verbally slinging mud at each other they seem to be caught up in very serious geopolitical situations that threaten to spiral out of control. But neither side is naïve. Both realize that it would be foolish to irrevocably sour relations or to cross the line that cannot be uncrossed.

Asli Aydintasbas, in her research, found that EU member states disproportionately polled in support of Turkish accession. Twenty members declared support with only four opposing. Opposition to Turkish membership in the European Union is a comically open secret so a particular nuance must be teased apart here. Europe, in the end, wants to maintain positive relations with Turkey without granting it membership to the EU. Turkey wants accession or to extract as much as it can from Europe while also cultivating alternative alliances. Part of all this entails playing an elaborate game in which both sides pretend the accession process is progressing or will progress once certain parameters are met. When either side fails to get its way, they can default to citing EU chapters and rules to moralize or pressure the other into give them what they want. Aydintasbas perfectly captures the fact that Turkish-EU relations are dysfunctional, but like a married couple that argues every day, they are comfortable in that dysfunction. Even as populism rages, Europe nor Turkey wants to sever from the other. The EU's economic clout along with Turkey's geography and military strength makes this "marriage" a necessity.⁴

But this does not change the fact that EU-Turkish relations are becoming increasingly toxic. By and large, EU grievances are real and legitimate. Of thirty-five accession chapters, fourteen of them are blocked over violations of human rights and lapses in the rule of law. Erdogan has continued to expand his authoritarian base of power, powering up the executive

² "Turkey's Erdogan Calls Dutch Authorities 'Nazi Remnants'," BBC News (BBC, March 11, 2017), https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-39242707.

³ Jessica Elgot, "Boris Johnson Wins 'Most Offensive Erdoğan Poem' Competition," The Guardian (Guardian News and Media, May 19, 2016),

https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2016/may/19/boris-johnson-wins-most-offensive-erdogan-poem-competition.

⁴ Asli Aydintasbas, "The Discreet Charm of Hypocrisy: An EU-Turkey Power Audit," *European Council On Foreign Relations*, March 1, 2018, pp. 1-48.

branch at the expense of the legislature and judiciary.⁵ Turks, meanwhile, seem to be at the mercy of this big-man rule. Those that do protest or criticize Erdogan's regime are subject to punishments ranging from suppression to torture.⁶ The one-time anomaly – a Muslim-majority, secular democracy – is in a major backslide whose transgressions mirror those of other adversarial states like China, Russia and Iran.

A turning point in EU-Turkey relations was the coup attempt of 2016. It can be argued that Turkey's authoritarian streak began well before the 2016 coup attempt. But what cannot be doubted is that the attempt placed a sudden and massive strain on Turkish democracy and set fire to whatever authoritarian elements were preexisting. Turkey's experience of the coup was traumatizing. Insult was added to injury when Turkey's allies and the West as a whole were either silent or lukewarm in their condemnation of it. Already suspicious, this only convinced Turkey of Wester hypocrisy and designs on it. Swift comparisons were made between the solidarity that the EU showed with Ukraine when Russia annexed Crimea, and the flippantness shown to Turkey in 2016.

By the West's own values, democratization should be gradual, legal and free of violence. If we posit that the West was largely silent because it opposes anti-Gulenism, crackdowns on the press, and Erdogan's centralization of power among other things, this still does not excuse not coming down hard on an attempt at changing Turkish politics with violence. All of this takes place in a context of Turkish aggression and violations of international law, but if the West wants to convince Turkey that it can enjoy the fruits of liberal IR order, it must be consistent across the board, even as Turkey is not where it wants it to be. Every time the West behaves hypocritically, Turkey grows more extreme in its stance towards it. It is now popular, for example, to declare the United States was behind the coup attempt. It doesn't matter that this isn't true, Western action and inaction is creating greater anti-western sentiment in Turkey.

This is not to say that the concerning and authoritarian elements in Turkey should be excused. The EU is not playing kick-the-can when it expresses that Turkey is not democratic enough to be granted EU membership. Whether Turkey was democratic enough somewhere in the last 30 years of trying to gain accession is a different question, however, and this frustration partly colors Turkey's current disposition. Regardless, the reversal of Turkish democracy is a key sticking point and disqualifier for EU-membership. But with Turkish suspicions of the west

⁵ Dominique Soguel, "Turkey's Constitutional Referendum Explained," The Independent (Independent Digital News and Media, January 21, 2017), https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/turkey-president-recep-tayyip-erdogan-referendum-constitutional-reform-a7539286.html.

⁶ Zaman, Amberin. "Torture on the Rise in Erdogan's Turkey." Al Monitor: The Pulse of the Middle East. Accessed April 21,2021. https://www.al-monitor.com/originals/2020/07/torture-turkey-rise-erdogan-republic fear.html.

⁷ Tim Arango and Ceylan Yeginsu, "Turks Can Agree on One Thing: U.S. Was Behind Failed Coup," The New York Times (The New York Times, August 2, 2016), https://www.nytimes.com/2016/08/03/world/europe/turkey-coup-erdogan-fethullah-gulen-united-states.html.

running sky high along with a contentious history of partially succeeding and failing to gain EU-membership, it is very unlikely that Turkey will be in a hurry to heed EU preaching on democracy.

Another major concern and disqualifier is Turkey's track record of aggression towards allies. Turkey infamously refuses to recognize the Republic of Cyprus and the Kurds and is the only state that recognizes the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus. The latter was born of a violent coup and invasion that left many dead, many displaced and Cyprus divided. Although the rest of the world refuses to acknowledge the de facto Turkish state that is there, the pain that led to it and the geopolitical situation created by its existence is a real thing. Turkish fighter jets have been known to fight with Greek ones, a particularly disturbing fact, given that the two are NATO allies. One such incident even caused the death of a Greek pilot. 8 Even more concerning was a dangerous situation that erupted between France and Turkey. Suspected of smuggling arms into Libya, French ships intercepted and got into a standoff with Turkey that could have very easily escalated and lead to a firefight between them. 9 Lastly is Turkey's purchase of the S-500 missile system from Russia which is taken by some scholars as indicator that is contemplating a departure from NATO defense systems and NATO itself. 10

Turkey's behavior in the arena of arms and defense is far more concerning than its domestic politics and may indicate that a realpolitik approach will be needed to curtail and correct Turkish behavior. It is clear that international law, IGOs and lofty morals are not enough to contain it. To some extent, the EU knows this and is beginning to think about how relations would look outside of the EU-Turkey lens.

We must ask what Turkey's recourse will be if relations with the EU utterly collapse. One such answer may be found in the Shanghai Cooperation Organization. The SCO looks like the European Union inverted. Its member states are China, Russia, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, India and Pakistan. States like Belarus, Iran, Sri Lanka, Nepal and others have shown curiosity if not interest in possibly joining. The SCO's mission alludes to regional cooperation in the battle against terrorism and economic coordination, but it also has a track record of defending human rights violations. 11

9 TRTWorld, "Greek Fighter Pilot Killed in Crash."

10 John Trish and Robin Emmott "France-Turkey Te

⁸ TRTWorld, "Greek Fighter Pilot Killed in Crash," Greek fighter pilot killed in crash (TRT World, April 13, 2018), https://www.trtworld.com/turkey/greek-fighter-pilot-killed-in-crash-16678.

¹⁰ John Irish and Robin Emmott, "France-Turkey Tensions Mount after NATO Naval Incident," Reuters (Thomson Reuters, July 7, 2020), https://www.reuters.com/article/us-nato-france-turkey-analysis/france-turkey-tensions-mount-after-nato-naval-incident-idUSKBN2481K5.

^{11 &}quot;Is the SCO Emerging as Eastern Counterweight to NATO?," RealClearDefense, accessed March 22, 2021, https://www.realcleardefense.com/articles/2015/08/31/is_the_sco_emerging_as_eastern_counterweight_to_nato_108426.html.

Who is to say whether or not the formation of such an eastern bloc could spell the beginning of a threat to the EU? Turkey began with a disposition of cultivating relations with all the regions whose borders it interacts with. The policies of Strategic Depth and "Zero Problems With Neighbors" once caused it to look like a liberal, international power in the making. As time progresses however, Turkey displays more of a willingness to balance against the west when it cannot get what it wants. By purchasing a missile system that is incompatible with NATO software, Turkey has indicated that in a worst-case scenario, it will defect to the eastern powers viewed as enemies. The prospect of this naturally terrifies the European Union, but it still refuses to admit Turkey into the EU.

If the EU strategy here is to continue dangling Turkey in a state of semi-membership, the EU may end up being unpleasantly surprised down the line. Turkey occupies critical geography and has a military that has proven capable in many different contexts. The EU is also acutely aware of Turkey's latent economic potential. This is not a state that can be bullied, played with or led on forever. Turkey has real options, and they are growing by the day. One popular alternative to EU accession is the idea of a privileged partnership. According to Altay:

While earlier proposals did not elaborate upon the idea, statements and publications following the initiation of the talks in 2005 emerged to offer a clearer picture of what a Privileged Partnership could actually look like. Overall, European advocates of the idea concur on three overlapping objectives to be pursued through special institutional mechanisms between the EU and Turkey: (i) The partnership should ensure Ankara's contribution to European security and political stability by closely anchoring Turkey to Europe; (ii) In conjunction with the first objective, the partnership should also maximize the benefits from Turkey's stronger association with Europe by enabling mutually beneficial co- operation in multiple realms such as trade, investment, energy, and security; (iii) Finally and most importantly, the partnership should minimize the costs of associating Turkey with the EU, which would become overwhelming in case of a full membership. 12

Peeking through the haze of technical jargon it would seem that all that's meant by a privileged partnership is granting Turkey EU-like benefits in exchange for EU-like behavior without actually admitting Turkey to the EU. It is almost typical of Europe to generate an alternative that is nearly identical to what is already being done and to what is currently causing so much tension. Turkey will not tolerate a situation in which it contributes to Europe in an EU-like fashion without accession. That the EU believes it would still be able to impose EU-rules

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¹² Serdar Altay, "Toward a 'Privileged Partnership': The EU, Turkey and the Upgrade of the Customs Union," *Insight Turkey* 20, no. 3 (2018): pp. 179-198.

onto Turkey and extract desired behaviors from it in the case of accession-talk collapse is outrageously arrogant and tone deaf. Privileged Partnership is tautology.

