THE PENINSULA FOUNDATION

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Peninsula Journal of Strategy and Policy

Aim and Scope

PJSP is committed to promoting critical analysis on a wide array of themes, addressing both international and domestic issues. The journal embraces the diversity inherent in the study of strategy and policy, aiming to produce research that has a global impact and fosters a deeper understanding of the world around us. At its core, PJSP seeks to challenge conventional thinking, encourage new perspectives, and provide a space for interdisciplinary dialogue that transcends traditional boundaries. Our mission is to support research that is not only academically rigorous but also relevant to real-world policy-making. We aim to bridge the gap between theoretical inquiry and practical application, ensuring that the strategic policies we explore are well-informed, balanced, and in the best interest of society.

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About TPF

The Peninsula Foundation (TPF) is a policy research think-tank headquartered in Chennai, Tamil Nadu, India. Established with the aim of contributing to informed policy-making and fostering intellectual discourse on critical issues, TPF engages in rigorous research, analysis, and advocacy. TPF focuses on a wide range of policy areas including but not limited to economics, governance, social development, environmental sustainability, and technology. Through its research initiatives, publications, seminars, and consultations, TPF strives to generate evidence-based insights that can inform public discourse and influence policy decisions at various levels of government and society.

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Editor's Note

It is with great pleasure that I introduce the inaugural edition of the Peninsula Journal of Strategy and Policy (PJSP), the flagship peer-reviewed journal of The Peninsula Foundation (TPF). As a biannual publication, the PJSP seeks to create a robust forum for critical research and dialogue on pressing strategic and policy issues in both domestic and global governance. This journal serves as a reflection of our core values—rigorous analysis, interdisciplinary scholarship, and an unwavering focus on addressing the most pressing challenges in today's geopolitical and strategic landscapes. Through this journal, we aim to encourage robust debate and foster a deeper understanding of both domestic and global governance challenges.

In today's globalised environment, where policy decisions in one region can have cascading effects across continents, there is a critical need for nuanced, multi-dimensional perspectives. Our journal seeks to bridge these complexities, offering a space for both scholars and practitioners to engage in thoughtful dialogue and bring forward innovative approaches to national and international issues. Our goal is not merely to generate academic discourse but to provide insights that can serve as a resource for policymakers, strategists, and stakeholders involved in shaping the future. The journal reflects our belief that strategy and policy cannot be static; they must evolve in response to shifting realities. PJSP will always strive to remain a dynamic platform for examining these shifting paradigms.

Our mission with the PJSP is to offer unbiased analysis that challenges conventional thinking and goes beyond the dominant narrative. We strive to remain neutral in our approach, prioritising scientific research and critical evaluation to ensure that the strategic policies we explore and advocate are truly in the best interest of all Indians.

I extend my deepest gratitude to our contributors, reviewers, and editorial team for their dedication in bringing this journal to life. I trust that the work we publish will provide our readers with thought-provoking insights and valuable contributions to their respective fields.

Air Marshal M Matheswaran AVSM VM PhD (Retd)
Editor in Chief
President and Chairman,
The Peninsula Foundation

About the Journal

The Peninsula Journal of Strategy and Policy (PJSP) is the independent peer-reviewed flagship biannual journal of The Peninsula Foundation (TPF). The PJSP is a publisher of research articles, book reviews and commentaries and aims to serve as a trusted repository of publications and research materials on the analysis of strategy and policy in the context of domestic and global governance. By providing a forum for researchers and academicians to create and publish their original manuscripts, the journal seeks to identify and encourage scholarship that engages with significant theoretical, and empirical subjects and methods. Promoting critical and objective analysis on themes concerning both international and domestic issues including the truly interdisciplinary is at the core of PJSP. Above all the journal aims to embrace the diversity inherent in this discipline, produce scholarship that is globally impactful and foster an understanding and holistic awareness of the world around us.

Our mission is to provide unbiased research analysis that questions the conventional norms that are western centric and transcends prevailing narratives. We are committed to maintaining a neutral stance, emphasising scientific research to ensure that policies are implemented consistently. Our goal is not only to keep the people informed, but also challenge our readers to think critically and be open to new perspectives, ultimately contributing to the shaping of India's future. We believe that these principles can meaningfully contribute to the development of strategic policies that are effective, fair, and beneficial for the nation as a whole.

Our Focus Area

PJSP's focus areas include, but are **not limited to**:

- **Democracy and Governance:** Detailed study and analysis of the practice and effectiveness of democracy and governance.
- **Science, Technology and Security:** Research various aspects of science and technology developments that impact on national development and India's comprehensive security.
- **International and Transnational Affairs:** Research in international relations, geopolitics, and geo-economics that impact India, Indo-Pacific, and the world.
- **Transformational Paradigms:** Explore and identify innovative ideas, technologies, and practices in the context of transformational paradigms.

DEMOCRACY
&
GOVERNANCE

Effect of Neo-Liberal Globalisation on Women in Garment Industries: A Third World Perspective

Samyuktha

Abstract

The garment industry has significantly contributed to the economic growth of many developing countries, with women constituting a large percentage of the labour force. However, gender inequality persists in this sector, manifesting in inadequate safety standards, wage disparities, and lack of maternity benefits and proper compensation packages. Despite efforts by international organizations to promote decent working conditions, the effectiveness of these initiatives has been limited due to a lack of understanding of the gendered aspects of these issues. This research aims to shed light on the consequences of patriarchal structures within organizations in comprehending the challenges faced by women in the garment sector and the development of appropriate policies. The study assumes that women's voices and concerns are insufficiently represented in policy-making processes, necessitating a gendered perspective on the development, implementation, and monitoring of policies related to the garment industry. This understanding will enhance awareness of the working conditions of women in the garment industry and highlight the impact of global policies on the female labour force. The study examines the historical aspects that contribute to globalisation, subsequent policies, and their impact on women, particularly in the context of export-oriented garment industries.

Keywords: Female labour, Globalisation, Gender inequality

Introduction

The second five-year plan in India, implemented between 1956 and 1961, prioritised rapid industrialisation and adhered to the Mahalanobis model for the production of capital goods. This approach enabled capitalism to drive the country's development, which later merged with globalisation and revolutionised the world economy by connecting global markets. The transnational phenomenon facilitated the import of advanced technologies that are highly reliant on capital investment (Indira Hirway, 2012). Consequently, technological advancements and productivity increases were observed, accompanied by a decline in employment intensity. Unfortunately, this reduction in employment affected the often marginalized and discriminated group of women. Patriarchy was perpetuated in the organisational structure, which curtailed

women's growth and ensured their subjugation. Women in the lower strata of the industrial workforce confronted the challenge of wage disparities, while women in higher positions faced a glass ceiling, which prevented them from securing managerial roles. They also experienced the dual burden of work and household responsibilities, which negatively impacted the female labour force participation rate. In garment industries across developing countries, such as India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh, large-scale employment of women as formal and informal labourers has been observed to meet the demands of international buyers. This study, based on secondary research, aims to examine the historical aspects that contribute to globalisation, the subsequent policies, and the impact of these policies on women, particularly in the context of export-oriented garment industries, where women constitute the highest percentage of employed individuals.

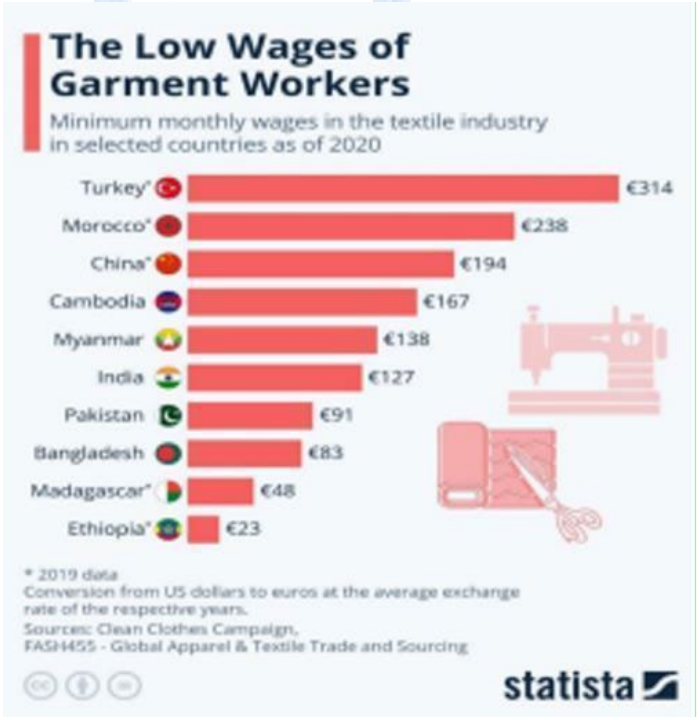
Industrialisation and women

The period following India's independence in 1947 was marked by significant industrial growth accompanied by a shift in employment from traditional agriculture. According to gender experts, the industrial labor force and employment of women were primarily based on gender. Few women were employed in factories and the support and protection they received were inferior to those of men. Policies designed to protect labour, such as the Factories Act (1948), the Minimum Wages Act (1948), and the Employees' State Insurance Act (1948), which appeared to be gender-neutral, were gender-blind. The subsequent era of globalisation, which challenged traditional market practices, also brought about changes in the perception of women's labour. As world markets opened up for exports, developing countries such as India were under pressure to keep up, and a viable solution was to employ women from the lower strata of society, mostly Dalits, to empower them. However, these women were merely a means to an end in the corporate world's culture, and governments failed to anticipate the consequences of unregulated markets and the dominance of capitalists.

As a part of the capitalist world, women were subject to both economic and emotional labour, which affected the female labor force participation rate, and the percentage of women in the informal sector became higher than that in the formal sector. However, there have been many studies on women employed in the informal sector, and time-use surveys have also been conducted in this regard. Women’s labour in the formal sector has been consistently neglected because of the common belief that they enjoy the protection of an organized system. This may hold true to some extent, but in the case of garment or textile industries, which are a focus here, women are also the most penalised according to reports by the International Labour Organisation (ILO).

Ministry of Labour and Employment, India – Statistics on Women Labour

According to the data provided by the Office of Registrar General & Census Commissioner of India in the 2011 Census, the total number of female workers in India amounts to 149.8 million, of which 121.8 and 28.0 million were from rural and urban areas, respectively. Of the total 149.8 million female workers, 35.9 million females work as cultivators and another 61.5 million as agricultural labourers. Of the remaining female workers, 8.5 million remain in households, and 43.7 million are classified as other workers. As per the Census 2011, the work participation rate for women was 25.51 per cent compared to 25.63 per cent in 2001. The female labour participation rate decreased marginally in 2011 but improved from 22.27 per cent in 1991 to 19.67 per cent in 1981. The work participation rate for women in rural areas was 30.02%, compared to 15.44 per cent in urban areas.



In the organised sector, 20.5% of the total employment was female workers in the country in March 2011. This was an increase of 0.1% from the previous year. As of March 2011, there were approximately 59.54 lakh women workers in the organised sector, both in the public and private sectors, according to the latest Employment Review by the Directorate General of Employment and Training (DGE&T). Additionally, approximately 32.14 lakh women were employed in the community, social, and personal service sectors.

Feminist Analysis of Existing Laws

Labour laws in India have thoroughly focused on the idea of promoting growth along with social justice in tandem with the efforts of labor unions. However, despite the state and the unions' consistent efforts, the laws' ability to improve womens' living and working conditions was negligible, as described in the landmark report published in 1971, "Towards Equality." It was an eye-opener to the dire circumstances in which women were surviving with patriarchy, clawing its way into not just the domestic sphere but the workplace as well. While acts like the Maternity Benefit Act of 1961 offer relief to women on some levels, there is a lack of legal awareness among female workers. This is a contributing factor for employers to take advantage of. An analysis of the allocation of Variable Dearness Allowance of Minimum Wages with effect from October 2022 has no separate mention of women's labour. The general labour classification in this regard has been Unskilled, Skilled/Clerical, Semi-Skilled and Highly skilled are the most probable categories in which women fall under unskilled due to a plethora of reasons. Despite the assumption that the New Labour Code provides relief to women's labor across the country, measures must be taken to understand its effective implementation in both public and private sector organisations.

Women in Garment Industries

The garment industries in South Asian nations such as India and Bangladesh have been significant contributors to their economies and have increased the employment ratio of women in the labour force. "India's ready-made garment industry contributes around 16 per cent to total export earnings and is the largest foreign exchange earner in the country" (WTO,2019). Post-1980 saw unprecedented growth in the export industry, and the growth chart statistics show that from $2 million in 1960-61 to $696 million in 1980-81, it then increased sharply to $2,236 million in 1990- 91 and to $4,765 million in 1999-2000. The vast wage disparity was the driving force behind the globalisation of the garment industry. Studies have shown that the hourly wage of Indian labour is a meagre Rs.8 per hour, whereas a British worker performing the same work received around Rs.420. Thus, the capitalist tendency of the upper and lower classes is synonymous with the imperialist notion of civilised and barbaric groups pushing for cheap labour and higher production of goods.

The onus of cheap labour fell on women, mainly from marginalised communities who were desperate for jobs that promised a stable source of income. The Indian state firmly believed that this was a way to empower women and ensure financial freedom. However, the challenges were masked by the rosy nature of the benefits offered by employers. The actual reasons for the employment of women, which were different from the portrayed norms, were: i) the common notion that women in the developing regions were meek beings who would barely retort against any kind of discomfort and would

succumb to the system; ii) women will not question the wage disparity because they are fed the patriarchal notion of the superiority of men; and iii) the stable source of income will not let them rise in protest despite the atrocities meted out to them.

Here, I would like to discuss a study conducted in Bangalore, Karnataka, which houses more than 800 garment industries and has the largest female workforce. The exploitative nature of women's employment in the garment industry is well documented and requires no elaboration. Briefly, the large majority of women, whether working as skilled or unskilled helpers, do not even receive the legally stipulated minimum wage. Workers are frequently required to work overtime, but because this is set against production targets, they are not paid for overtime work. Work insecurity is one of the most widely reported problems, as employers frequently terminate a woman's service just before the completion of five years to avoid payment of gratuity. Harsh production targets, sexual and verbal abuse, lack of maternity and other leave, lack of accident insurance, and absence of toilets and creche facilities are some of the commonly stated and widely known features of female employment in garment manufacturing. This misery underpins the production of high-fashion garments sold in chic stores in the first world and worn by middle- and upper-class women who pay for a single dress at a price that exceeds several times the monthly income of a woman who produces it.

Challenges to women in the garment labour force due to Globalisation

The post-1991 era in India saw a massive difference in the treatment of women as the labour force in industries, especially the textile sector. Female workers typically migrate from rural areas to work in the garment industry to meet financial needs. Women's' labour in the garment industry mostly comes from households below the poverty line. Therefore, the proposition to empower women through employment in these capitalist industries was thought to pave the way for the emancipation of this vulnerable group. However, with the fashion industry boom and the convergence of interests among global consumers, there is still a constant need to consistently satiate consumer behaviour. The mass production of goods has become inevitable. This had adverse effects in that it created a hostile working environment, and reports suggest that it took a toll on womens' physical and mental health.

i) Impact on physical well-being: The research study "Sewing shirts with injured fingers and tears: An exploration of the experiences of female garment workers' health problems in Bangladesh revealed that physical health issues included headaches, eye pain, musculoskeletal discomfort, and exhaustion. Moreover, it was found that garment work is so physically demanding that women cannot continue working

for more than a decade. These findings are in line with other studies that have revealed that the majority of female workers leave factory work before reaching the age of 40 years. Workers reported that getting sick and injured was common. Physicians believe that stressful conditions in factories prevent women from working for an extended period. The study also highlighted that due to male dominance in supervisory roles, it is challenging for women to voice their concerns, particularly those related to menstrual health. Furthermore, this gendered division of labor extends to their domestic life, where husbands expect them to fulfil their household duties despite working long, physically demanding hours.

ii) Impact on mental well-being: The article "Mental Health Status of Female Workers in Private Apparel Manufacturing Industry in Bangalore City, Karnataka, India" brings to light the significance of mental health awareness and the need for a safe working environment for women in the garment factories. Depression and other mental health problems have become global health concerns, with socially disadvantaged individuals being more susceptible to these issues. In low- and middle-income countries, scarce human resources, limited access to mental health services, and high costs pose critical challenges. Separation from their children is a significant issue for these women, most of whom have left their children in their home villages due to a lack of time to care for them due to long work hours and financial constraints in providing for their children's living expenses in the city. They work tirelessly from morning until night and during weekends, with no one at home to look after their children. They only return home a few times a year, and the distance to their villages can be up to ten hours of travel time. Consequently, they have no choice but to leave their children in their villages to live with their grandparents. Nevertheless, reducing long working hours is not an option for them, as they need to earn money to support impoverished families.

To promote the physical and mental well-being of female workers in the garment industry, it is essential to devise health interventions that cater to their unique needs. These workers play a crucial role in the nation's economic growth, and their health needs should therefore be addressed with utmost importance.

Way Forward

Although women are at a disadvantage, their participation in decision making is crucial. A developmental perspective based on male priorities and the male perspective of women's role in a patriarchal society like ours cannot alleviate the plight of women, who are already constrained by traditional gender role expectations. Stakeholder theory posits that firms are responsible for the consequences of their actions, and, based on this premise, women are considered normative stakeholders to whom the industry owes a moral obligation of stakeholder fairness.

Furthermore, emphasis should be placed on including women in the policymaking process to increase the accountability of the formulated policies. Illiteracy is a global issue that contributes to the deterioration of women's status and feminization of poverty. Lack of knowledge about their political, social, and economic rights leads to the exploitation of women and hinders their ability to form pressure groups. The relationship between grassroots women and activists should be utilized to build awareness and sensitize both men and women. Engaging men sensitive to women's issues is beneficial. It would be advantageous for women's causes if their struggle is perceived as a fight for human rights, rather than solely as a gender-based movement.

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THE PENINSULA FOUNDATION

The Philippines' History Curriculum: Origins and Repercussions

Niyanthri Arun

Abstract

The Philippines, a twice-colonised nation, has an educational system heavily influenced by its former colonisers, Spain and the United States. Spanish occupation introduced compulsory elementary education, albeit with restrictions based on social class and gender, and established Spanish as the language of the elite. In contrast, American occupation revolutionised the education system by creating a free public school system with English as the medium of instruction. This shift led to the propagation of American ideals and subversion of separatist tendencies. The study of history, despite its importance in understanding a nation's culture and colonial struggles, is often not prioritised in the education system of the Philippines. The country's linguistic diversity, with an estimated 170 distinct languages, has been impacted by the Latinisation of indigenous scripts during Spanish occupation and the widespread use of English in schools during the American period. The Philippines' education system continues to evolve owing to its dynamic demographic and political atmosphere, with the efficacy of the system often called into question due to administrative oversight, infrastructural deficiencies, and pervasive corruption. Reforming the current flaws requires a fundamental understanding of the underlying structure of the system and the importance of proper historical education in the development of a nation.

Key words: Education, Philippines, colonialism

Background

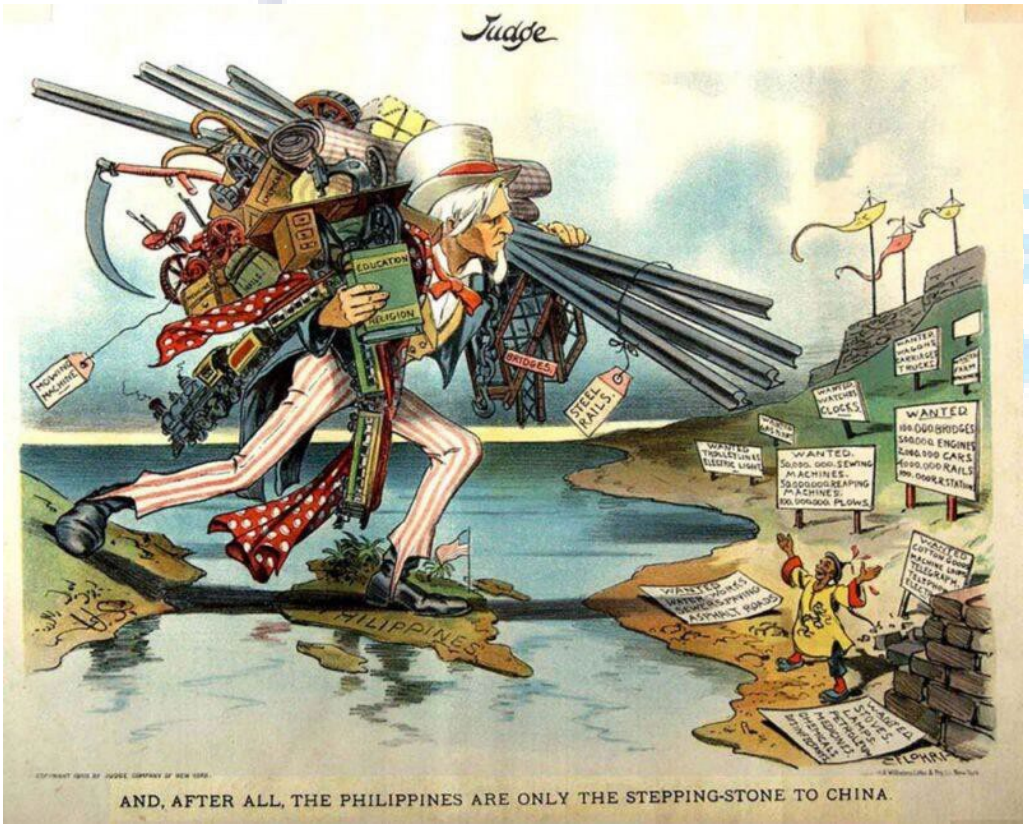
The Philippines, a twice-colonized archipelago that achieved its complete independence in 1946, is a member of the ASEAN and an essential player in the geopolitics of the Southeast Asia region. Its status is owed mainly to its rapidly growing economy, of which the services industry is the most significant contributor, comprising 61% of its Gross Domestic Product (GDP) (Bajpai, 2022). Services refer to various products – for example, business outsourcing, tourism, and the export of skilled workers, healthcare workers, and labourers in other industries. In recent years, a growing demand for qualified professionals has grown as the economy has grown, thus necessitating more robust educational systems (Bajpai, 2022). Although the Philippines has a high literacy rate,

hovering at around 97%, the efficacy of its educational system is often called into question ("Literacy Rate and Educational Attainment", 2020). Administration oversight, infrastructural deficiencies, and pervasive corruption in the government that seeps into the entities responsible for educational reform are significant issues that legitimize these doubts (Palatino, 2023). However, reforming the current flaws in the system requires an understanding of the basic underlying structure of the country's educational system as it is today. This fundamental understanding can help clarify specific political trends in the status quo and highlight the importance of proper historical education in developing a nation. Despite its ubiquity in nearly every curriculum, the study of history as a crucial part of the education system is often not prioritized, leading to an underdeveloped understanding of the society's culture and previous struggles with colonial exploitation. Though it is present in the Philippines' education today, it continues to change because of its historically dynamic demographic and political atmosphere.

Origins of the Education System

To begin with, the educational system, and especially the modes of linguistic and history education in the country, have been heavily influenced by the major powers that occupied it – namely, the Spanish Empire and the United States. The impact of these periods of colonization can be seen most significantly in the historical education and consciousness of the general population, as well as the propagation of the English language. The Philippines possesses a great deal of linguistic diversity, especially among indigenous groups – an estimated 170 distinct languages in the country today (Postan, 2020). However, even in pre-colonial times – typically considered by historians to be the years before 1521 – the most common language in the country was Old Tagalog, and other indigenous languages are still spoken today (Stevens, 1999). Records suggest that the Spanish did not forcefully erase indigenous languages spoken in the country. However, they did conduct business and educational institutions in Spanish, leading to the language being used almost exclusively amongst the upper classes – the colonizers, business people in the country, and other influential figures in the empire. Though there were attempts to conduct education in Castilian Spanish, priests and friars responsible for teaching the locals preferred to do so in local languages as it was a more effective form of proselytization. This cemented the reputation of Spanish as a language for the

elite, as the language was almost exclusively limited to those chosen to attend prestigious institutions or government missions that operated entirely in Spanish (Gonzales, 2017). In terms of popularising education to expose a broader audience to Christianity, the Spanish also established a compulsory elementary education system. However, restrictions existed based on social class and gender (Musa & Ziatdinov, 2012). Because of this, although the influence of Spanish on local languages can be seen through the borrowing of certain words, indigenous and regional languages were not supplanted to a large extent, though their scripts were Latinised in some instances to make matters more convenient for the Spanish (Gonzales, 2017). However, the introduction of Catholicism to a large segment of the population and a more organized educational system are aspects of Spanish rule that remain in Philippine society today, as do the negative ramifications of the social stratification that was a significant element of its occupation (Herrera, 2015).