Arguments that the customs union should be upgraded hold more water by acknowledging economic self-interest and trying to create a situation of mutual benefit. But if the EU expects Turkey to play the role of geographical bulwark and EU foreign policy expat, it is naïve. If the EU believes it can dissolve accession talks and have almost nothing change as a result, it is foolish. There must be a paradigm shift.

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Dimensions of Power: The Effects of China's Escalating Economic Influence on the Contemporary Global Landscape*

Kenny Dustin¹

Abstract: As a result of changing geopolitical circumstances, China is increasingly threatening U.S. hegemony in the global order. Facets of these changes have manifested themselves through economic initiatives, which in turn provide geopolitical influence. To contextualize the difference between China and the United States' respective policy, I analyze their actions, as well as the power afforded to each. Furthermore, through the lens of regime type, I draw conclusions regarding how each nation was able or failed to accomplish certain initiatives, how China may continue to expand, and how the United States or other Western nations may counter this growth.

Keywords: Economics, Sino-American, China, United States, Foreign Policy, Trade, Geopolitics

Introduction

On October 6th, 2020, German Ambassador Christoph Heusgen presented a joint statement on behalf of 39 member-nations to the United Nations Human Rights Committee that condemned China's recent human rights abuses, specifically, its treatment of Hong Kong, and the persecution of the ethnic Uighur population of the Xinjiang Autonomous Region.² At roughly the same time one year before, only 22 nations were party to a similar statement, one which focused solely on the treatment of ethnic Uighurs. In response to the initial challenge, Belarus ambassador Valentin Rybakov issued a joint statement, given on behalf of 54 member-nations, which voiced support for China, praising its efforts in counter-terrorism and de-escalation. Rybakov's statement went so far as to "commend China's remarkable achievements in the field of human rights." China's Ambassador to the United Nations responded that the "accusations

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² Christopher Heusgen, "Statement by Ambassador Christoph Heusgen on Behalf of 39 Countries in the Third Committee General Debate, October 6, 2020," Permanent Mission of the Federal Republic of Germany to the United Nations (Federal Foreign Office, October 6, 2020), https://new-york-un.diplo.de/un-en/news-corner/201006-heusgen-china/2402648.

against Beijing [were] baseless" and a "gross interference in China's internal affairs and deliberate provocation."³

Regardless of whether China's actions qualify as human rights abuses, the present scenario begs three questions which I intend to address in this manuscript. First, how has China used its geopolitical power to influence other states and build a coalition that rivals that of the Western world? Second, how is the international challenge to China's human rights record politically motivated? Finally, and of particular importance, does China pose a significant threat to the United States' hegemony and the liberal international order?

I propose that, through economic policies such as the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) and the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP), China has exerted its influence upon various states, garnering itself a measure of regional hegemony. Furthermore, recognizing the relationship between economic initiatives and geopolitical power, it is clear that there is a tangible benefit for nations challenging China's record on human rights, aside from ensuring human rights are upheld. These benefits are two-fold. First, Western powers, which are largely democratic, tend to have an innate mistrust of autocratic government, and a challenge to Beijing inherently challenges autocratic rule. Second, as China's growth poses a threat to the United States' global hegemony, stalling that growth is beneficial not only to the United States, but also to any nation that finds itself benefitting from the current liberal international order. However, this mistrust is not necessarily warranted.

This manuscript analyzes the relationship between economic influence and geopolitical power, showing that China's economic initiatives have created a regional power dynamic involving a multitude of states, one which may eventually challenge the ideological dominance enjoyed by the United States. I also discuss the impact of regime types. This discussion will include the characteristic benefits or drawbacks of democracy or autocracy, namely how this dimension has affected economic policy decisions through exposure or insulation to domestic constraints. I posit that China does pose a serious threat to U.S. hegemony, however, this power transition, and the subsequent effects, can be addressed and mitigated if steps are taken to challenge the nation's continued geopolitical growth.

What is Geopolitical Power?

To discuss the relationship between economic and military influence and geopolitical power, it is important to first understand what geopolitical power is, as well as the variety of

³ "China Warns US That Criticism over Detention of Uighurs Is Not 'Helpful' for Trade Talks," Reuters, CNBC (CNBC, October 30, 2019), https://www.cnbc.com/2019/10/30/china-warns-us-criticism-over-xinjiang-is-not-helpful-for-trade-talks.html

ways it may present itself. Using Colin Flint's typology, geopolitical power can be divided into 3 dimensions: Material, Relational, and Ideological.⁴

Material power is based on a country's material capability, or their capacity to wage war. Flint states that "In the late twentieth century, as the geopolitical study of power became increasingly academic, scholars created numerous indices of power, which remained focused on country-specific capabilities of industrial-strength, size and educational level of the population, as well as military might." In this sense, power is defined by scholars as a tangible commodity which can be measured. An example of such is a nation's possession of nuclear warheads. Put simply, through this lens, power is defined as possessing the material strength, most commonly military, to force other actors to do what they want.

Relational power is the next step in the evolution of how scholars recognize geopolitical power. Though the material capability to influence and coerce other actors is important, it is meaningless without the power relation between two or more actors. In essence, a strong power can only be categorized as such concerning another actor which is considered to be relatively weak within the specified political framework. As an example of such, Flint writes "the power relations of nuclear proliferation lie not solely in the technical capacity to build a bomb but in the power relations inherent within some states being members of the United Nations Security Council and others, such as Iran and North Korea, being labeled rogue or outlaw states." This theory is recognized in application to economic influence by Joseph Nye, who writes "Judging whether economic interdependence produces power requires looking at the balance of asymmetries."

Ideological power is the final evolution Flint recognizes in his typology of geopolitical power. It is a further progression of the aforementioned relational categorization. Ideological power is defined as "the ability or need not to force others to do what you want, but to make them follow your agenda willingly without considering alternatives." Through this characterization, normative structure and perceived mutual benefit influence actors to cooperate. This segmentation of geopolitical power is especially relevant to the case of China. Policies for economic growth and development are created by rich and powerful countries and adopted by the world's poorest countries in the name of progress and growth.

⁴ Colin Flint. 2016. *Introduction to Geopolitics*. London and New York: Routledge. 78-82.

⁵ Colin Flint. 2016. *Introduction to Geopolitics*. London and New York: Routledge. 78-82.

⁶ Colin Flint. 2016. *Introduction to Geopolitics*. London and New York: Routledge. 78-82.

⁷ Joseph Nye, "Has Economic Power Replaced Military Might?," Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs (Harvard Kennedy School, June 6, 2011), https://www.belfercenter.org/publication/has-economic-power-replaced-military-might.

⁸ Colin Flint. 2016. *Introduction to Geopolitics*. London and New York: Routledge. 78-82.

⁹ Colin Flint. 2016. *Introduction to Geopolitics*. London and New York: Routledge. 78-82.

The discussion, or labeling of different categorizations as evolutions, is not intended to imply that discussing geopolitical power in terms of material or relational power is no longer worthwhile or valid. It is also not meant to insinuate that these theories are mutually exclusive. While a new means by which we examine power, ideological, has become prevalent, the use of material or relational power is still very much at play in our global order. These means of coercion may no longer be the dominant philosophy when analyzing geopolitical power, but they remain impactful all the same.

The Relationship Between Economic Influence and Geopolitical Power

Two economic initiatives stand at the forefront of China's foreign economic policy: The Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) and the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP). Through China's Belt and Road Initiative, various nations have become indebted to China, becoming subject to their whim internationally to address trade deficit domestically. China has been extremely successful in implementing economic influence in the form of foreign direct investment through the Belt and Road Initiative. China has exerted a great deal of control over nations through the BRI without exerting any military influence. As Nye puts it, "A carrot is more effective than a stick if you wish to lead a mule to water." 10

The Belt and Road Initiative was launched by the People's Republic of China's President Xi Jinping in 2013. It takes a two-pronged approach: The Overland Silk Road Economic Belt and the Maritime Silk Road Economic Belt. ¹¹ These initiatives aim to expand the use of Chinese currency, and, in the words of Xi Jinping, "break the bottleneck of Asian connectivity." ¹² Specifically, these two prongs rely on long-term development lending to build infrastructure in foreign countries. The initiative is comprehensive and ties a tremendous number of countries to China through economic dependence. As of January 30th, 2021, China has signed 205 cooperative agreements for building the Belt and Road. These agreements involve 140 different countries, as well as 31 international organizations. ¹³ This affords China geopolitical power in two ways. First, there is the issue of debt itself. Many of the countries China has involved in the Belt and Road Initiative are indebted to it, which exerts influence in itself. This lends China a

 $^{^{10}}$ Joseph Nye, "Has Economic Power Replaced Military Might?," Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs (Harvard Kennedy School, June 6, 2011), https://www.belfercenter.org/publication/has-economic-power-replaced-military-might.

¹¹ Andrew Chatzky and James McBride, "China's Massive Belt and Road Initiative," Council on Foreign Relations (Council on Foreign Relations, January 28, 2020), https://www.cfr.org/backgrounder/chinas-massive-belt-and-road-initiative

¹² Xi Jinping, "Connectivity Spearheads Development and Partnership Enables Cooperation," Embassy of the People's Republic of China in the Republic of Indonesia (The People's Republic of China, November 8, 2014), https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/ce/ceindo/eng/jrzg/t1211795.htm.