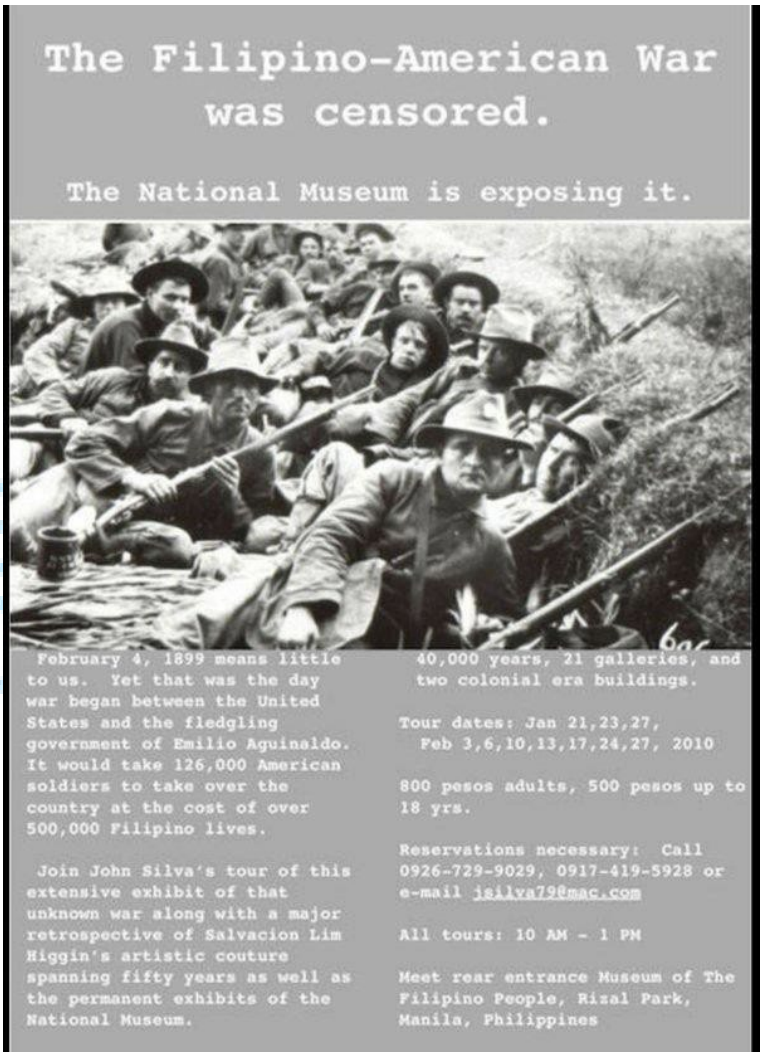
Uncle Sam, loaded with implements of modern civilization, uses the Philippines as a stepping-stone to get across the Pacific to China (represented by a small man with open arms), who excitedly awaits Sam's arrival. With the expansionist policy gaining greater traction, the possibility for more imperialistic missions (including to conflict-ridden China) seemed strong. The cartoon might be arguing that such endeavours are worthwhile, bringing education, technological, and other civilizing tools to a desperate people. On the other hand, it could be read as sarcastically commenting on America's new propensity to "step" on others. "AND, AFTER ALL, THE PHILIPPINES ARE ONLY THE STEPPING-STONE TO CHINA," in Judge Magazine, 1900 or 1902. Wikimedia.

In contrast, the American occupation following Spain's defeat in the Spanish-American War in 1898 significantly changed the country's linguistic patterns and revolutionized the education system. Upon arriving in the country, the Americans decided to create a public school system in the country, where every student could study for free. However, the medium of instruction was in English, given that they brought teachers from the United States (Casambre, 1982). This differed from the Spanish system in that social class and gender did not influence students' access to education to the same extent. Furthermore, the Americans brought their own material to the country due to a lack of school textbooks. As the number of schools in the country and the pedagogical influence of American teachers increased, the perception of the Americans' role as colonizers

ultimately changed. Education became a tool to exert cultural influence, leading to the propagation of American ideals like capitalism, in addition to subverting separatist tendencies that were cropping up in the country as one colonizer was replaced by another. It also led to the suppression of knowledge concerning the US' exploitation of the nation. Ultimately, the colonizers' influence on the linguistic and educational landscape of the nation manifests itself in the general population's understanding of their country's history.

The Current History Curriculum

The social studies curriculum in the Philippines, called Araling Panlipunan (AP), is an interdisciplinary course that combines topics of economics and governance with history, primarily post-colonial history ("K to 12 Gabay Pangkurikulum", 2016). The topic of World War II takes up nearly 50% of the course, while other aspects of indigenous and pre-colonial history are included to a limited extent (Candelaria, 2021). This act of prioritization is a colonial holdover. Although the Philippines indubitably played a crucial role in the Pacific Theatre during WW II, its massive presence in the AP course signals the nation's continued alliance with the US and reinforces a mentality amongst the general public that favours it. This bias occurs as a singular American perspective is promoted by the course, wherein the actions of other countries against the Philippines are highlighted. At the same time, the exploitation of the Philippines by the Spanish and Americans is not as widely discussed. For example, although the atrocities committed by the Japanese during World War II are taught extensively as part of the curriculum, the American actions during the Philippine-American War (1899-1902), during which the Americans burned and pillaged entire villages, are not emphasized (Clem, 2016). Furthermore, it leads to the sidelining of historical events that have created the political situation in the country today, such as the issue of the current president being related to the former dictator, Ferdinand Marcos.



As the course is conducted chronologically, discussions of topics such as the Marcos Regime are left up to teachers' discretion due to the subject's controversial nature, given that the dictator's son is the current president (Santos, 2022). This means that as much or as little time can be spent on it is as decided. Because of the American influence, even citizens who are taught about the atrocities that occurred during the dictatorship are not informed of the support provided to the Marcos dictatorship by the US government. During his presidency, which lasted from 1965 to 1986, the Philippines received significant economic aid from the US government in exchange for the continuation of its military presence in the country, which proved helpful to the US during the Vietnam War as it was able to utilize its bases in Subic Bay and Clark air base(Hawes, 1986). As a result of the necessity of these bases, a 1979 amendment to the 1947 Military Bases Agreement was signed, which increased the US' fiscal contributions to security assistance. To further support this military objective, the Carter and Reagan administrations showed their diplomatic support to Marcos by visiting the Philippines and inviting him to Washington.

Additionally, when Marcos was ousted from power in 1986 by the People Power Revolution, he spent his exile in 'Hawaii', in the US (Southerl, 1986). Therefore, while the US is credited for introducing democratic principles to the country through its program for expanding education while occupying the archipelago, it also played a significant role in supporting a despotic government that is not as widely acknowledged. Because of this, the Filipino perception of and relationship with the US has been heavily influenced by a lack of awareness amongst the general public about its involvement in a massively corrupt administration.

Significant Developments

Despite the importance of a robust historical education in improving the public's awareness of their own culture and geopolitical relationships, history as a subject has been transformed into a political tool in the Philippines, twisted when it can be useful and neglected when it does not support an agenda. Various bills passed in the House of Representatives (the lower house of parliament in the Philippines, below the Senate), as well as decisions taken by the Department of Education, have diminished the significance of history in the overall school curriculum and reinforced an American perspective in the historical content that continues to be

taught. Department of Education Order 20, signed in 2014, removed Philippines History as a separate subject in high school (Ignacio, 2019). The argument for this decision was that Philippines History would be integrated within the broader AP social studies curriculum under different units, such as the Southeast Asian political landscape. However, educators opposing the abolition of Philippine History as a separate subject state that due to fewer contact hours being allocated for AP in total compared to English, maths, and science, it is unlikely that Philippine history can be discussed in adequate depth, considering the other social science topics mandated by the AP curriculum. In addition, House Bill 9850, which was passed in 2021, requires that no less than 50% of the subject of Philippine history centres around World War II (Candelaria, 2021). The bill's primary concerns mention that it prioritizes the war over other formative conflicts in the nation's history, such as the Philippine Revolution against Spain or the Philippine-American War. Furthermore, it requires modifying or reducing discussions surrounding other vital events in the Philippines, such as agrarian reforms and more recent developments like the conflict in Mindanao.

Both of these policies face significant opposition. For example, a Change.org petition demanding the return of the subject of Philippine history in high schools has garnered tens of thousands of signatures. At the same time, numerous historical experts and teachers have spoken against HB 9850 (Ignacio, 2018). Despite this resistance from academics and teaching professionals, it is unlikely that history will be prioritized unless the general public also learns to inform itself. Around 73% of the total population (approximately 85.16 million people) have access to the internet, of which over 90% are on social media (Kemp, 2023). Because of the large working population in the country, social media companies like Facebook have set up offices there. Programs that offered data-free usage in 2013 have made the Philippines a huge market for Facebook, and many Filipinos trust the news they find on the website more than some mainstream media sources (Quitzon, 2021). Even though internet access is relatively widespread, signifying that information is readily available to the average Filipino, social media, especially Facebook, often functions as a fertile breeding ground for misinformation.

Repercussions of the History Curriculum

In recent years, misinformation has become an important political tool to propagate ignorance and manipulate historical and current events to promote specific agendas. The most relevant example was the mass historical revisionism campaign leading to the 2022 general elections (Quitzon, 2021). Given that Bongbong Marcos, Ferdinand Marcos' son, was

running for president alongside vice presidential candidate Sara Duterte (former president Rodrigo Duterte's daughter), the campaign focused on changing the public perception of both families and their period of rule. Preceding the elections, social media trolls and supporters of the campaign spread videos, doctored images, and fake news that minimized the atrocities and scale of theft that occurred throughout the Marcos regime and the Duterte administration, instead highlighting and exaggerating the perceived benefits they brought to the country. The prioritization of these political agendas is reflected in the history curriculum, as it does not sufficiently cover critical areas of Philippine history that have directly led to the political situation of today and the pre-colonial era that is an inseparable part of Filipino culture.

Recommended Policy Measures

However, another by-product of this absence of consciousness is that the general public is desensitized to poor governance and neocolonialism as their education systems and news sources constantly feed them biased and inaccurate information about the history of their own country and its relationship to others. When dictators are portrayed as good rulers and previous colonizers are portrayed as historical allies, it results in a population that unknowingly votes against its interests as they are unaware of the past events that have shaped the current political atmosphere and the various deficiencies in the system. Considering that these political campaigns rely on the general public not having a solid understanding of historical events, especially those about the martial law era, it is unlikely that politicians will take meaningful steps to improve historical education in the country since they benefit from citizens lacking awareness. As such, the onus must, unfortunately, be placed on the general public to educate themselves on good citizenship and exercise their right to vote at the grassroots level responsibly so that future local politicians and members of parliament may at least be able to encourage the study of history in the government. Additionally, teaching students how to use the internet to conduct reliable research is imperative to reduce misinformation so they can counter the misinformation they find online.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the Philippine education system has been shaped by the periods of colonization the country has experienced. This has led to a history curriculum favouring the American perspective and thus disadvantages crucial elements of local history. The consequences of the lack of awareness this has caused in the general public are manifold: it has made them more susceptible to misinformation and historical revisionism. It has worked to the advantage of politicians who take advantage of it. Nevertheless, the Philippines can still reverse this trend by utilizing its high literacy rates and social media presence to promote reliable historical education. They can also push for better historical education policies through petitions and appeals to local government agencies and Senate committees related to education – such as the National Commission for Culture and the Arts (NCCA), the Committee on Basic Education and Culture, and the Committee on Education, Arts and Culture – amongst others (Ignacio, 2018). Overall, there are many deficiencies in the current history education

system in the Philippines, but they still coexist with the potential for change. Citizens have the power to advocate and must continue using it to usher forth a more well-informed society and nation.

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The Distress Migration: A case study of KBK districts in Odisha

Anjana Sreelakshmi

ABSTRACT

Among the different forms of migration, distressed migrants remain the most impoverished and unrecognised. These migrants form the lowest strata of the society; disadvantaged by caste, poverty and structural inequalities. In Odisha, the underdeveloped region of KBK is one among the main sources of distressed migrants. They move to cities in search of employment and better wages, while in cities they are even more disadvantaged due to social, economic and linguistic barriers. Administrative and political apathy over their issues has only enhanced their distress.

The former districts of Koraput, Balangir and Kalahandi, also known as KBK districts, were reorganised into 8 districts of Koraput, Malkangiri, Nabarangpur, Rayagada, Balangir, Subarnapur, Kalahandi and Nuapada in 1992. These highland districts highly rich in mineral resources, flora and fauna remain as one of the most backward regions in Odisha districts form the South-West part of Odisha comprising the great Deccan Plateau and the Eastern Ghats. These highland districts highly rich in mineral resources, flora and fauna remain as one of the most backward regions in Odisha.
The analysis is carried out through a review of published articles, government reports, e-books and newspaper reports.

Key words: Distress Migration, Orissa, Wages

The former districts of Koraput, Balangir and Kalahandi, also known as KBK districts, were reorganised into 8 districts of Koraput, Malkangiri, Nabarangpur, Rayagada, Balangir, Subarnapur, Kalahandi and Nuapada in 1992. These districts form the South-West part of Odisha comprising the great Deccan Plateau and the Eastern Ghats. These highland districts highly rich in mineral resources, flora and fauna remain as one of the most backward regions in Odisha

Among the different forms of migration, distressed migrants remain the most impoverished and unrecognised. These migrants form the lowest strata of the society; disadvantaged by caste, poverty and structural inequalities. In Odisha, the underdeveloped region of KBK is one among the main sources of distressed migrants. They move to cities in search of employment and better wages, while in cities they are even more disadvantaged due to social, economic and linguistic barriers. Administrative and political apathy over their issues has only enhanced their distress. This paper attempts to address three questions:

1. What are the characteristics of distressed migrants in KBK district, Odisha?
2. What are the existing policies of the state to curb this form of migration?
3. What form of government intervention is required to address this distress?

   The analysis is carried out through a review of published articles, government reports, e-books and newspaper reports.

Defining distress migration

Migration is a multifaceted concept driven by diverse factors. Migration can be internal or international, voluntary or involuntary, temporary or permanent. Depending on the pattern and choice of migration, each migratory trend could be characterised into different forms. Distress migration is one such form of migration.

Involuntary migration is often associated with displacement out of conflict, environmental distress, climatic change etc. That is any sudden threat or event forces people to migrate. However, involuntary migration may also arise out of socio-economic factors such as poverty, food insecurity, lack of employment opportunities, unequal distribution of resources etc. This component of involuntary migration is addressed by the concept of distress migration (Avis, 2017).

To understand distressed rural-urban migration in India, the broad definition used by Mander and Sahgal (2010) in their analysis of rural-urban migration in Delhi can be employed. They have discussed distress migration as:

"Such movement from one's usual place of residence which is undertaken in conditions where the individual and/or the family perceive that there are no options open to them to survive with dignity, except to migrate. Such distress is usually associated with extreme paucity of alternate economic options, and natural calamities such as floods and drought. But there may also be acute forms of social distress which also spur migration, such fear of violence and discrimination which is embedded in patriarchy, caste discrimination, and ethnic and religious communal violence" (Mander and Sahgal, 2010)

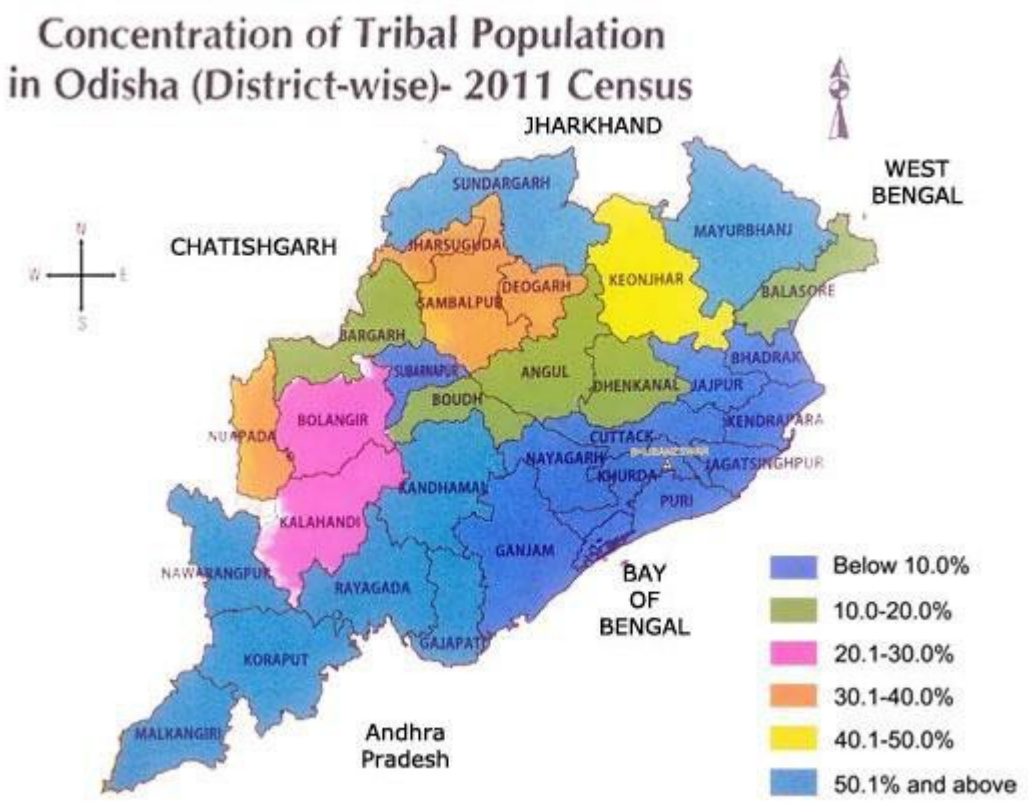
In brief, the definition states that distress migration is caused by an array of issues. Environmental disasters, economic deprivation, gender or social oppression, lack of alternate employment opportunities and inability to survive with dignity are mentioned as the main drivers of distress migration (Avis, 2017).

Thus, distress migration is a form of temporary migration driven by environmental and socio-economic factors and not based on an informed or voluntary choice.

Profile of KBK districts

The former districts of Koraput, Balangir and Kalahandi, also known as the KBK districts, were reorganised into 8 districts of Koraput, Malkangiri, Nabarangpur, Rayagada, Balangir, Subarnapur, Kalahandi and Nuapada in 1992. These districts form the South-West part of Odisha comprising the great Deccan Plateau and the Eastern Ghats. These highland districts highly rich in mineral resources, flora and fauna remain as one of the most backward regions in Odisha. The region is termed backward on account of rural backwardness, high poverty rates, low literacy rates, underdeveloped agriculture and poor development of infrastructure and transportation

(Directorate of Economics and Statistics, 2021).



The districts are home to primitive tribal communities such as Gonds, Koyas, Kotias etc. dependent on forest produce and subsistence agriculture for a living. KBK region registered a workforce participation rate of 48.06 % in the 2011 census. There was a significant occupation change noticed from the 2011 census. The region witnessed a fall in cultivators from 33% in 2001 to 26.7% in 2011. However, the fall in cultivators was compensated with an increase in agricultural labourers from 44.24 % in 2001 to 48.87% in 2011. Employment in household industries also witnessed a downfall between the period of 2001 to 2011 (Sethy, 2020).

The rise in agricultural labourers has a negative impact on the communities. As agriculture is underdeveloped owing to the arid nature of the region, crop failure, extreme calamities, low net irrigated area and falling government expenditure, these workers are pushed into abject poverty. In search of alternate employment options, these workers migrate to other areas of employment in rural or urban pockets. Such a form of seasonal migration during the lean period in agriculture is a predominant phenomenon in these districts. Their dependence on non-timber forest produce is hindered by the rapid deterioration and deforestation of forests for development projects and mining.

Characteristics of distressed migrants in KBK region

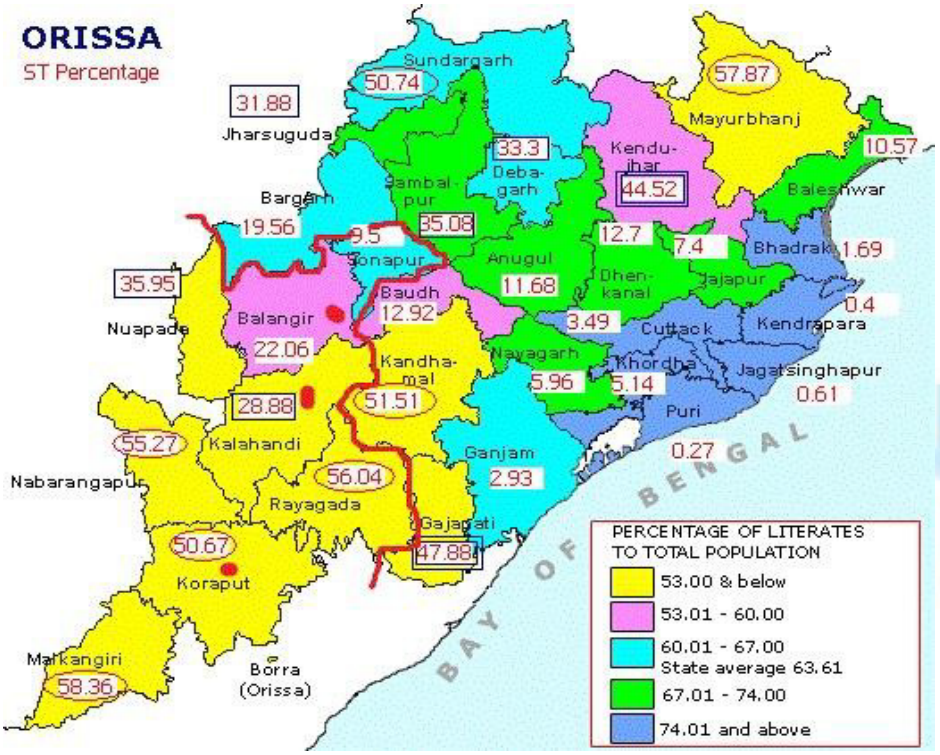
1. Who Are These Distressed Migrants?

In the KBK region, distress migration has been a popular coping strategy during lean periods of agriculture. And this strategy is majorly adapted by disadvantaged and marginalised sections of the region. They are disadvantaged by caste, chronic poverty, landlessness, low levels of literacy and skills, increased dependence on forest and

agriculture and debt-ridden (Meher, 2017; Mishra D.K., 2011; Tripathy, 2015, 2021).

2. Why Do They Migrate

Distressed migration in the region is induced by many interlinked factors. One such factor is that the region is highly under-developed in terms of social and economic infrastructure. Such under-development puts the communities at a disadvantage with low levels of literacy and skills. Their dependence on agriculture and forest produce for livelihood rises. However, agriculture is under-developed and forests are subjected to high levels of deforestation. With low levels of income, crop failure and non-availability of alternate employment opportunities, the communities are subjected to absolute levels of poverty, food and employment insecurities (Kujur, 2019).



Landlessness is also identified as one significant push factor. As the region is highly dominated by tribal communities, they are more attached to and dependent on the forest cover. Globalisation and industrialisation resulted in deforestation and encroachment of farmlands for industrial and mining purposes. Eventually, a major proportion of land remains with a smaller group of wealthy people (Mishra D.K., 2011). Relocation and involuntary displacement also result in the loss of their livelihood that is dependent on the local environment (Jaysawal & Saha, 2016).

With falling income, people approach local moneylenders to meet their basic sustenance needs. With low incomes from agriculture and forest produce, families approach these informal creditors to meet emergency needs like marriage, birth and death rituals or medical treatment as well as to meet basic consumption needs with the expectation of cash flow from labour contractors during the lean season. Moneylenders exploit them by charging higher interest rates. Thus, the non-availability of formal credit facilities pushes them into a debt trap and further to adopt migration (KARMI, 2014; Mishra D.K., 2016).

The region is also subject to extreme calamities and drought. Small and marginal farmers, poor in income

and land, choose to migrate as they are unable to cope with the regular droughts and climate change. A study on historical analysis of the effect of climate on migration in Western Odisha mentions that the migratory trend saw a rise after the mega drought in 1965. Up until then, large-scale migration from the region was not a phenomenon (Panda, 2017).

3. Channel of Migration

Sardars provide an advance amount and in exchange, the debtor or any family member agrees to work for them for a stipulated period, usually six months. Hence, there exists a form of debt bondage. Large-scale family migration through this system is seen in the KBK region. The major stream of such bonded labour migration is witnessed towards brick kilns in Andhra Pradesh

In the region, seasonal migration occurs through the channels of agents, locally known as Sardars, on a contractual basis. This form of migration is known as Dadan labour migration. The poor migrant labourers are known as Dadan and they are recruited by Sardars, who are usually local people who are familiar with residents in the region (KARMI, 2014). During the period of Nukhai, they go around the villages and contact prospective labourers. These Sardars are the intermediary between the employer and the migrant labourer. Sardars provide an advance amount and in exchange, the debtor or any family member agrees to work for them for a stipulated period, usually six months. Hence, there exists a form of debt bondage. Large-scale family migration through this system is seen in the KBK region. The major stream of such bonded labour migration is witnessed towards brick kilns in Andhra Pradesh. They are also a major source of labour in the areas of construction, handlooms and other forms of informal sector work across South India (Daniels, 2014). The problems they face in the destination are manifold. They are subjected to poor working conditions, poor housing and sanitation facilities and limited access to education and health facilities. They are recognised as cheap labour with limited bargaining power owing to their social, cultural and linguistic exclusion in the destination state. Upon entering the contract their freedom to move and freedom to express is denied (Acharya, 2020).

4. Pull Factors to Migrate

The hope of availability of better job opportunities and wages is the main pull factor. However, upon the analysis of the nature of migration, push factors have a higher weightage in inducing such distress migration. Migration to brick kilns and other informal sectors from the KBK region can be termed as distress migration as in this case, distress is caused mainly by socioeconomic factors. It is not an informed or voluntary choice. Debt migration remains the only coping strategy that they could adopt.

Government intervention to curb such distress

1. Policies Addressing Debt-Bondage Migration:

The first attempt of the state government to address Dadan migration or debt migration is the enactment of the Dadan Labour (Control and Regulation) Act (ORLA) in 1975. The act had provisions for the registration of labourers and agents, ensuring compliance of minimum wages and favourable working conditions and appointing inspection officers and dispute redressal committees (Daniels, 2014). However, the act remained on paper and no evidence of enactment was published until it was repealed in 1979 upon the enactment of the Interstate Migrant Workmen (Regulation of Employment and Conditions of Service) Act, 1979 (Nanda, 2017). The ISMW act has been criticised to be inadequate and failing to regulate and facilitate safe migration. According to the act, only those interstate migrant workmen who are recruited by licensed agents come under the ambit of the act. However, most agents involved in Dadan migration are not licensed and hence, these workers cannot avail of any of the provisions of the act (Singh, 2020). Though registration of labour contractors is mandatory in the origin state, there is no information about the names of these contractors and hence, further monitoring of the migration process is avoided (NCABL, 2016). Lack of adequate enforcement, under-staffing and poor infrastructure are identified as the reasons for poor implementation of the act in the state (Daniels, 2014).