¹³ "List of Countries That Have Signed Cooperation Documents with China to Jointly Build the 'Belt and Road,'" Belt and Road Portal (Office of the Leading Group for the Belt and Road Initiative, January 30, 2021), https://www.yidaiyilu.gov.cn/info/iList.jsp?tm id=126&cat id=10122&info id=77298.

deal of geopolitical power, however, the more formidable effects of this partnership are still yet to be seen. Much like the RCEP, which will be discussed next, the Belt and Road Initiative will eventually create economic interdependence, once infrastructure development is complete, and, subsequently, a power relation between the involved countries. In this power relation, China is the relatively powerful state, and those it has invested in are relatively weaker. As the Belt and Road Initiative continues, and the project moves from a developmental to an actionable stage, this power dynamic will only be further ingrained in the liberal economic order. While this economic initiative is the largest in terms of involved actors, it isn't necessarily the most worrying in regards to the end of the West's global supremacy.

The Regional Comprehensive Trade Partnership (RCEP), is China's latest attempt at challenging Western dominance of the global market. This trade agreement is the largest free trade agreement in history, and it doesn't include the United States, the largest economy in the world. The partnership, which was signed on November 15th, 2020, includes 15 nations and accounts for roughly 30% of global trade. As the largest or second-largest exporter of goods to most nations within the region, enhanced access to foreign markets provides China's economy with significant new opportunities. While this trade agreement is beneficial on its own, it also works in tandem with the Belt and Road Initiative, "Improv[ing] access to Chinese...funds, enhancing gains from market access by strengthening transport, energy, and communications links." Additionally, the RCEP explicitly satisfies the stated goal of PRC President Xi Jinping to break the bottleneck is Asian connectivity. Stronger economic interdependence boosts China's role as a regional hegemon. China is, by far, the largest economy party to the RCEP, and as such, will be able to exert the economic clout necessary to drive policy decisions favorable to its success and growth.

In summary, China is not exerting its will over these foreign entities through the threat of military action or dominance. Keeping in mind that ideological power is an evolution of relational power, the dichotomy between the economic standing of China and those who are receiving foreign direct investment fits well within the relational and ideological framework of geopolitics. China is the strong or powerful actor in this power relation, while investment targets are the relatively weaker states. Past this, however, is the normative structure enforced and upheld by the One Belt, One Road initiative and the RCEP. While these economic policies are currently a means of engaging in relational power dynamics, the creation and enforcement of this new normative structure may lend itself to China's ideological challenge to the United States.

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¹⁴ Peter Petri and Michael Plummer, "RCEP: A New Trade Agreement That Will Shape Global Economics and Politics," Brookings (The Brookings Institution, December 15, 2020), https://www.brookings.edu/blog/order-from-chaos/2020/11/16/rcep-a-new-trade-agreement-that-will-shape-global-economics-and-politics/.

The Role of Autocracy

The power contention between the United States and China, or more generally the East and the West, can be attributed to a variety of differences. However, the cornerstone of this great power rivalry is a difference in regime type: Democracy vs. Autocracy. As we have seen, it is evident that China is expanding rapidly. In truth, China's economic explosion dominates contemporary discussion on international affairs. More specifically, the discussion revolves around the threat that China poses to U.S. global leadership and the international order that surrounds it. China has not been reserved about its intent for the future. This is evident by China's China 2049 initiative, which was drafted into the People's Republic of China's constitution in 2012. This initiative aims to make China a globally, and domestically, recognized superpower by 2049. ¹⁵ This is by no means inconceivable. Conventional wisdom holds that we are on track to enter a post-American world. Furthermore, according to the 2020 Democracy Report, there is an "acceleration and deepening of autocratization around the world.", signaling an ideological shift away from the contemporary liberal order. ¹⁶

It is easy to see why autocracy is appealing to developing nations when considering the case of China. Under the autocratic structure, China is seemingly on a track to surpass the United States as a global superpower. Their leadership seems more efficient, cohesive, and better equipped to respond to crises quickly. Despite this, Matthew Kroenig argues that the United States will triumph in this struggle due to the democratic advantage it holds. ¹⁷ Kroenig's theory of democratic advantage aggregates previous findings which show how a democratic regime leads to beneficial economic and war outcomes. World War Two provides a stark example of the democratic advantage in motion. World War Two may, for my purposes, be boiled down to a struggle between democracy and autocracy. The United States, the United Kingdom, and France represent democracy and Nazi Germany, Fascist Italy, and imperial Japan represent autocracy. By the end of this conflict, the predominant autocratic powers of the 20th century were soundly defeated. Furthermore, shortly after the end of the conflict, the aforementioned autocratic nations were reborn as democracies, prospering in the years since. ¹⁸

Moving into the democratic advantage, or rather the autocratic disadvantage, today, Kroenig's arguments center on China. First, is China's history of economic growth. While the

¹⁵ Andrew Chatsky and James McBride, "Is 'Made in China 2025' a Threat to Global Trade?," Council on Foreign Relations (Council on Foreign Relations, May 13, 2019), https://www.cfr.org/backgrounder/made-china-2025-threat-global-trade.

¹⁶ Diego Lopes da Silva, "Autocracy Is on the Rise: Should We Expect Military Spending to Follow?," SIPRI (Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, October 29, 2020), https://www.sipri.org/commentary/topical-backgrounder/2020/autocracy-rise-should-we-expect-military-spending-follow.

¹⁷ Matthew Kroenig. 2020. *The Return of Great Power Rivalry: Democracy Versus Autocracy from the Ancient World to the U.S. and China*. Oxford University Press. 208.

¹⁸ Matthew Kroenig. 2020. *The Return of Great Power Rivalry: Democracy Versus Autocracy from the Ancient World to the U.S. and China*. Oxford University Press. 135.

PRC was established by Mao Zedong in 1949, it was not until 1978 that China achieved economic success. This success followed a series of economic reforms, modeled after the Western concept of a free market, enacted by Deng Xiaoping. While this model, unable to be described categorically as 'communist' or 'capitalist' has been extremely successful for short-term economic growth, it remains limited by CCP influence, especially in the long-term. Kroenig writes that "Theory and history suggest, however, that state-planned economies cannot generate high rates of return over the long term." ¹⁹ Capitalist reform in China's economic sector has slowed since Xi Jinping took power, with economic institutions now acting as support for the machinations of the Chinese Communist Party. This may stifle innovation, fail to incentivize growth, and, now that unproductive labor has been fully exploited, signal an era of stalled development.

In terms of long-term stability, the theory of democratic advantage is best expressed in the words of Niccolò Machiavelli: "I, therefore, disagree with the common opinion that a populace in power is unstable [and] changeable ... The prince ... unchecked by laws, will be more ... unstable, and imprudent than a populace." On the surface, this wisdom may not seem to be particularly applicable in the case of China. Arguments could be made that President Xi Jinping's success in his call to action against Uighurs, in which he called for "an all-out 'struggle against terrorism, infiltration and separatism' using the 'organs of dictatorship,' and showing 'absolutely no mercy." is evidence of an autocratic advantage. ²¹ However, while this struggle against terrorism is being carried out more efficiently than it could be through a democratic structure, and likely with greater success, the imprudent nature remains. Thus far, the consequences of China's rash actions have not severely impacted their contemporary affairs. However, as evidenced by the aforementioned discussion of foreign challenges to Beijing's record on human rights, as well as the power-contention's dominance of contemporary foreign affairs dialogue, they may very soon be forced to face the consequences of their actions.

Despite the marked differences between historical and contemporary international affairs, "It is [undeniably] notable how often democracies appear at or near the top of global power rankings. And this is even more remarkable when one considers how historically rare this form of government has been." ²² Through the aforementioned facts presented in this manuscript, it is evident that China is making great strides to increase its geopolitical standing on the world stage.

¹⁹ Matthew Kroenig. 2020. *The Return of Great Power Rivalry: Democracy Versus Autocracy from the Ancient World to the U.S. and China*. Oxford University Press. 180.

²⁰ Matthew Kroenig. 2020. "The Power Delusion," Foreign Policy (Foreign Policy Institute, November 11, 2020), https://foreignpolicy.com/2020/11/11/china-united-states-democracy-ideology-competition-rivalry-great-powers-power-delusion/.

Austin Ramzy and Chris Buckley, "'Absolutely No Mercy': Leaked Files Expose How China Organized Mass Detentions of Muslims," The New York Times (The New York Times, November 16, 2019), https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2019/11/16/world/asia/china-xinjiang-documents.html.

²² Matthew Kroenig. 2020. The Return of Great Power Rivalry: Democracy Versus Autocracy from the Ancient World to the U.S. and China. Oxford University Press. 53.

While much of this can be attributed to explicit efforts by the People's Republic of China to modernize and expand their sphere of influence, some of their advancement can only be accredited to the action, or rather inaction, of the United States in contemporary global affairs. Take, for example, China's Belt and Road Initiative. China's foreign economic policy does not exist in a vacuum. Through the United States' pulling back in recent years, China, and Xi Jinping in particular, has been able to step forward and proclaim that China is *the* champion of free trade. ²³ China's Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) is formidable, however, it isn't infeasible that a resurgence in the United States's FDI can match it. Furthermore, competing investment in developing nations would actually be mutually beneficial. Developing nations would experience further economic growth as a result of greater investment, and economic integration between the United States and these nations would severely limit China's sphere of influence.

Conclusion

China's status as a revisionist power is widely accepted as common knowledge within contemporary academic circles. Additionally, the 'great power struggle' or 'U.S.-China contention for power', is increasingly examined through the lens of autocracy versus democracy, touted as a new Cold War. While this dimension remains central to the discussion, it is not the only lens through which we should examine the conflict. Despite the significant impediments to China's goal to be recognized as a global superpower, namely those resulting from its autocratic political structure, it is quite possible that China will be successful. However, this success remains contingent on a variety of economic considerations, any of which could seriously stifle China's growth. These considerations include the continued success and effectuation of the Belt and Road Initiative, achievement of trade objectives through the RCEP, and China's economic ambitions in the coming years. All of these components appear to be operating effectively at the moment, however, they also all provide avenues for future challenges by foreign actors.

By matching FDI in sub-Saharan Africa and other developing regions, the United States can effectively challenge Beijing's economic dominance in the region. By taking a hardline approach to trade with China, and simultaneously expanding economic interdependence elsewhere, the United States can rival the economic breadth of the RCEP. And finally, by continuing to challenge China's domestic actions towards ethnic minorities, as well as their record on human rights, through international norms and institutions, the United States can compellingly oppose the autocratic political structure of the People's Republic of China.

In conclusion, China does pose a significant threat to Western dominance and the contemporary global system. It is not, however, a foregone conclusion that China will overtake the United

 $^{^{23}}$ Matthew Kroenig. 2020. The Return of Great Power Rivalry: Democracy Versus Autocracy from the Ancient World to the U.S. and China. Oxford University Press. 178.

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States economically and become a global superpower. Though scholars like Matthew Kroenig believe China's autocratic structure may prove to be its greatest flaw and eventual undoing, it is unwise to anticipate that China will eventually burn itself out. Rather, adaptation and explicit action are required if the United States hopes to preserve the hierarchy present in the contemporary global landscape.

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A Multinational Overview of the LGBTQ+ Panic Defense in Remembrance of its Victims*

Darius White¹

People that commit hate crimes based on sexual orientation and gender identity should be held accountable for their actions but, there is a legal loophole that is used around the world to soften their punishments. The LGBTQ+ panic defense, also known as the gay or trans panic defense or the homosexual advance defense, is "a legal strategy that asks a jury to find that a victim's sexual orientation or gender identity/expression is to blame for a defendant's violent reaction." It has been used to mitigate cases of hate crime or murder to manslaughter or justified homicide. The penalties for the latter two are much less severe, with justified homicide absolving the actor of any criminal liability. The defense is used in three ways in the court of law. Defendants can argue that a sexual proposition from the LGBTQ+ victim triggered a nervous breakdown or panic using a defense of insanity or diminished capacity, or that it sufficiently provoked them to induce the defendant to kill the victim using a defense of provocation, or that the victim was about to cause the defendant serious bodily harm using a self-defense argument. The gay and trans panic defense should be banned because they dehumanize the LGBTQ+ community, legitimize homophobia in the court of law, and dishonor a victim's right to justice.

This multinational overview will commemorate five victims killed in queerphobic attacks by examining their cases and detailing the sociopolitical, legal, and historical landscapes surrounding the LGBTQ+ panic defense and rights in their respective five countries. With the cases in the foreground and the country's landscape in the background, each case study, first and foremost, honors each of the victims. The power of sharing stories, names, and memories will be made clear by the end of this study. The New Zealand, Australia, and the U.S. case studies may emanate hope but, for the other two, the Philippines and Jamaica, the outlook is bleaker.

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² National LGBT Bar Association. "LQBTQ+'Panic' Defense." The LGBTBar. Accessed 2021. https://lgbtbar.org/programs/advocacy/gay-trans-panic-defense/.

³ Cornell Law School. "Justifiable Homicide." Legal Information Institute. https://www.law.cornell.edu/wex/justifiable homicide.

⁴ National LGBT Bar Association. "LQBTQ+'Panic' Defense."

Ronald Brown - New Zealand

The first study takes place in New Zealand. Ronald Brown, 69, was a grandfather and salesman from Onehunga, an Auckland suburb. He met Ferdinand Ambach, 29, at a bar and they left together. Brown made an unwanted sexual advance, prompting Ambach to brutalize him with a dumbbell and a banjo. On December 7, 2007, Brown's body was found on his stairs with the banjo shoved down his throat. Using the defense of provocation, Ambach's lawyer successfully reduced his verdict of murder to manslaughter, claiming that Brown's *possible* rape attempt triggered a "monstrous rage" in Ambach.

Although justice was flouted for Brown, his memory is honored by the fact that he will be the last person in New Zealand to be a victim of the LGBTQ+ panic defense. The Crimes Amendment Act (2009) was royally assented on July 12, 2009 with the purpose of abolishing the partial defense of provocation, making New Zealand the first country in the world to ban this defense.⁷

Andrew Negre – Australia

The setting of the next case study is Australia. Andrew Negre was a 37-year-old outgoing man who lived in southern Adelaide, South Australia with his girlfriend. After making friends at the local tavern, he joined them for a boozy party back at their house on March 31, 2011. At the party, Negre jokingly straddled Michael Lindsay's lap which prompted him to tell Negre to stop. He apologized and Lindsay accepted his apology. Later that night, Negre asked Lindsay to sleep with him. Lindsay declined so, Negre offered to pay him for sex. Lindsay lost it. He viciously attacked Negre then asked his friend, Luke Hutchings, to check Negre's pockets. Lindsay then put on gloves before stabbing him 25 times. Following the murder, Lindsay and Hutchings dumped Negre's body into a creek.⁸ At the trial, even though Lindsay did not use the LGBTQ+

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⁵ "Banjo killer Ferninand Ambach sent home to Hungary after serving eight years." Stuff. February 27, 2016. https://www.stuff.co.nz/auckland/77338066/banjo-killer-ferninand-ambach-sent-home-to-hungary-after-serving-eight-years.; Eames, David. "Accused killer on 'wanted' list at home." New Zea land Herald, December 16, 2007. https://www.nzherald.co.nz/nz/accused-killer-on-wanted-list-at-home/MY36VLOMPGNFOC75JZRDFDNBZY/.

⁶ "Banjo killer Ferninand Ambach sent home to Hungary after serving eight years." Stuff. February 27, 2016.; Crimes (Provocation Repeal) Amendment Bill — First Reading: Hearings Before the Justice and Electoral Committee, Hansard (Debates) (2009) (statement of Hon Simon Power, Minister of Justice). https://www.parliament.nz/en/pb/bills-and-laws/bills-proposedlaws/document/00DBHOH_BILL9305_1/crimes-provocation-repeal-amendment-bill.

⁷ Crimes (Provocation Repeal) Amendment Bill, Justice and Electoral Committee, House of Representatives, New Zealand Parliament. 64-2 (Oct. 19, 2009).

https://www.parliament.nz/resource/enNZ/49DBSCH_SCR4507_1/b9657217b13b0f5f15a69ba6f124dc4aa84ac214.; Crimes (Provocation Repeal) Amendment Bill—First Reading: Hearings Before the Justice and Electoral Committee, Hansard (Debates) (2009) (statement of Hon Simon Power, Minister of Justice).

⁸ Mark Whittaker. "Out of Sight: The Untold Story of Adelaide's Gay-Hate Murders." Illustrated by Jeremy Lord. Special Broadcasting Service. https://www.sbs.com.au/topics/feature/out-sight-untold-story-adelaides-gay-hate-murders#text-over-media-48092.

panic defense, the Judge was required to explain to the jury that "the crime of murder may be reduced to manslaughter if there was a reasonable possibility that the crime was committed as a result of provocation...a situation [that] would arise if Lindsay suffered a sudden and temporary loss of self-control as a result of conduct on the part of Mr. Negre." The verdict? Lindsay was found guilty for murder twice, while Hutchings was found guilty of assisting an offender. ¹⁰ Even though the verdict saw justice for Negre, the law, or lack thereof, still provided a chance for the provocation defense to prevail.

In the past two decades, the provocation defenses have been challenged in the Australian states. Tasmania became the first state to abolish the defense of provocation in the Criminal Code Amendment Bill (2003). ¹¹ Likewise, in the Australian Capital and Northern Territories, the provocation defense was abolished in 2004 and 2006, respectively. ¹² In Victoria, the panic defense's legal history is a bit more complicated. The provocation defense was abolished in 2005, but a new crime called "defensive homicide" was implemented. This simply shifted the defense strategy's provocation approach to an issue of self-defense; therefore, it did not guarantee the end of the LGBTQ+ panic defense in Victoria. ¹³ It was not until nine years later, when the Crimes Amendment Bill (2014) abolished the defense homicide, that the LGBTQ+ panic defense was finally banned. ¹⁴ Additionally, Western Australia and New South Wales respectively banned the provocation defense in 2008 and 2014. ¹⁵ Furthermore, Queensland's Criminal Law Amendment Act (2017) established that an unwanted sexual advance does not merit a provocation defense. ¹⁶ And most recently, South Australia became the final state to

⁹ R v. Lindsay, SASCFC 56. Court of Criminal Appeal, Supreme Court of South Australia (June 3, 2014). Australasian Legal Information Institute. http://www8.austlii.edu.au/cgibin/viewdoc/au/cases/sa/SASCFC/2014/56.html.

¹⁰ R v. Lindsay, SASCFC 56. Court of Criminal Appeal, Supreme Court of South Australia

¹¹ Criminal Code Amendment (Abolition of Defence of Provocation) Bill 2003, Legislative Council and House of Assembly, Tasmanian Parliament 15-II, 2003. (Tasmania). (Introduced by Judith Louise Jackson, Minister for Justice and Industrial Relations) https://www.parliament.tas.gov.au/bills/Bills2003/pdf/15 of 2003.pdf.

¹² Kent Blore. "The Homosexual Advance Defence and the Campaign to Abolish It in Queensland: The Activist's Dilemma and the Politician's Paradox." QUT Law Review 12, no. 2 (October 19, 2012). https://doi.org/10.5204/qutlr.v12i2.489, 42.; Crimes Act 1900, A. A1900-40, 2017 Australian Capital Territory. (Mar. 8, 2021). https://www.legislation.act.gov.au/a/1900-40.