A positive attempt against distress migration was the Memorandum of Undertaking (MoU) initiated between the labour department of Odisha and Andhra Pradesh to ensure labour welfare measures of migrant workers in Brick Kilns. After the MoU, the state of undivided Andhra Pradesh took up various progressive measures in education, health, housing and PDS for migrant workers in Brick Kilns. ILO necessitated the need for states to enter into inter-state MoUs to effectively address the bonded labour migration. However, no further MoU was signed with other states like Tamil Nadu, Chhattisgarh etc. which are also among the major host states for migrants from the region (NCABL, 2016).

The Bonded Labour System (Abolition) Act enacted in 1976 governs the provisions for identification, rescue and rehabilitation of bonded labourers across the country. The act has its loopholes in implementation. There is no information on whether vigilance committees have been set up in every district or whether the surveys have been periodically conducted or to what extent the act has been functioning in the state (Post News Network, 2019). The centrally sponsored scheme for Rehabilitation of Bonded Labour also has its setbacks. There have been reported cases of delay and denial of financial aid by district officials (Mishra .S., 2016). In 2016, with restructuring and revamping of the Rehabilitation scheme, rescued workers could only avail the full amount of financial aid with the prosecution of the accused employers. With no database on the employer, the rates of prosecution have been low and the rescued bonded labour do not receive their funds (NACBL, 2016)

2. Ensuring Accessibility of Health Facilities in Destination

The Rashtriya Swasthya Bima Yojana or RSBY launched by the central government in 2008 provides health insurance to BPL families. The scheme incorporates provisions to split smart cards so those migrant workers could avail health insurance in destination states. After signing of the MoU between Andhra Pradesh and Odisha, the two states took steps to spreading awareness among the migrant workers about how to use the smart cards (Inter-State Migrant Workman Act (ISMW), Labour Directorate, n.d.)

3. Ensuring Education of Migrant Workers Children

The state of Odisha has established seasonal hostels to ensure the education of children of migrant workers. The children are enrolled in seasonal hostels during October-June, that is until their parents return home (Odisha Primary Education Programme Authority, n.d.). The state has ensured the education of migrant children at their destination state by sending Odiya textbooks and Odiya teachers to residential schools in Andhra Pradesh (Inter-State Migrant Workman Act (ISMW), Labour Directorate, n.d.).

4. Alternate Employment Opportunities: MGNREGA

Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) was introduced in 2006 to provide guaranteed employment to rural poor with the objective of uplifting them from poverty and restricting distress migration. A study analysing the performance of MGNREGA through secondary sources of data suggests that based on physical criteria of 100 Days of Wage Employment, Person-days generated, ST and Women person-days and financial performance in terms of total expenditure, total wages, average cost and average wage rate per day person, the performance of MGNREGA in KBK districts is better compared to Non- KBK districts. But the region is lagging in rural employability criteria based on average days of employment provided per household and job cards issued (Sahoo et al., 2018). Labour in the region is not interested to work under MGNREGA due to its dismal implementation in the state. Workers complain about the delay in receiving payments and instances of the creation of non-existent workers' names among MGNREGA's beneficiaries (KARMI, 2014). Uncertain and low wages make these labourers favour migration to Brick Kilns in hope of better wages (Deep, 2018).

5. Development Policies in KBK Region

The KBK region has a high incidence of poverty owing to regional disparities in development and social exclusion based on caste. The main initiatives implemented by the state government for the upliftment of the KBK region are the Special Area Development Programme, Revised Long Term Action Plan (RLTAP), Biju KBK Plan, Backward Regions Grants Fund, Gopabandhu Gramin Yojana (GGY), Special Central Assistance (SCA) for tribal sub-plan (TSP) areas, Western Odisha Development Council (WODC) and Grants under Article

275(1) of the Constitution. Development projects to reduce poverty and regional disparities are obstructed by economic, social and institutional factors (Mishra, 2020).

The state of Odisha has done positive interventions in the education of migrant children and health facilities of the migrant population. However, the distress migration is still prevalent owing to the social and economic exclusion and debt bondage situations in the region. Land grabbing in the name of development left the tribal communities poor and in distress. Structural inequalities induced by caste discrimination are enhanced with such landlessness.

Policy Recommendations

The state of Odisha has done positive interventions in the education of migrant children and health facilities of the migrant population. However, the distress migration is still prevalent owing to the social and economic exclusion and debt bondage situations in the region. Several initiatives and schemes have been enacted to address distress migration; however, their failure in reducing distress can be linked to dismal governance, poor implementation and misappropriation of schemes.

The state must ensure migration to be safe and a viable coping strategy. From this study it is suggested the state of Odisha follow a multipronged approach to address the distress.

Origin state (Odisha) interventions

- Short Term Interventions:

1. The system of debt bondage should be completely abolished by the proper implementation of legislation. Different loopholes in implementation such as the delay in the release of funds, prosecution of accused and identification and registration of middlemen should be addressed. Apart from the financial aid, the state should intervene in providing a comprehensive livelihood plan for the rescued labourers. Abolishing the bonded labour system is essential to reduce distress and make migration safe.
2. Informal sources of credit should be eliminated and formal credit and microfinance facilities should be made available. Such facilities would reduce the exploitation and prevent the creation of absurd debt. Formal credit provides opportunities for small and marginal farmers to indulge in productive investments. This enables them to cope with extreme climatic changes.

3. Land grabbing in the name of development left the tribal communities poor and in distress. Structural inequalities induced by caste discrimination are enhanced with such landlessness. The provision of land ownership enables the communities to enjoy land-based benefits which further supports them to sustain their livelihood. Ownership of land also provides the indigenous community with a sense of social and economic significance.

- Long term interventions

1. The state should engage in enhancing the skills of the people in the region. Vocational skill training and development schemes can be introduced. This could expand the opportunities available for employment and distribute labour across all the economic sectors.
2. Rural development should be given higher priority. The state of Odisha has already initiated many schemes for the development of the KBK region. However, the state should study the economic and social factors that stagnate the process of development in the region. Chronic poverty, poor infrastructural and rural connectivity and dismal education and health facilities are some of the important areas that require attention.

Host state intervention

1. The host state needs to create a database of migrants entering their state. A statistically significant database on migrants solves a huge array of issues faced by the migrant in the destination state. A comprehensive database helps in identifying and recognising migrants. It also allows for understanding the different characteristics of migrants and the sectors in which they are employed. This would be beneficial for monitoring and ensuring safe and favourable working conditions. A database also helps in ensuring the availability and accessibility of social security and entitlements in host states.

2. Migrant labour is as important to the destination state as it is to the origin state. Both origin and host state should cooperate towards making migration a viable livelihood strategy.

Another important area where both the origin and host state should intervene together is creating awareness among workers about the existing provisions and rights available to them. Access to the same should be made easy.

Conclusion

The highly backward districts of the KBK region remain a major source of distressed migrants. Years of state initiative in reducing distress have had negligible impact. The area remains underdeveloped and migration is the only viable choice of employment. Migration can only be a viable coping strategy for seasonal migrants when the channel of migration is made legal and safe. The major drawback in any initiative attempted to resolve distress is

the poor implementation. Administrative apathy, corruption and misappropriation of schemes have stagnated the progress of every initiative.

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INTERNATIONAL & TRANSNATIONAL AFFAIRS

Understanding the Syrian Civil War through Galtung's Conflict Theory

Rupal Anand

Abstract

Johan Galtung's conflict theory provides a framework for understanding the Syrian Civil War. Galtung defines conflict as a triadic construct consisting of attitudes, behaviour, and contradictions. Attitudes and contradictions reflect the latent, subconscious level of conflict, while behaviour is manifest and reflects conscious actions when confronted with contradictions and hostile attitudes. Conflicts can start from any point of the triangle and are categorised as direct or structural. Direct conflicts have manifest attitudes and contradictions, while structural conflicts have latent attitudes and contradictions. Galtung also defines three types of violence: direct, structural, and cultural. Direct violence is quick and visible, whereas structural violence is slow and invisible, reflecting the injustice and inequality in societal institutions. The Syrian Civil War can be analysed using Galtung's theory, considering the attitudes, behaviour, and contradictions of the parties involved, as well as the direct and structural violence present in the conflict. Understanding these elements is crucial for developing strategies for peaceful resolution and transformation of the conflict.

Key Words: Galtung, Peace Theory, Violence

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Introduction

As the founder of the discipline of Peace and Conflict Studies, Johan Vincent Galtung has outspokenly advocated for a world without nuclear weapons and has placed the placed the focus of his research on scientific terminologies and methods to understand and deal with conflicts. Having coined the term "peace research", Galtung has devoted much of his time in formulating the influential and unique 'transcend approach',' wherein the focus is on peace, rather than security. He advocated for a model that is holistic and is based on deep understanding and dialogue with one party at a time.

Having coined the term "peace research", Galtung has devoted much of his time in formulating the influential and unique 'transcend approach', wherein the focus is on peace, rather than security.

The underlying cause of any violence, according to Galtung, is an unresolved conflict, one that has not been transformed or transcended, due to the existence of incompatible goals. If the goals are among the four basic needs of survival, well-being, identity, or freedom, the conflict is then concluded to be deep, and most difficult to resolve if left unattended. It is important to remember that a conflict does not progress linearly, but rather goes around in a circle, through a cycle of non-violence, to violence, then to post-violence, and likely back to violence again if it fails to be resolved.

The escalation of a conflict to a violent level is largely a result of disequilibrium among the actors or parties involved, leading to polarization and dehumanization of the Other, and finally reflected in their aggression, the output of which is violence. What follows violence is traumatization, and consequently acts of revenge (Galtung, 2010), leading the cycle of conflict back to its first level.

Galtung's Notion of Conflict

Johan Galtung, in his book, 'Peace by Peaceful Means (1996)', defined conflict as a "triadic construct" (pg.71), consisting of three important factors – Attitudes, Behaviour, and Contradictions.

While both, Attitudes (A) and Contradiction (B), reflect the latent, subconscious level of conflict, Behaviour (B), on the other hand, is always manifest and reflects how people consciously act when confronted with contradictions and hostile attitudes and assumptions. Behaviour may thus be seen as an act of violence, both physical and verbal.

Attitudes and assumptions may include the person's perceptions about an actor or an institution; his/her emotions – how s/he feels about the actor/institution involved; and what s/he wants or expects from the given actor/institution. Thus, attitudes may include sexist beliefs about women or discriminatory attitudes towards minorities.

Contradictions, on the other hand, refer to the content of the conflict, the incompatibility between the goals. It may include a territorial dispute between two or more actors over a single piece of territory, as in the case of Israel and Palestine, or as in the case of multiple parties laying claim to the same group of islets in the South China Sea. In the case of structural or indirect conflict, the contradictions may refer to the disequilibrium in the positions of the parties involved, as in the case of inequality between different classes.

A conflict, according to Galtung, could start from any of the three points of the triangle. It could start from point (A), wherein the actor's hostile attitude could be in disharmony with those of other actors, leading to contradiction, and later reflected in violent behaviour. A conflict may also start from point (B), where the

actors involved may develop capacities or inclinations towards negative/aggressive behaviour, which may get stimulated when a contradiction comes along.

Galtung further divides the conflicts into actor/direct conflicts and structural/ indirect conflicts. The main point of departure between the two lies in their categorisation into manifest, and latent levels. In a direct conflict, both attitudes and contradictions are manifest, that is, they are conscious and overt, the actor being aware of them at all times.

However, the same does not apply when one takes into account the structural or indirect conflicts. Here, both attitudes and contradictions are latent; that is, they are subconscious, and the actor is unaware of them. This is not to say that the contradictions or the incompatibilities are non-existent, rather only that the actor involved finds himself/herself completely unaware of such contradictions.

Types of Violence

While stating that the two types of violence – Direct and Structural–are to be considered as the starting point of any strategy for a peaceful resolution, Galtung also defined a third category of violence, namely, Cultural Violence.

Direct violence is an event that is often quick and visible, reflecting the capabilities and intentions of actors to engage in conflict. It includes a victim and a perpetrator and can be seen explicitly in societies. Structural violence, on the other hand, is a process that is slow and often invisible. It refers to the injustice and inequality built into the structural institutions of society. It is reflective of a position "higher up or lower down in a hierarchy of exploitation-repression-alienation' (Galtung, 2012, pg.12), where the parties involved are determined either to keep the hierarchy intact or to completely obliterate it.

An example of structural violence, as seen from a top-down approach would include colonial aspirations of the European nations. In the case of India and the British empire, the aggression from top existed in the form of material exploitation at the hands of the latter. It became visible once the natives demonstrated their will to oppose colonialism and break the hierarchy of exploitation. The same holds for the Indian caste system, wherein the structural violence, in the form of exploitation and marginalisation, has remained intact because of the capability of those higher up, namely the Brahmins, to maintain the disequilibrium in positions between themselves and the communities they perceive to be lower than them.