¹³ Kent Blore. "The Homosexual Advance Defence and the Campaign to Abolish It in Queensland: The Activist's Dilemma and the Politician's Paradox," 40.

¹⁴ Crimes Amendment (Abolition of Defensive Homicide) Bill 2014, Legisla tive Council, Parlia ment of Victoria. 8 (July 2014). (Introduced by Edward O'Donohue, Minister for Corrections and Crime Prevention). https://www.parliament.vic.gov.au/publications/research-papers/download/36-research-papers/13698-crimes-amendment-abolition-of-defensive-homicide-bill-2014

¹⁵ Criminal Law Amendment (Homicide) Act 2008, Parliament, Western Australia. 29. (June 27, 2008)

¹⁶ Criminal Law Amendment Act 2017, Parliament, Queensland. 6. (Mar. 30, 2017). https://www.legislation.qld.gov.au/view/pdf/asmade/act-2017-006, 11-12.

https://www.legislation.wa.gov.au/legislation/prod/filestore.nsf/FileURL/mrdoc_7554.pdf/\$FILE/Criminal%20Law%20Amendment%20(Homicide)%20Act%202008%20-%20%5B00-0002%5D.pdf?OpenElement.;Crimes Amendment (Provocation) Act. 13, 2014. (New South Wales).

abolish the defense in 2020. ¹⁷ Thus, as of 2021, the LGBTQ+ panic defense has been de facto abolished in all of Australia, making it one of the only two countries to do so.

Nikki Kuhnhausen – United States

The third case study is set in the U.S. Nikki Kuhnhausen was a 17-year-old teen living in Vancouver, Washington when she met David Bogdanov, 25. The pair met at a bar on June 5, 2019, drank together, and later engaged in sexual contact. The morning after, the two reunited in his car where she then revealed her transgender gender identity to him. Describing his emotions as "enraged, disturbed, shocked, and uncomfortable," Bogdanov consequently strangled her to death. ¹⁸ Although he was charged with second-degree murder, there were further calls for a hate crime charge to be added and public concern that the trans panic defense may have come into play. With large crowds rallying together for Kuhnhausen and demanding justice, not only was Bogdanov charged with a hate crime but, "Nikki's Law," banning the LGBTQ+ panic defense, was also passed in her home state. ¹⁹

The defense strategy still endangers queer lives elsewhere in the U.S. Since the 2013 American Bar Association (ABA) resolution urging governments to take legislative action "to curtail the availability and effectiveness" of the defense, only D.C. and these 12 states have prohibited its use in their courts: California, Nevada, Colorado, Illinois, New York, Maine, Rhode Island, Connecticut, New Jersey, Hawaii, Virginia and Washington. ²⁰ Bans have also been introduced in the state legislatures of Oregon, New Mexico, Texas, Nebraska, Iowa, Minnesota, Wisconsin, Florida, Virginia, Maryland, Pennsylvania, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, and Vermont. ²¹ Meanwhile, at the federal level, in the House of Representatives and the Senate, two bills called the Gay and Trans Panic Defense Prohibition Act of 2019 were struggling to make it out of the committee level under the Trump administration but, are gaining ground under the current Biden one. ²² This century has seen significant advances in LGTQ+

¹⁷ Criminal Law Consolidation Act 1935, South Australia. https://www.legislation.sa.gov.au/LZ/C/A/CRIMINAL%20LAW%20CONSOLIDATION%20ACT%201935/CUR RENT/1935.2252.AUTH.PDF.

¹⁸ Oscar Lopez. "U.S. states move to ban LGBT+'panic defense' for crimes." Reuters. February 27, 2020. https://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-lgbt-lawmaking-trfn/u-s-states-move-to-ban-lgbt-panic-defense-for-crimes-idUSKCN20M00P; Shedlock, Jerzy. "Vancouver teen's slaying revives hate-crime discussion." The Columbian (Vancouver, WA), January 1, 2020. https://www.columbian.com/news/2020/jan/01/vancouver-teens-slaying-revives-hate-crime-discussion/

¹⁹ Oscar Lopez. "U.S. states move to ban LGBT+'panic defense' for crimes."

²⁰ Gay and Trans Panic Defenses Resolution, American Bar Association Res. 113 A (as a dopted by the House of Delegates, Aug. 12-13, 2013). https://lgbtbar.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/Gay-and-Trans-Panic-Defenses-Resolution.pdf; "LGBTQ+ 'Panic' Defense Legislation Map." Map. LGBT Bar. https://lgbtbar.org/programs/advocacy/gay-trans-panic-defense/gay-trans-panic-defense-legislation/.

²¹ LGBTQ+'Panic' Defense Legislation Map." LGBT Bar.

²² H.R.3133 - Gay and Trans Panic Defense Prohibition Act of 2019, H.R. H.R. 3133, 116th, 1st. (as introduced, June 5, 2019). https://www.congress.gov/bill/116th-congress/house-bill/3133; S.1721 - Gay and Trans Panic Defense Prohibition Act of 2019, S. S.1721, 116th, 1st. (June 5, 2019). https://www.congress.gov/bill/116th-congress/senate-bill/1721.

rights, yet this barbaric loophole persists. Therefore, the U.S.'s governments, at all levels, ought to adopt the ABA resolution's two proposals. The first requires "courts...upon the request of a party, to instruct the jury not to let bias, sympathy, prejudice, or public opinion influence its decision about the victims, witnesses, or defendants based upon sexual orientation or gender identity;" and the second specifies that a non-violent sexual advance or the discovery of a person's sex or gender identity does not constitute a legally adequate provocation to mitigate the severity of any crime.²³ Until this happens, and the defense is banned nationwide, this country's aspirations of "liberty and justice for all" will continue to be a dream rather than reality.

Jennifer Laude – Philippines

Case study number four happened just northwest of Manila in Olongapo, a port city in Subic Bay, formerly known as "one of the U.S. Navy's most important overseas military bases." ²⁴ In October 2014, 26-year-old Jennifer Laude and U.S. Marine Lance Cpl. Joseph Scott Pemberton left a nightclub for a nearby hotel. There, upon finding out Laude was transgender, Pemberton strangled her from behind until she was unconscious then, left her to drown in a toilet. He returned to his ship, *USS Peleliu*, that was docked in the Bay and confessed to his shipmate about what happened. ²⁵ Olongapo Regional Trial Court found him guilty of homicide, and not murder, with the judge's reasoning corresponding with the defense of diminished capacity, "he reacted out of passion and obfuscation." ²⁶ On September 13, 2020, six years into his 10-year sentence (already reduced from 12 years), President Rodrigo Duterte announced that he had granted him an absolute pardon, officially nullifying Pemberton's sentence. As a privilege that Pemberton earned for "good behavior," Duterte defended his decision saying, "if there is a time when you are called upon to be fair, be fair." ²⁷

But this blatant disregard of justice cannot not be deemed as fair. The panic defense's success, lessening Pemberton's charge from murder to homicide, and his subsequent early release is interpreted by some Filipinos as messages that trans lives matter less, that the justice

²³ Gay and Trans Panic Defenses Resolution, American Bar Association Res. 113A (as a dopted by the House of Delegates, Aug. 12-13, 2013). https://lgbtbar.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/Gay-and-Trans-Panic-Defenses-Resolution.pdf.

²⁴ Kevin Sliwoski. "Sounds of Subic Bay: The U.S. Navy in the Philippines, 1950-1971." PhD diss., University of California (Riverside). https://escholarship.org/uc/item/20t1x85q.

²⁵ Rodrigo Bacus. "Inadequate justice: the case of Jennifer Laude and the call to end unequal military agreements." Rights Wire, Leitner Center for International Law and Justice. January 7, 2016.

https://rightswireblog.org/2016/01/07/inadequate-justice-the-case-of-jennifer-laude-and-the-call-to-end-unequal-military-agreements/.; Jason Gutierrez. "Duterte Pardons U.S. Marine Who Killed Transgender Woman." New York Times (NY), September 7, 2020. https://proxy-tu.researchport.umd.edu/login?url=https://www.proquest.com/blogs.podcasts,-websites/duterte-pardons-u-s-marine-who-killedtransgender/docview/2440456550/se-2?accountid=14378.

²⁶ Jennifer Williams. "Ban 'panic defence', save LGBTQ lives." Al Jazeera. Last modified October 22, 2020. https://www.aljazeera.com/opinions/2020/10/22/ban-panic-defence-save-lgbtq-lives.

²⁷ Julie McCarthy. "Philippines Pardons U.S. Marine In Killing Of Transgender Woman." National Public Radio. September 7, 2020. https://www.npr.org/2020/09/07/910512970/philippines-pardons-u-s-marine-in-killing-of-transgender-woman.

system is unequal, and that the LGBTQ+ panic defense is valid in their courts. ²⁸ Furthermore, as a former colony of the U.S., this controversial case unfolds against a backdrop of colonial historical relations. The Visiting Forces Agreement (VFA) is a bilateral agreement that "ensures that the two countries have a predetermined process to be followed if an [American] service member is arrested and charged with a crime." ²⁹ Some Filipinos feel that this an unequal agreement favoring the Americans. For example, Filipino personnel deferred to U.S. authority in determining where Pemberton was to be detained via Article Five (Criminal Jurisdiction) of the VFA. 30 The past Status of Forces Agreement, which ended in 1991, addressed criminal actions by American service members through the U.S. military justice system, effectively protecting them from prosecution in Filipino courts. Under this agreement, abuse and violence against Filipina women and girls perpetrated by American military personnel were rife at or around the bases. 31 Some Filipinos, reminded by this troubling past, have responded to Pemberton's release with public outrage, protests, and social media hashtags that express their frustration with the U.S.'s ongoing military presence. The successful use of the panic defense, Duterte's pardon, and unequal military treaties are an affront to the Philippines's sovereignty and democracy, endangering LGBTQ+ lives.