The Indian caste system, wherein the structural violence, in the form of exploitation and marginalization, has remained intact because of the capability of those higher up, namely the Brahmins, to maintain the disequilibrium in positions between themselves and the communities they perceive to be lower than them.

Cultural violence refers to those "aspects of culture that can be used to legitimise or justify both structural and direct violence' (Galtung, 1990, pg.291). It renders the use of violence as acceptable in society and makes it okay for actors to use violence without making them feel guilty. In a brilliant example, Galtung discusses how the internalisation of culture makes it morally easier for actors to employ violence, such as in the interpretation of murder on behalf of one's country being seen as right (Galtung, 1990, pg.292). In the case of direct and structural violence faced by immigrants, it is the culture that allows for such violence to be tolerated. The cultural violence, in this case, justifies the indirect and direct violence by dehumanising the immigrants and portraying them as thugs or aliens. This allows societies to tolerate policies of forced child separation while continuing to deny them equitable means of living.

Escalation of conflicts into violence

Violence is most often an outcome of deprivation of needs. The more basic and non-negotiable the needs, the more likely it is that aggression will come into existence. While classifying the basic needs into four broad categories of survival, welfare, freedom, and identity, Galtung warns his readers against prioritising any one need over the others. To put survival above freedom and identity, would result in repression and alienation (Galtung, 1985), failing to end structural and cultural violence.

When the goal of an actor (A) is incompatible with that of an actor (B), such that it obstructs the attainment of the goal by the actor (B), the pursuit of such goals would then most likely result in frustration among both actors, the consequence of which would be a polarisation of the two extremes. Polarisation would imply a zero-sum game, where the scope of transcendence is low, and the likely outcome is a position of no compromise. Because the contradiction in goals is absolute, the victory of the actor (A) would thus necessarily imply the loss of actor (B).

Polarisation, accompanied by the dehumanisation of the Other, may galvanise into hostility and hatred, manifesting itself into aggressive behaviour, finally resulting in escalation. The conflict, however, does not stop at violence. What follows violence is the traumatisation of victims harmed by violence and the breeding acts of revenge (Galtung 2010, pg.16).

In an actor conflict, polarisation between the two sides can almost immediately lead to direct violence. This is because actor (A), who has incompatible goals with actor (B), can easily identify the object/subject of the

obstruction of the attainment of its goals. Therefore, what follows is violent behaviour by actor (A) towards actor (B).

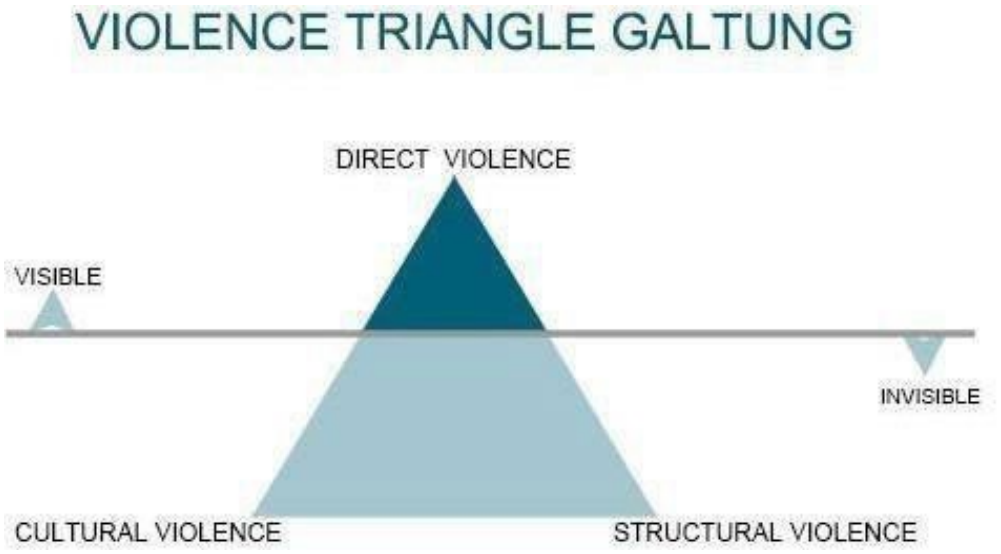
However, in a structural conflict, polarisation may result in acute disequilibrium between the rank positions of members in a society. However, Galtung in his essay on the "Structural Theory of Aggression" argues that violence is unlikely to occur unless all methods of maintaining equilibrium have been tried and unless culture facilitates violence wherein those lower down are constantly reminded of their position and their consequent mistreatment (Galtung 1964, pg.99).

A system of injustice or inequity which refuses to break the hierarchy of oppression and exploitation would likely result in frustration, the outburst of which would be reflected in the form of violence. The often-visible naxalite violence in India can be seen as a result of deep-rooted structural violence, wherein the parties involved have suffered exploitation and marginalisation due to unequal economic development and inequitable distribution of resources for years.

The genocide that took place against the members of the Rohingya community in Myanmar is a crude example of direct violence.

On the other hand, the genocide that took place against the members of the Rohingya community in Myanmar is a crude example of direct violence. They claimed to have been living in the state since the 9th century but were eventually labelled Bangladeshi Immigrants. Years of discrimination (structural violence) and hatred (attitudes, assumptions, and cultural violence) have led to ethnic cleansing (direct violence). They were murdered, raped, and evicted from their homelands. It only took one law, which rendered them stateless, for the majority of Myanmar to consider them as sub-humans and readily accept the atrocities committed against them.

Syrian Conflict through Galtung's Conflict Theory



The civil war in Syria is, unfortunately, an example of one of the bloodiest conflicts of this century. The war is often seen as a result of the outburst of pro-democracy protests in 2011, under the appellation of the Arab Spring.

However, when approached using Galtung's conflict theory, the conflict can be divided into three categories of violence. First, what we have been witnessing is the horror of direct violence in Syria, as a consequence of years of repression, facilitated by the government's violent response towards peaceful protesters in 2011. Second, the structural violence in the form of decades of economic restraints and systemic corruption, which exacerbated the existing poverty and inequality amongst the citizens. Further, four years of drought between 2006 and 2011, and the consequent failed economic policies forced 2 million to 3 million Syrians into abject poverty (Polk, 2013). The dwindling Syrian economy and infrastructure finally led to the deprivation of the basic need of welfare and threatened their need for survival, resulting in frustration. Third is the cultural violence that has helped in sustaining the ongoing violence, in the form of distortion, denial, and dehumanisation of the victims of violence has helped Assad and his foreign allies in continuing the mass murder of Syrians. Here, the sanitisation of language is of key importance, where attempts to distort reality often end up changing the moral colour of violence, as argued by Galtung, wherein violence from being unacceptable begins to be tolerated without question.

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Direct Violence in Syria

Syrians have been victims of decades-long political repression in the form of restrictions on freedom of speech and expression, torture, and enforced disappearances. Political institutions have historically been unstable, with three military coups taking place in 1949, followed by one in 1954, in addition to the Ba' athist-led coups of 1963 and 1966. Syrian security forces (Mukhabarat) are known to have detained citizens without proper warrants even before 2010, many of whom have reportedly been tortured in prisons (Human Rights Watch,2010). In their attempts to keep the hierarchy of power relations intact, centralised institutions are known to clamp down on any public demonstrations, with frequent arrests and the employment of state violence. Several actors are involved in perpetrating the more visible, direct violence, and it is clear that the Syrian conflict cannot be looked at as a conflict solely between the state and armed rebellion groups.

In 2011, 15 school-going children under the age of 17 were reportedly arrested and tortured to write anti-graffiti on a wall, leading to the protests of 2011. The government responded by opening a fire on peaceful protestors, killing four civilians (Macleod, 2011). More than 400,000 people have died because of the Syrian conflict since 2011, with five million seeking refuge abroad and over six million displaced internally (World Bank). This section identifies several actors involved in perpetrating the more visible, direct violence and contends that the Syrian conflict cannot be looked at as a conflict solely between the state and armed rebellion groups. It would also be myopic to look at the conflict entirely from the perspective of sectarian divisions, given that each rebellion group has a different motive, and is being backed by several different actors.

While soldiers supporting the Syrian president and the opposition armed groups continue to remain prominent actors, recent years have seen the rise of Islamic State, Al-Qaeda and their affiliated members. The war has also seen a large-scale presence of two categories of foreign actors – those supporting the Syrian regime (Iran, and Russia), and those who continue to be the key rebel supporters (US, Turkey, and Saudi Arabia). All of these actors have their motives and intentions of being engaged in the war. While Iran sees Syria as its primary ally and a transit point for Hezbollah, Russia thinks of Syria as its last remaining stronghold. On the other hand, the United States and Saudi Arabia are driven by their intentions to maintain the regional balance of power away from the Iranian axis of influence. Meanwhile, Turkey continues to battle the spillover effect of thousands of Syrian refugees who continue to cross the border to Turkey.

The anti-government groups based in Ghouta, including Jaysh al-Islam, Ahrar al-Sham and Faylaq al-Rahmane, have killed and mutilated hundreds of civilians in indiscriminate attacks on Damascus. These armed groups have also regularly arrested and tortured civilians in Douma, including the members of religious minority groups. Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham (HTS), an Al-Qaeda affiliate present in Idlib, has carried out arrests and kidnappings that targeted local political opponents and journalists, while also continuously interfering with humanitarian access and aid distribution in areas under its control (CSIS).

Cultural Violence in Syria

Cultural violence in Syria, like elsewhere, is most often perpetrated in the form of sanitisation of language, where years of structural violence are termed mere discrimination and where civilians are seen as mere targets to be killed. A few years ago, in an attempt of distorting reality, the Russian media described a Syrian documentary on Helmet volunteers in Aleppo as a "thinly disguised Al Qaeda promotional vehicle" (Hamad, 2018). Such attempts of distortion aim at normalizing even the most brutal violence. In the case of Russia,

these attempts help to legitimise its airstrikes, even when the number of civilians killed in these strikes surpasses the number of ISIS members it sought to target. According to a report, approximately four thousand civilians have been killed by Russian airstrikes as opposed to 2758 ISIS members (Armstrong & Richter, 2016).

Additionally, cultural violence in the form of ideology and religion has helped to sustain violence in the region. Here, religion has acted as a form of cultural violence, where the fight is between the 'Chosen' and the 'Unchosen'. In Syria, this fight has taken the form of sectarian divisions between the minority Alawi community and the majority Sunni population. The legitimisation of violence at the hands of the state is rooted in its fight against 'extremism', which depends upon the promulgation of the narrative that all rebel forces have the same ulterior motive -of building an intolerant Islamic caliphate. The state's reliance on its alleged effort to curb extremism has allowed its forces to justify the use of heavy artillery, bombardment of residential places, and subsequent massacres. Another factor that helps explain the sustenance of violence is its normalisation, where violence is seen as natural and a part of everyday life. Decades of repression in Syria have helped normalise torture, rampant arrests, and restrictions.

Structural Violence in Syria

While countries continue to witness the horrors of visible atrocities and war crimes, the underlying layers of structural violence continue to buttress egregious brutality which is often more direct, and physical. Although war is often seen as a result of the outburst of pro-democracy protests in 2011, a close examination of the country's socio-economic structures would enable one to obtain a detailed insight into the underlying layers of frustration caused by large-scale poverty, inequality, and marginalisation.

> The injustice and inequality built into the structural institutions of the Syrian society can be referred to, what has been called as the 'structural violence', by Johan Galtung.

One would also find that the relatively peaceful structure, which existed before the protests of 2011, remained largely intact because of the existence of single-party dominance, where one actor (Hafez al-Assad, and later Bashar al-Assad) held all power and authority, while those existing in the lower ranks of society continued to lack resources, as well as opportunities to challenge the dominant power. The violence, here, is reflective of a position "higher up or lower down in a hierarchy of exploitation-repression-alienation", where the parties involved are determined either to keep the hierarchy intact or to completely obliterate it.

In the case of Syria, deprivation of the most basic and non-negotiable needs, which threatened citizens' need for survival, has been the primary cause of aggression to come into existence. The factors that, thus, led to the conflict in Syria can be seen as rooted in years of repression, poverty, and lack of representative institutions,

which manifested in the form of protests, or the Arab Spring of 2011. The Syrian economic crisis has existed long before the commencement of the civil war. Since the beginning of the economic crisis, Syria's institutional structures have failed to meet the rising needs and rights of its population. In the 1980s, the country was trapped in a downward spiral of a fiscal crisis, as a result of large-scale drought, and due to both, domestic and external factors. The crisis led to a high food deficit and an increase in the cost of living, leading to a rise in patronage networks which provided small circles of elite with profitable businesses. These networks became increasingly popular in real estate and land management, leaving out large sectors of Syria underdeveloped. While the country witnessed a decreasing overall debt and a noticeable rise in the GDP in the 2000s, large sections of the population were excluded from benefitting from these growth rates due to differences in wage rates and declining job opportunities. Increasing inequality was reflected in a paper published by the UNDP, which claimed that 65.6% of all labour in Syria belonged to the informal sector in 2010, with Aleppo and Idlib ranking first with over 75% of their workforce belonging to the informal sector (UNDP, 2018).

Years of conflict have exacerbated the economic crisis, pushing both the state and its citizens, into chaos, with more than 80 per cent of the Syrian population living below the poverty line, with an unemployment rate of at least 55 per cent in 2018.

Additionally, oil revenues fell from more than 14% of GDP in the early 2000s to about 4% in 2010 due to the depletion of reserves. According to a report, overall poverty in Syria in 2007 impacted 33.6% of the population, of which 12.3% were estimated to be living in extreme poverty. Noting the degree of inequality in Syria in 1997, the report found that the lower 20% of the population had a share of only 8% in expenditure, while the richest 20% of the population shared about 41% of the expenditure (Abu-Ismail, Abdel-Gadir & El-Laithy). Moreover, the widely disputed region of North-Eastern Syria witnessed the highest levels of inequality in 2007, in addition to the deprivation of living standards, the worst levels of illiteracy, and access to safe water just four years before the outbreak of the civil war. The unequal access to resources was also starkly reflected in the housing situation of the country before the war, where over 40% of the population lived under informal housing conditions through squatting or on lands obtained without legal contracts (Goulden, 2011).

Years of conflict have exacerbated the economic crisis, pushing both the state and its citizens, into chaos, with more than 80 per cent of the Syrian population living below the poverty line, with an unemployment rate of at least 55 per cent in 2018. With most of the business networks now being controlled by the selected few elites, the population at large continues to suffer the brunt of both structural, and direct violence.

Conclusion

This paper has attempted to explain the theoryof conflict, as proposed by Johan Galtung. In doing so, it has referred to six primary sources of the author. It has taken into account Galtung's two triangles of conflict. First, the attitudes-behaviour-contradiction triangle, which seeks to explain the notion of conflict, and demonstrates how a conflict consists of all three, with attitudes and contradictions existing at the latent level, manifesting themselves into violent behaviour which is conscious and visible. The second triangle divides violence into three broad categories of direct violence, structural violence, and cultural violence, and demonstrates how the latter two facilitate and bring about direct violence. This paper has also attempted to employ Galtung's theory of conflict to explain the civil war in Syria, where it has identified the three categories of violence and has tried to apply the theory into practice. The conflict, which started with citizens demanding their basic needs and rights has been sustained over the years by the involvement of foreign states, and increased state brutality which has been responded to by an increasingly similar, if not equal, force by the rebellion groups. The country, now, witnesses itself entangled in a cycle of conflict, where the war has led to steep economic deterioration, political repression, and physical violence, which in turn has led to further widespread cataclysm.

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Entrepot Development and Diversification: A comparative case study of Singapore and Dubai

Adithya Subramoni

Abstract

This study conducts a qualitative comparative case study analysis of Singapore and Dubai, two city-states with similar entrepot histories and development approaches, to examine the factors contributing to their different economic diversification outcomes. Despite implementing comparable policies during the same period, Singapore diversified into high-technology manufacturing and a knowledge-intensive economy, while Dubai developed a service-based economy as a global logistics and regional finance hub. Using the 'most similar systems design', this study identifies theoretically significant differences between the two cases, such as Dubai's hydrocarbon revenues, its high dependence on expatriates, and Singapore's geographic location in Japan's industrialisation zone. This study aims to understand how these differences in inputs affect the outcomes of their development models, pushing beyond limitations in historical data and potential criticisms of comparing a successful Middle Eastern economy to a prominent Asian economy. By evaluating the interaction between development policies and businesses, this study contributes to the literature on late-development, highlighting the importance of factors within and outside policymakers' control, such as human capital development, resource wealth, history, and regional development. The findings provide valuable insights for economic historians and development practitioners in understanding the nuances of development approaches in different contexts.

Key words: Singapore, Dubai, Diversification.

Introduction

Dubai is a small city-state in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) that is renowned internationally as a logistics hub. With hydrocarbon revenues accounting for less than 1% of GDP, it is the most diversified sheikhdom in the region.[1] Dubai's development model is considered ideal, and is followed by other Gulf countries in the region.[2] Dubai's development approach was inspired by the Singaporean model. Singapore developed by welcoming foreign firms to set up shop for export-oriented manufacturing and thus used its entrepot status to its advantage.[3] The emirate followed a similar approach to development because it was historically an entrepot and housed merchants, but not

[1] Matthew Winkler, "Dubai's The Very Model of a Modern Mideast Economy", *Bloomberg.Com*, 2018, https://www.bloomberg.com/opinion/articles/2018-01-14/dubai-s-the-very-model-of-a-modern-mideasteconomy.
[2] Afshin Molavi, "Is Dubai A Model For Economic Diversification?", *CNN*, 2018, https://edition.cnn.com/2018/06/04/middleeast/dubai-diversification-persian-gulf/index.html.
[3] Kim Song Tan, "Invitation Strategy For Cutting Edge Industries Through Mncs And Global Talents: The Case Of Singapore", in *Promoting Dynamic And Innovative Growth In Asia: The Cases Of Special Economic Zones And Business Hubs* (Korea: Korea Institute for International Economic Policy, 2016).

entrepreneurs. Thus, it followed the Singaporean model by opening its borders to foreign firms, and sought to diversify its economy by building on its entrepot characteristics. However, the outcome of this approach differs from those of Dubai and Singapore in terms of sectoral diversification which is interesting. This paper conducts a qualitative study that reviews the literature on their development policies and follows the most similar systems design to explain the outcome of sectoral diversification based on the differences in the inputs of their development policies. The study found that domestic wage policies and initiatives to encourage technologically advanced firms to relocate were key factors that encouraged the service-oriented diversification of Dubai's economy.

While the author appreciates that Singapore developed without the support of hydrocarbon revenues with which Dubai was privileged, this study questions why Dubai, an emirate blessed with the resources and capability to direct its development narrative, witnessed a different outcome in its diversification experience. This research provides insights into two cases of late development which are not often discussed by late-development theorists. This study has the potential to further encourage economic historians and development practitioners in this region's context to think about how development approaches are affected by factors like history, geographic location, and political conditions. This study uses primary data sources, such as government publications and newspaper reports, and secondary sources, such as scholarly work. Following this, the methodology of the study is addressed, and after the key factors of Singapore's development are highlighted, the literature regarding Dubai's development is reviewed, and then the discussion is presented, followed by the conclusion.

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Methodology

This study followed a qualitative comparative case study analysis, using the most similar design system. Based on this design, some theoretically significant differences will be found among similar systems, and these differences can be used in explanation.[4] This method is used in comparative politics, where the differences between two similar cases are used to explain why these similar systems had a different outcome.[5]

Singapore was chosen as a case study to compare Dubai's development approach because both are city-states with an entrepot history, invested in world-class infrastructure and services through state-owned enterprises, and positioned themselves as business-friendly to invite foreign firms for economic development. Both states implemented development policies around the same period as well. Singapore achieved independence in 1965

[4] Przeworski and Teune 1970, p.39 cited in Dirk Berg-Schlosser and Gisele De Meur, "Comparative Research Design: Case And Variable Selection", in *Configurational Comparative Methods: Qualitative Comparative Analysis (QCA) And Related Techniques* (Sage Publications, 2009).

[5] Sandra Halperin and Oliver Heath, *Political Research: Methods And Practical Skills*, 2nd ed. (Oxford University Press, 2016).

and invested in the relevant re-export infrastructure. Dubai joined the UAE in 1971, but investments in port infrastructure and services were initiated by Sheikh Rashid in the early 1960s.[6] Similarly, although both states are frequently mistaken for pursuing development based on liberal economic policies, they follow state-directed, free-market capitalism.[7] Some prominent differences to consider as factors affecting their development are Dubai's hydrocarbon revenues, its high dependence on expatriates, and Singapore's geographic location in Japan's industrialisation. The difference in outcome between the two is that while Singapore was able to diversify into manufacturing high-technology goods and a knowledge-intensive economy, Dubai developed into a service-based economy as a global logistics hub and regional finance hub. This methodology is useful for the context of this study because, first, it helps us acknowledge that Dubai and Singapore had a similar approach and shared factors to development; second, it identifies the differences in factors of their development models, and third, identifies differences in the outcomes of their development model. This structure helps examine the role of different inputs in the differences in the outcomes of development models.

At this juncture, it is also necessary to address the potential criticisms of this approach. A prime concern would be the hydrocarbon revenues Dubai is privileged with. This is the primary reason why no comparative study has been conducted between these two late-developing countries (city-states) before. However, this privilege itself becomes a pertinent reason to engage in a comparative study to understand why the development outcomes were different despite having an upper hand. This study is also especially worth examining because Dubai's policymakers aspired to follow along the path of Singapore.[8] A second criticism would be the limitations on statistical information and reliance on secondary sources and recent data to support historical claims. The challenge of obtaining historical data about Gulf countries is a prime reason for the dearth of research on the economic development of some of the richest countries. However, this study extends beyond these limitations to make original contributions to the literature. Another criticism is the pitching of Dubai, one of the few successful economies in the Middle East, in the same space as Singapore, one among the many successful economies. Dubai certainly fared well for the region, and thus, using Singapore as a yardstick might be perceived as too harsh on the city-state. However, the aim of this study is to understand why similar development policies have had different outcomes and not pit them against each other, but instead evaluate them alongside each other. This form of assessment would provide useful insights into how development policies interact with businesses.

[6] Christopher Davidson, *Dubai: The Vulnerability Of Success*, 1st ed. (London: Hurst Publishers, 2008).

[7] Linda Y. C. Lim, "Singapore's Success: The Myth Of The Free Market Economy", *Asian Survey* 23, no. 6 (1983): 752-764, doi:10.2307/2644389., Martin Hvidt, "THE DUBAI MODEL: AN OUTLINE OF KEY DEVELOPMENT-PROCESS ELEMENTS IN DUBAI", *International Journal Of Middle East Studies* 41, no. 3 (2009), doi:10.1017/s002074380909151x.

[8] Jeffrey Sampler and Saeb Eigner, *Sand To Silicon* (Dubai, UAE: Motivate Publ., 2008).

Thus, this study is unique in that it compares the development policies and outcomes of Singapore and Dubai and contributes to the literature on late development by studying the importance of factors within the control of policymakers, such as human capital development, and outside of it, such as resource wealth, history, and regional development. The following sections present case studies of Singapore and Dubai and outline the evidence of the divergence in their developmental outcomes.

Singapore

When Singapore achieved independence in 1965, its main economic activities were rooted in its entrepot history and thereby focused on logistics, transportation, and financial services.[9] Around this time, the Lee Kuan Yew government realised that the country had to diversify its dependence on entrepot trade because of rising unemployment and turned to industrialisation for development.[10] Although it had some manufacturing activities, they were mostly labour-intensive light industries.[11] Singapore's development occurred in three stages: from 1965 to the mid-1970s, from the mid-1970s to the early 1990s, and the current phase from the 1990s onwards. In its first stage, the People's Action Party (PAP) focused on building the country's industrial and manufacturing base. The second phase focused on industrial upgrading and setting up of services, and in the third stage, the focus was to propel Singapore into a knowledge-intensive economy.[12] The following graph demonstrates a sectoral contribution to Singapore's GDP over time –

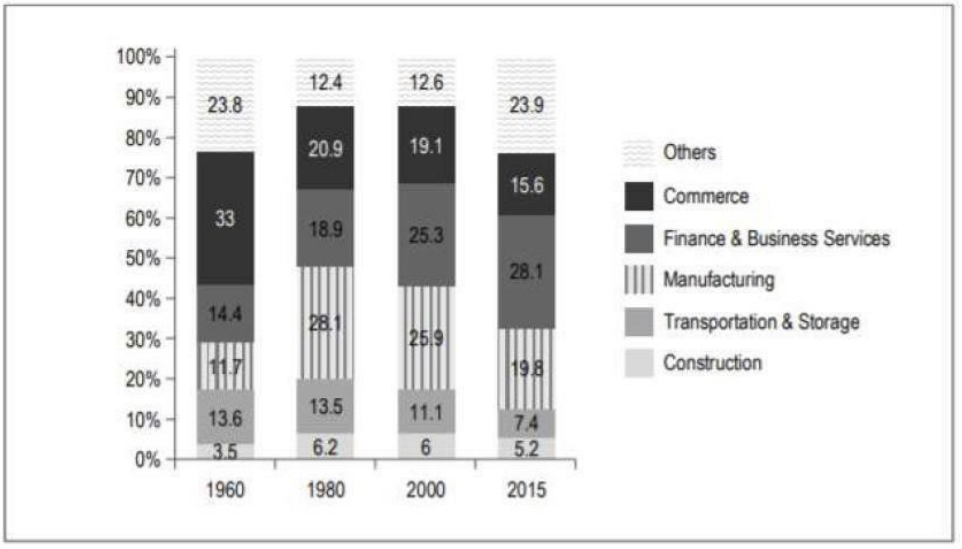

Figure 1 Structural transformation of Singapore Economy

Source: Tan, "Invitation Strategy", p.153.