Dexter Pottinger – Jamaica

In the final case study, the story begins in Jamaica, where fashion designer, video director, LGBTQ+ activist, and Jamaica's 2016 "Face of Pride," Dexter Pottinger, 34, successfully built his celebrity before his tragic death at the hands of Romario Brown. ³² On August 29, 2017, at Pottinger's home in Kingston, Brown stabbed Pottinger after he entered the room and approached him while in an aroused state. Pottinger tried to walk away, but Brown followed and stabbed him 24 more times. Following this, Brown took a bath and then stole his TV, watch, and car. In addition to his charges of larceny from the dwelling and simple larceny,

²⁸ Ja son Gutierrez. "Duterte Pardons U.S. Marine Who Killed Transgender Woman."; Corinne Redfern. "He Killed a Transgender Woman in the Philippines. Why Was He Freed?" *New York Times* (NY), September 17, 2020. https://proxy-tu.researchport.umd.edu/login?url=https://www.proquest.com/blogs,-podcasts,-websites/he-killed-transgender-woman-philippines-whywas/docview/2443360117/se-2?accountid=14378.

²⁹ Corinne Redfern. "He Killed a Transgender Woman in the Philippines. Why Was He Freed?"

³⁰ Joseph Scott Pemberton v. Secretary of Justice Leila M. De Lima. Supreme Court, G.R. No. 217508. Manila, Philippines (Apr. 18, 2016).

³¹ Corinne Redfern. "He Killed a Transgender Woman in the Philippines. Why Was He Freed?"

^{32 &}quot;Jamaica: Gay panic defense in killing of Pride icon." Alturi. April 20, 2019. https://alturi.org/news_items/jamaica-gay-panic-defense-in-killing-of-pride-icon/.; "Ja maica: Gay panic defense in killing of Pride icon." 76crimes. April 17, 2019. https://focrimes.com/2019/04/17/jamaica-gay-panic-defense-in-killing-of-pride-icon/.; Jon Sharman. "Dexter Pottinger dead: Gay a ctivist and face of Jamaica Pride found murdered in his home." The Independent. September 2, 2017. https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/americas/dexter-pottinger-dead-jamaica-gay-pride-murder-stabbed-kingston-a7925556.html.

Brown's initial charge of murder was mitigated to manslaughter using the provocation defense. He was sentenced a total of 17 years (12 for manslaughter) in May 2019.³³

Homosexuality is criminalized in Jamaica and, like Laude's story, it is related to vestiges of colonialism. That vestige is the Offences Against the Person Act of 1864 (OAPA), which was inherited from the British Constitution and remains as a holdover from the colonial era. The first of these "buggery" laws, Article 76, calls for 10 years of imprisonment and hard labor for men convicted of having homosexual sex; while the next law, Article 77, calls for seven years for just attempting it. Worse, Article 79, concerning gross indecency between two males, can refer to any kind of physical intimacy. So, being caught holding hands in public can be justification for a two-year prison sentence.³⁴ Although the buggery laws are not wholly enforced, these laws are emblematic of the widespread prejudices against the LGBTO+ community. Essentially, from a legal standpoint, all gay men are criminals. This is troubling for two reasons. First, it leaves gay men vulnerable to arbitrary arrests and detention. And second, if gay victims are considered criminals in panic defense cases, it could influence courts to charge suspects with justifiable homicide or manslaughter instead of murder. ³⁵ Considering the widespread homophobia present in Jamaica, demonstrated by the fact that a majority of Jamaicans believe that homosexuality is immoral, oppose repealing the buggery law, and are against amending the Charter of Fundamental Rights and Freedoms to protect LGBTQ+ rights, a panic defense ban would likely not end anti-queer violence. ³⁶ But it would at least ensure adequate justice for the cases that make into court.

Conclusion

Hate crimes based on sexual orientation represent 16.7% of hate crimes in the U.S., gender identity-based hate crimes are on the rise, and 1 in 5 lesbian, gay, and bisexual and 1 in 4

³³ The Jamaican Crown v. Romario Brown, NO. 2018 CR.00446. Supreme Court of Judicature of Jamaica. Criminal Division. (May 24, 2019).

https://www.supremecourt.gov.jm/sites/default/files/judgments/R%20v%20Brown%2C%20Romario.pdf.

³⁴ Human Rights First. *LGBT Issues in Jamaica*. https://www.humanrightsfirst.org/sites/default/files/Jamaica-LGBT-Fact-Sheet.pdf; Jackson, Angeline. "Is 'The Most Homophobic Place on Earth' Turning Around?" *Time*. June 1, 2015. https://time.com/3900934/most-homophobic-place-on-earth-turning-around/.

³⁵ Se-sha una Wheatle. "The Constitutionality of the Homosexual Advance Defence' in the Commonwealth Caribbean." *Equal Rights Review* 16, no. 38 (August 9, 2016).

https://www.equalrightstrust.org/ertdocumentbank/The%20Constitutionality%20of%20the%20Homosexual%20Advance%20Defence%20in%20the%20Commonwealth%20Caribbean.pdf.

36 Eric Mawira Gitari and Mark Walters. Equality and Justice Alliance, Human Dignity Trust. *Hate Crimes against*

the LGBT Community in the Commonwealth: A Situational Analysis. March 2020.

https://www.humandignitytrust.org/wp-content/uploads/resources/2020-Hate-Crimes-against-the-LGBT-Community-in-the-Commonwealth A-Situational-Analysis.pdf.; Human Rights First. LGBT Issues in Jamaica.;

Rochelle McFee and Elroy Ga lbraith, eds. The Developmental Cost of Homophobia: The Case of Jamaica. Ja nuary 2016. https://www.washingtonblade.com/content/files/2016/01/The-Developmental-Cost-of-Homophobia-The-Case-of-Jamaica 2016-1.pdf.

transgender people will experience hate violence.³⁷ Because crimes like this are often unreported, these startling statistics are just a portion of the true numbers.³⁸ Considering the global persecution directed against the LGBTQ+ community, this legal strategy needs to be banned in order to safeguard justice for victims of gender identity and sexual orientation-based hate crimes.

Out of 197 countries, only two have banned the panic defense. Even though there are bans in New Zealand and Australia, Ronald Brown's and Andrew Negre's stories cannot be forgotten because cases are still going on elsewhere in the world. Saying their names and commemorating their stories can create meaningful change, demonstrated by Nikki Kuhnhausen's mother and stepfather who campaigned for justice. Their efforts were not in vain because Washington's LGBTQ+ panic defense ban, Nikki's Law, will forever honor her story. But, in the U.S., only 12 states and D.C. ban the defense. Worse, President Duterte's pardoning of Jennifer Laude's killer sent an implicit message to the international community that LGBTQ+ lives matter less. And in Jamaica, how are gay men supposed to beat the panic defense when, according to the buggery laws, they are already considered criminals? It is highly unlikely that there will be international interventions to this issue so, a grassroots approach could be more successful in banning the defense. So, remember their names, honor their memories, and be cognizant of your community around you because by doing so you can have a positive impact through just telling a story.

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³⁷ Eli Coston. "Understanding and Handling Hate Crimes a gainst Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender People." Scholars. November 9, 2018. https://scholars.org/contribution/understanding-and-handling-hate-crimes-against-gay-bisexual-and-transgender-people.; "Incidents, Offenses, Victims, and Known Offenders by Bias Motivation, 2019." Table. Federal Bureau of Investigation. <a href="https://www.https://ww

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³⁸ Wyatt Ronan. "New FBI Hate Crimes Report Shows Increases in Anti-LGBTQ Attacks."

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Shifting Away from the West: Erdogan's Post-Coup Attempt Response*

Hannah Warner¹

Abstract: The 2016 coup attempt presented an opportunity to Erdogan to increase the power of the presidential position, while promoting pre-existing anti-West sentiments. Through the implementation of a state of emergency and constitutional revisions, Erdogan has cracked down on dissent. While continually committing major human rights atrocities against the Turkish population, Erdogan has retained his conservative support base through his polarizing strongman attitude. In speech, Erdogan champions democracy, however, according to his actions he is running an authoritarian regime.

Key Words: Turkey, Middle East, Social Justice, U.S.-Turkey Relations

Introduction

On July 15, 2016, the Turkish Armed Forces (TAF) launched an attack on the Turkish presidential administration from an air base near the capital city of Ankara, marking the bloodiest coup attempt in Turkish political history. Today, President Recep Tayyip Erdogan continues to make arrests and accusations of Turkish citizens for their involvement. More than 292,000 people have been detained over links to the attack and over 100,000 of these suspects are still waiting in jail for a "fair" trial. To date, 337 suspects have been sentenced to life in prison of which 291 are aggravated life sentences, the most severe punishment of the Turkish courts. This large-scale crackdown began after the coup attempt when President Erdogan declared a state of emergency in order to root out the supporters of Fethullah Gülen, United States-based Muslim preacher and business-man whom he blames for the attack. Gülen is a leader of the widespread movement called "Hizmet," which owns foundations, media companies,

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² "Turkey Jails Hundreds for Life over 2016 Failed Coup Attempt," Al Jazeera (Al Jazeera, November 26, 2020), https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2020/11/26/turkey-dozens-given-life-sentences-for-failed-coup-attempt.

³ "Turkey's Failed Coup Attempt: All You Need to Know," Al Jazeera (Al Jazeera, July 15, 2017), https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2017/7/15/turkeys-failed-coup-attempt-all-you-need-to-know.

and schools within Turkey and abroad.⁴ Erdogan claims that Hizmet is a terrorist organization and that his actions are crucial in defending the security of Turkey, due to the network of Gülen supporters being deeply embedded in the state.⁵

While the Turkish parliament only approved a three-month state of emergency to locate coup participants, Erdogan did not lift it until two years later, during which the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) was suspended. This allowed President Erdogan to bypass parliament when creating new laws or restricting freedoms. 6 During the state of emergency, Erdogan proposed a constitutional referendum, which passed in 2017. The referendum eliminated the position of the Prime Ministry, giving the president disproportionate control over all three branches of government. Ultimately, the state of emergency that followed the 2016 coup attempt has allowed Erdogan to do much more than find and persecute Gülen supporters. He has used this critical time to limit political opposition gatherings, crack down on journalists, and persecute minority groups. Erdogan has further taken advantage of the situation by removing anyone not completely in support of the Justice and Development (AKP) party ideology, such as civil servants, including teachers and academics, and replacing them with loyalists. While continually committing these major human rights atrocities against the Turkish population, Erdogan has succeeded in maintaining his conservative support base through his polarizing strongman attitude and the stirring of anti-West and anti-EU sentiments. Ultimately, the coup attempt has benefitted the Erdogan administration by creating an avenue through which Erdogan can conduct Turkish life in a manner that strays far away from the principles of democracy. And, as Turkey grows away from western values, they grow closer to other Eastern countries such as Russia who supports Erdogan despite his actions and is actively pursuing a partnership with Erdogan.

An Unexpected Response

Military coups are not a foreign concept in Turkey, as the 2016 attempt marked the fourth coup in the country's history. In the past, the TAF has acted as a check on presidential power, challenging those who have overstepped in their duties. Formerly an organized and united body, the TAF had been able to do what Turkish citizens could not: remove a corrupt President. And after President Erdogan held snap elections in 2014 to secure the presidency with a larger margin than in the general elections, it was clear that Erdogan was not going to have the best interest of Turkish democracy in mind. However, when the TAF launched the coup in July of 2016, they

⁴ "Turkey Orders Scores of Arrests for Alleged Coup Links," Deutsche Welle, August 6, 2020, https://www.dw.com/en/turkey-orders-scores-of-arrests-for-alleged-coup-links/a-53727847.

⁵ "Turkey's Failed Coup Attempt: All You Need to Know," Al Jazeera.

⁶ "Everything You Need to Know a bout Human Rights in Turkey," Amnesty International, a ccessed May 10, 2021, https://www.amnesty.org/en/countries/europe-and-central-asia/turkey/report-turkey/.

⁷ "Turkey's Failed Coup Attempt: All You Need to Know," Al Jazeera.

were met by an unsuspected response: ordinary Turkish citizens taking to the streets armed with kitchen utensils. § Initially, it had looked like the TAF would topple Erdogan, but in a last-ditcheffort Erdogan broadcasted live on social media to encourage the Turkish people to defend their democracy. And surprisingly, even those who did not support the Erdogan administration went out to defend their government, feeling convicted to eliminate the threat to their democracy. Ultimately, the crowds resisted the tank fire and air bombardments, and with the aid of police and loyalist soldiers, they were able to defeat the TAF in just a few hours. ¹⁰

But why would people take to the streets to defend a president who was becoming increasingly authoritarian in his practices and altering election results to maintain power? Well, prior to the coup, anti-military sentiments were rising along with disdain for a secular state. Turkey is extremely conservative, and President Erdogan was able to capitalize on this knowledge with his rhetoric to mobilize the people on his behalf. Erdogan framed the coup as an attack on Turkish democracy and the TAF as a threat to Turkish life. And, when Turkish citizens responded to the President's call, they were stunned that their military was killing them in the streets. When the coup failed, the TAF no longer existed as a champion of the people and antimilitary sentiment was solidified among Turkish citizens. And even after more altered elections, the constitutional referendum, censorship and human rights atrocities, Erdogan has maintained relative popularity. Erdogan's charisma and ability to capitalize on growing anti-military and anti-West sentiments has brought him into this unique position. He has framed himself as a strongman leader, and as such, he is extremely polarizing. Erdogan's supporters love him unconditionally, while those who despise him remain silent for fear of losing their jobs, freedoms, and privileges.

Influence of the Coup History

Prior to the coup attempt of 2016, the coup of February 28, 1997 was the most recent. At that time, Erdogan was the mayor of Istanbul. Erdogan recapped his agonizing memories of the coup when appealing to the people on July 15, 2016. He reminded the people that he was unlawfully imprisoned, and his political life almost ended, but that he had risen and become the first Turkish President elected by popular vote. ¹¹ He reminded the Turkish people of his service to his country and used his careful rhetoric to sway them. Turkish officials supported Erdogan by promoting the narrative that every coup undermined Turkey by stalling both economic and

⁸ "Turkey Orders Scores of Arrests for Alleged Coup Links," Deutsche Welle.

⁹ "Turkey's Crackdown on Human Rights," Amnesty International UK, May 18, 2020, https://www.amnesty.org.uk/turkey-coup-crackdown-human-rights.

¹⁰ "Turkey Orders Scores of Arrests for Alleged Coup Links," Deutsche Welle.

^{11 &}quot;Turkish Officials Recall 'Post-Modern Coup'," Hürriyet Daily News, February 28, 2021, https://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/turkish-officials-recall-post-modern-coup-162773.

political progress. ¹² In addition, the Erdogan administration took advantage of the conspiracy claims throughout the history of Turkey. The Turkish people have a pattern of fear of Western conspiracy, and when something terrible happens, they often have the initial assumption of outside interference. Because the United States has historically meddled in Turkish affairs and because Gülen resides in the United States, many still believe the United States was involved in the coup attempt. ¹³ With U.S. refusal to cooperate by returning Gülen to Turkish soil, resentment has further grown towards the West among the Turkish government and Turkish citizens. ¹⁴ This distrust of the United States and the West in general is something that unites the majority of Turkish people. Many of Erdogan's opponents, such as Kurds, secularists, and nationalists, have also worried about Gülen's influence within the country, agreeing with their president that the United States is siding with Gülen. ¹⁵ And these anti-West sentiments are key in Erdogan's strategy of maintaining the allegiance of the Turkish people despite his authoritarian actions.

Beyond Political Opposition

It is clear that President Erdogan has used his emergency powers to crack down on all dissent, not just that of Gülen. Anyone who does not align with the PKK ideology is now a target. Many of those who have been subjected to the Turkish prisons since the 2016 coup have experienced torture, beatings, rape, and sexual abuse. Along with the constant threat of arrest, the media has been censored and journalists fear for their safety. Today, Turkey is ranked alongside China and Saudi Arabia as the world's top jailers of journalists by the Committee to Protect Journalists. ¹⁶ More than 20 news websites have been blocked, 42 journalists have warrants out for their arrest, and 25 media outlets have lost their licenses. ¹⁷ Emergency decrees have allowed for the government to close more than 200 media organizations such as newspapers, periodicals, radio stations and television channels. ¹⁸ According to Turkey's Journalist Syndicate, as many as 85 media workers are in jail under Turkey's very broad anti-terrorist laws. These same laws have allowed authorities to conduct mass purges of public employees within the state. In August,

¹² Kareem Shaheen, "Military Coup Was Well Planned and Very Nearly Succeeded, Say Turkish Officials," The Guardian (Guardian News and Media, July 18, 2016), https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/jul/18/military-coup-was-well-planned-and-very-nearly-succeeded-say-turkish-officials.

¹³ Tim Arango and Ceylan Yeginsu, "Turks Can Agree on One Thing: U.S. Was Behind Failed Coup," The New York Times (The New York Times, August 2, 2016), https://www.nytimes.com/2016/08/03/world/europe/turkey-coup-erdogan-fethullah-gulen-united-states.html.

¹⁴ Tim Arango and Ceylan Yeginsu, "Turkish President Returns to Istanbul in Sign Military Coup Is Faltering," The New York Times (The New York Times, July 15, 2016),

https://www.nytimes.com/2016/07/16/world/europe/military-attempts-coup-in-turkey-prime-minister-says.html. ¹⁵ *Ibid*.

¹⁶ "A Look at Turkey's Post-Coup Crackdown," AP NEWS (Associated Press, August 30, 2018), https://apnews.com/article/dbb5fa7d8f8c4d0d99f297601c83a164.

¹⁷ "Everything You Need to Know a bout Human Rights in Turkey," Amnesty International.

¹⁸ "Turkey Ramps up Gulen Crackdown with Nearly 700 Arrests," Middle East Eye, February 18, 2020, https://www.middleeasteye.net/news/turkey-ramps-gulen-crackdown-nearly-700-arrests.

Erdogan implemented new regulations that required internet broadcasting platforms to obtain licensing from the Radio and Television Supreme Council (RTUK), who will censor their online content. ¹⁹

Censorship has gone much further than just media networks and journalists. At least 839 social media accounts have been investigated for "sharing criminal content," hundreds of which have been confiscated by police. Istanbul Provincial Chairperson, Canan Kaftancioglu, of the CHP party was sentenced to almost 10 years in prison for "insulting the President," "insulting a public official because of his/her duty," "provoking people into enmity and hatred," and "propaganda for a terrorist organization." Bans on all assemblies have been issued in many cities across Turkey. Peaceful protests have been met violently with police brutality and participants have been prosecuted for "propaganda for a terrorist organization," "participation in an unlawful assembly," and "resisting police," ²⁰ In November 2017, an indefinite ban was issued by the Ankara governorate on all lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex events. It was not lifted until April 2019 after which events were banned individually. University student pride marches and Istanbul pride march have been repeatedly banned for almost six years now. In March 2020, authorities banned the International Women's Day March in Istanbul just before it was about to begin. To dismantle the crowds, police used tear gas and force on the peaceful participants. A similar event occurred in November 2020, when women were met with plastic bullets and tear gas for gathering for the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women. University students have been met with the same response when having peaceful protests and have been prosecuted for their gatherings.

Erdogan is far past the point of being able to justify his actions with the 2016 coup attempt or as a search for Gülen supporters. Criticism from Europe and the United States for the Turkish administration began shortly after the coup as Erdogan quickly diverted from democratic principles. Since November of 2016, talks about Turkey's accession to the European Union have been suspended based on Erdogan's erosion of democracy and human rights. However, this has not kept Erdogan from growing more authoritarian in his actions since. And the stalling of the accession process has only helped Erdogan to promote the anti-EU, anti-West narrative that helps him to maintain his unique position in the eyes of the Turkish public.

²⁰ Andrew Wilks, "Turkey's Student Protests: New Challenge for Erdogan."

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¹⁹ Andrew Wilks, "Turkey's Student Protests: New Challenge for Erdogan," Al Jazeera (Al Jazeera, February 6, 2021), https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/2/6/turkeys-student-protests-new-challenge-for-erdogan.

Conclusion

The 2016 coup attempt presented an opportunity to Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan to increase the power of the presidential position, while simultaneously building the pre-existing anti-West sentiments among Turkish citizens. Through the implementation of a state of emergency, Erdogan has successfully transformed the constitution to benefit his presidency, eliminating checks on executive power by the legislative and judicial branches. Without oversight, Erdogan has cracked down on dissent among the population by limiting political opposition gatherings, arresting journalists, and persecuting minority groups. While continually committing major human rights atrocities against the Turkish population, Erdogan has retained his conservative support base through his polarizing strongman attitude. In speech, Erdogan champions democracy, however, according to his actions he is running an authoritarian regime. Ultimately, the coup attempt has benefitted the Erdogan administration by creating an avenue through which he can conduct Turkish life in a manner that strays far away from the principles of democracy. And as Turkey grows away from the democratic system, they grow closer to other Eastern countries who support Erdogan despite his actions.

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A Seemingly Developed Nation: Women's Rights in Japan*

Morgan Waters¹

Abstract: Women's rights in Japan have been fairly stagnant for decades even though the nation has continued to progress technologically and economically. In order for the country to be as prosperous as possible, it needs to advance its protections for women in general society, as well as in the job sector. By doing so Japan not only will become more progressive but also can help alleviate issues that affect the entire country—including, but not limited to, the problems associated with its large, aging population.

Keywords: Social Justice, Women's Rights, Japan

Japan is seen as one of the most economically successful, and technologically advanced countries in the world. It has the second largest economy—only behind the United States—which is highly impressive, as most of this growth occurred after the end of World War II.² However, while the country has an advanced economy and the majority of their population enjoys a high standard of living, there are certain groups within Japanese society that are not afforded the same rights as others. One population that is, arguably, the most oppressed is women. Although Japan is consistently a prosperous country as it has not had general, extreme economic hardship for the past few decades, the country needs to focus more effort into helping their most burdened citizens.

Historically, Japanese women have not always been in a deprived position within society. Multiple female emperors have ascended the throne prior to modern times, though in the present-day women are legally no longer allowed to do so.³ The 1889 Meiji Constitution exemplifies some of the prejudice that is rather engrained within Japanese politics and society, because Japanese royalty has been recently struggling to continue its lineage; therefore, even though an

^{*}This article is taken from the TJIA Roundtable series

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² Shigeki Hijino, "Japan." Encyclopædia Britannica. Encyclopædia Britannica, inc., February 25, 2021. https://www.britannica.com/place/Japan/Demographic-trends#ref23254.

³ Brooke Larson. "Where Does JAPAN Stand in Its Approach to Women Rights in 2019?," May 23, 2019. https://savvytokyo.com/where-does-japan-stand-in-its-approach-to-women-rights/.

easy solution has presented itself—that solution being the inclusion of women as heiresses those in power to make these decisions are so against the notion of women having this title that they would rather struggle to maintain a cultural standard than alter it, much like was done in ancient times. 4 This rhetoric is important to consider because of the influence that and the royal family has upon the societal standards of average, Japanese people. By continuing to allow a 19th century law to dictate how the royal family's lineage will function, a message is being sent about how conservative and traditional the view of women are within their country.

Another aspect of Japanese politics that negatively affects women, and the country overall, is the lack of protections and encouragement in place for women that are survivors of sexual assault. On record, Japan is a rather safe country for women with "1 in 15" reporting they have been sexually assaulted within their lifetime, according to surveys done by the government; however, another study found that at least 95 percent of women do not report these crimes to the authorities, likely due to the overall negative stigma that exists around reporting sexual assault.⁵ A major aspect of this specific issue has to do with Japanese culture, and how many people heavily practice a sense of silence when it comes to unspeakable or seemingly shameful acts, even if one is unable to control what has been done to them against their will. Additionally, the way in which Japanese authorities investigate the claims that are made, causes many victims to eventually discontinue pursuing their cases because the practices of victim blaming, and excessive interrogation are heavily utilized. 6 Since the government has decided not to properly address the root of the sexual assault issue—as in the people who are committing the assaults they are not only allowing these heinous behaviors to continue but are also advertising an ideology where women are not as deserving of protection and justice as others. This dichotomy then radiates throughout other aspects of Japanese culture, including the treatment of women in the workplace.

Throughout many countries in the world, women are often treated differently within the job sector, and Japan is no different. In a 2018 study, almost 70 percent of Japanese women were employed—which is a rather impressive number on paper—yet nearly half of those women quit their jobs when they started families, while 56 percent were employed only part time. 7 In fact, even if Japanese women do work while raising children, there are still societal standards that they are expected to manage on their own. Not only must they complete assignments and tasks for their jobs, but they also have to factor in time for cooking meals, cleaning, and tending to their children's other needs—without the expectation that their male partner should be helping their family as well. 8 This lack of support by society and the entities that employ these women

⁴ Brooke Larson. "Where Does JAPAN Stand in Its Approach to Women Rights in 2019?,"

⁵ Brooke Larson. "Where Does JAPAN Stand in Its Approach to Women Rights in 2019?,"

⁶ Brooke Larson. "Where Does JAPAN Stand in Its Approach to Women Rights in 2019?," ⁷ Brooke Larson. "Where Does JAPAN Stand in Its Approach to Women Rights in 2019?,"

⁸ Brooke Larson. "Where Does JAPAN Stand in Its Approach to Women Rights in 2019?,"

has had a negative impact on the Japanese economy because of the rapid aging of the majority of Japan's population.

Japan is the fastest aging country in the world and needs to find solutions rather quickly in order to ensure that their economy will survive once a large portion of their labor force is no longer able to work. However, a rather obvious solution to this problem has existed since the issue arose in mid to the late 20th century—that solution being allowing more women to work. One study estimates that if Japan were to increase its "female labor participation" numbers, it would create a significant influence in workers that will ultimately help their economy to remain more stable and provide growth in the long run. 10 In other nations that have managed to increase their female labor participation numbers, they have managed to produce the outcome that the study suggest will help save Japan's loss of labor issue. And although the inclusion of women and providing them with more supportive resources—resources such as, "neutral tax treatment of second earners, child care subsidiaries, and paid maternity leave"—is, seemingly, the most ideal solution, Japan has yet to effectively do so. 11

There has been a rather large amount of pushback by Japanese people regarding how women are treated in the workplace, and in response, the Prime Minister initiated a "Womenomics" initiative back in 2013. 12 And although certain improvements have been made regarding more parental leave and the inclusion of women in more entry-level job opportunities, there is still a noticeable lack of women in management positions across multiple types of employment sectors and in the Japanese government. 13 Again, this great lack of representation showcases to the nation that women are not as important to society as their male counterparts, and the emphasis on a woman's place in society being that of a mother or a homemaker exemplifies that their main duty within Japanese society is to appease the lives of men. This ideal is problematic for the morale of a large population of Japanese citizens, especially since the nation is struggling to fulfill certain roles and have enough qualified individuals so that their society can not only function but continue to grow into an even greater nation.

The consequences that women face in Japanese society—due to the lack of successful attempts at creating more equal opportunities and legally enforced protections—are very restricting and harmful to women and the entire nation. By not acknowledging the oppressive ideologies that many Japanese people still hold towards women populations, the government is implying that these people do not need, or do not deserve, to be protected from the ways in

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⁹ Steinberg, Chad, and Masato Nakane. "Can Women Save Japan?" *IMF Working Papers* 12, no. 248 (2012): 1–50. https://doi.org/10.5089/9781475512922.001.

¹⁰ Chad Steinberg, and Masato Nakane. "Can Women Save Japan?"

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¹² Pamela Boykoff,, and Cardiff Garcia. "6 Years After Japan Launched Its 'Womenomics' Policy Is It Working?" NPR. NPR, May 23, 2019.

¹³ Pamela Boykoff. "6 Years After Japan Launched Its 'Womenomics' Policy Is It Working?"

which employers, businesses, and regular people genuinely discriminate against women—even if these repressive practices are affecting their everyday lives.

Japan is a successful country in many regards, especially economically, though there are a lot of cultural values and norms that actively affect women in extremely negative ways. Women in this country are not safe when it comes to dealing with their sexual assaults in proper ways, they are heavily encouraged not to stray outside of traditional roles, and if they are comfortable enough to work are still expected to fulfill their wife and motherly duties largely without the help of their male spouse. In order for the country to become even more prosperous economically, they must start to address their social issues so that a large population of Japanese people are able to feel more comfortable within their county in order to best contribute to the nation's overall success. By creating actual laws that address issues specifically and in their entirety, the Japanese government will be taking concrete steps to end a lot of prejudice and discrimination that exists throughout their country. And in doing so they will be creating a lot more opportunity, not just for women, but also for their nation as a whole.

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