[9] Tan, "Invitation Strategy For Cutting Edge Industries Through Mncs And Global Talents: The Case Of Singapore."
[10] Ibid
[11] Ibid
[12] Kalim Siddiqui, "The Political Economy Of Development In Singapore", *Research In Applied Economics* 2, no. 2 (2010), doi:10.5296/rae.v2i2.524.

In 1965, the PAP built Singapore's development strategy for export-oriented industrialisation. A challenge they faced to implement this was the lack of capital, resources, and indigenous entrepreneurs.[13]To resolve this, Singapore opted to depend on foreign MNCs as they could bring capital, technology, and resolve the issue of growing unemployment.[14] To attract foreign firms, Singapore undertook a series of steps to posit the country as business friendly. Some key steps are highlighted here –

(1) Wage control: With the passing of the Employment Act and the Industrial Relations (Amendment) Act of 1968, the PAP established de facto government control over labour unions which allowed the state to determine wage levels and subsequent increases.[15] This suppressed wages to keep them low and internationally competitive.[16]

The following table from Huff demonstrates the extent to which domestic wage levels were reduced to international prices –

	1975		1980		1993	
	$	Index	$	Index	$	Index
United States	6·36	100	9·87	100	16·79	100
Japan	3·05	48	5·61	57	19·20	114
Singapore	0·84	13	1·49	15	5·38	32
South Korea	0·33	5	0·97	10	5·37	32
Taiwan	0·40	6	1·00	10	5·23	31
Hong Kong	0·76	12	1·51	15	4·31	26
Asian NICs	0·50	8	1·15	12	5·15	31

Note: Asian NICs refers to a United States trade-weighted average level for Singapore, South Korea, Taiwan and Hong Kong.

Figure 2 Hourly wages for production workers in manufacturing 1975-1993

Source: Huff, "What is the Singapore Model of Economic Development?", p.741.

(2) Infrastructure and service investment: To be an effective production and distribution hub for MNCs, investment in infrastructure such as transportation, logistics, and telecommunications was essential to

[13] Rachel Elkan, "Singapore's Development Strategy", in *Singapore - A Case Study In Rapid Development* (IMF, 1995).
[14] Tan, "Invitation Strategy For Cutting Edge Industries Through Mncs And Global Talents: The Case Of Singapore."
[15] Lim and Pang, 1986, p.11 cited in W.G. Huff, "What Is The Singapore Model Of Economic Development?", *Cambridge Journal Of Economics* 19, no. 6 (1995), doi:10.1093/oxfordjournals.cje.a035339.
[16] Siddiqui, "The Political Economy Of Development In Singapore"

maintain Singapore's regional advantage.[17] Singapore was able to pursue this by borrowing from the Central Provident Fund at cheap interest rates.[18]Using this, the government upgraded its port facilities, built an airport, roads, mass-rapid transit systems etc., which reduced the cost of operating within the country and in reaching world markets.[19]Other investments to attract foreign firms include the building of low-cost production sites by the Jurong Town Corporation (JTC), which was established in 1968 by the Yew government, on government-owned land that was leased to foreign firms post-completion. Singapore has also actively upgraded its service-oriented infrastructure which was predominantly state-owned. The state undertook heavy investments through public sector agencies such as the Port of Singapore Authority and the Public Utilities Board, and set up government-linked enterprises to accelerate investments in infrastructure complementary to a business hub such as in aviation - Singapore Airlines, shipping – Neptune Orient Lines, and telecom Singapore Telecom (SingTel).[20]

(3) Business-friendly policy environment: To encourage FDI, Singapore adopted policies that encouraged businesses to set up shops in the country. An example is the Economic Expansion Incentives Act which was introduced in 1967. This act significantly reduced corporate tax rates for export-oriented manufacturing, allowed 'tax relief for incremental income arising from capital expansion', '90% remission of tax on profits for up to 15 years on approved enterprises', and provided tax exemptions on royalties, know-how and technical assistance fees.[21] Although similar advantages were offered by neighbouring countries too, the benefits offered by Singapore were relatively higher.[22]

(4) Human Resource: From the early stages of development, the planners of Singapore understood that in its initial years, the country would face difficulties in providing skilled labour for firms it hoped to attract. In the 1970 Budget Speech, Dr. Goh KengSwee highlighted that in the coming years, the demand for skilled labour force such as engineers, management, and technical personnel would rise significantly, and if the country were to depend on the local labour force, it would not be practical as an engineering student would take four years to graduate and more years to acquire relevant experience

[17] Tan Kim Song and Manu Bhaskaran, "The Role Of The State In Singapore: Pragmatism In Pursuit", in *Singapore's Economic Development Retrospection And Reflections* (World Scientific Publishing Company Pte Limited, 2016).
[18] Huff, "What is the Singapore model of economic development?" p.746
[19]Helleiner 1973 cited in Huff, "What is the Singapore model of economic development?" p.746
[20] Tan, "Invitation Strategy For Cutting Edge Industries Through Mncs And Global Talents: The Case Of Singapore."
[21] Teck-Wong Soon and William A. Stoever, "Foreign Investment And Economic Development In Singapore: A Policy-Oriented Approach", *The Journal Of Developing Areas* 30, no. 3 (1996).
[22] Ibid

before being qualified to work for large-scale organisations.[23] In this regard, it introduced many schemes from the late 1960s that allowed the intake of higher-skilled foreign labour to promote industrialisation.[24] For instance, foreign skilled workers and professionals with a university degree from recognised institutions were provided with employment passes for up to three years at a time.[25] The government also accounted for naturalisation programmes where foreign workers, entrepreneurs and investors could apply for citizenship after two to five years of being permanent residents.[26]Meanwhile, the government encouraged the education and training of citizens in knowledge and skills-based courses.[27] Although the government still welcomes foreign talent in the country, policies were initiated to prioritise local labour, as a result of which foreign talent in the labour force was reduced to 9% in the economy.[28] The following data compiled by Abeysinghe demonstrate the number of economically active university degree holders in Singapore's resident labour force and their fields –

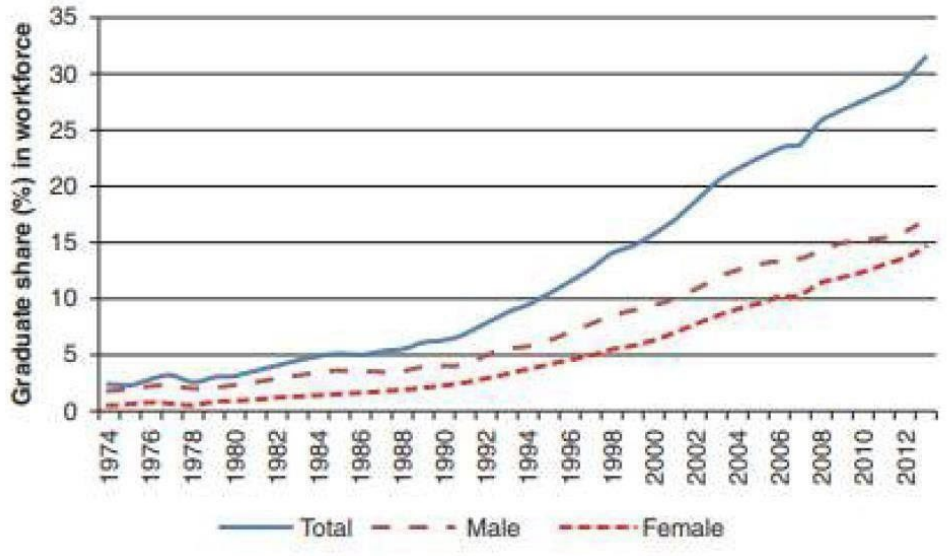

Figure 3Proportion of economically active university degree holders in Singapore labour force

Source: Abeysinghe, "Lessons Of Singapore's Development", p.42

[23] Yap Mui Teng and Christopher Gee, "Singapore's Demographic Transition, The Labor Force And Government Policies: The Last Fifty Years", in *Singapore's Economic Development Retrospection And Reflections* (World Scientific Publishing Company Pte Ltd, 2016).
[24] Teng and Gee, 'Singapore's demographic transition', p.208.
[25] Ibid.
[26] Ibid.
[27]Tilak Abeysinghe, "Lessons Of Singapore's Development For Other Developing Economies", in *Singapore's Economic Development: Retrospection And Reflections, p.*42 (World Scientific Publishing Company Pte Ltd, 2016).
[28]Abeysinghe, 'Singapore's demographic transition, the labour force, and government'.

Course	Gender	1995	2000	2005	2010	2013
Engineering sciences	M	50.0	60.7	56.7	43.4	40.7
	F	10.3	23.0	23.9	17.3	17.3
Accountancy, business and administration	M	14.7	9.6	11.8	14.1	15.5
	F	29.5	23.0	21.8	19.6	19.4
Natural, physical and mathematical sciences	M	8.1	6.4	8.5	11.1	10.4
	F	13.1	13.4	15.4	15.6	15.3
Humanities and social sciences	M	9.6	8.2	8.4	11.0	11.8
	F	30.6	24.6	21.7	22.9	23.4
Information technology	M	7.2	6.3	5.5	7.7	8.7
	F	5.0	3.8	3.3	3.6	4.2
Medicine, dentistry, health sciences	M	4.5	3.9	3.6	3.7	4.0
	F	3.1	3.4	4.1	5.3	6.2
Architecture and building	M	3.2	3.0	2.6	2.4	2.5
	F	4.1	4.7	3.9	3.9	3.7
Law	M	2.3	1.3	1.5	2.3	2.5
	F	2.8	1.9	2.3	2.7	2.4
Education, applied arts, mass communication, services	M	0.5	0.8	1.3	4.3	3.8
	F	1.7	2.1	3.6	9.3	8.0

Figure 4 Enrolment in University first degree courses (Percentage distribution)

Source: Abeysinghe, "Lessons Of Singapore's Development", p.42

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In this way, the government sought to meet the needs of foreign firms as well as the skills of its citizens in a manner that aligns with the country's broader development goals.

These domestic conditions made it possible for Singapore's Economic Development Board's (EDB) task of approaching MNCs to relocate their manufacturing sites to Singapore easier. They highlighted conditions in the country suitable for manufacturing such as its low-wage environment, good transportation infrastructure and logistics sector, and the newly introduced export-oriented trade and investment regime to pursue suitable foreign firms.[29]The MNCs were also approached by the EDB based on satisfaction of specific criteria such as value-added, skill content, and capital intensity, and were certain that they would be ideal for the long-term development of Singapore's economy.[30] For instance, EDB spotted the potential of electronics in Taiwan and

[29] Elkan, 'Singapore's development strategy'.
[30] Huff, 'What is the Singapore model of Economic Development?'

later approached pioneer firms to enquire the necessary incentives to move to Singapore and provide them later.[31] These efforts led Singapore to reach full employment by mid-1975 and propelled it towards focusing on industrial upgrading, developing financial services, and becoming a knowledge-intensive economy. As the economy reached full employment, there was upward pressure on wages, which led labour-intensive tasks to be repatriated to relatively low-wage countries in the region and allowed industrial upgrading to occur in Singapore.[32] Furthermore, as Singapore developed its infrastructure, foreign firms resorted to conducting higher value-added activities in the country.[33] A significant driver of this change was the availability of skilled labour at relatively cheap prices, accessibility to Singapore's globally well-connected logistics hub, and political commitment through business-friendly initiatives.[34] The foundation of Singapore as an international financial centre was laid when the Bank of America's Asian currency unit was set up in 1968 which allowed participants to invest and trade in foreign currencies without needing to convert to SGD.[35] From this point, there was a conscious effort to use Singapore's historical experience in financial services to develop the domestic banking sector as a regional funding base and posit the country as an offshore trading centre for foreign currencies by making use of its favourable time-zone position to intermediate between the London and New York foreign exchange markets.[36]Afterwards, Singapore secured its position as the regional headquarters for knowledge-intensive functions by establishing the Johor- Batam-Singapore growth triangle in 1989.[37] Through this initiative, business functions in labour-intensive technology were encouraged to transition to Malaysia and Indonesia, while skill-intensive functions were retained in Singapore.[38] Thus, these policy initiatives were crucial in Singapore's development.

Apart from endogenous factors, there were also exogenous factors that benefitted Singapore in its pursuit of inviting MNCs to set up shop in the country of which three are discussed here. First, the period between 1965-1973 witnessed a rapid expansion in world trade and the relocation of textile and garment factories from other Asian countries which had exhausted their clothing export quotas to developed-country

[31] Ibid
[32] Elkan, 'Singapore's development strategy'.
[33] W.G. Huff, "Markets, Government, And Growth, 1960-1990", in *The Economic Growth Of Singapore:Trade And Development In The Twentieth Century*, 1st ed. (Cambridge University Press, 1994), 299-360.
[34] Ibid
[35]Peter Wilson, "Monetary Policy And Financial Sector Development", in *Singapore's Economic Development Retrospection And*
[37] Elkan, 'Singapore's development strategy'.
[38] Ibid.

markets.[39] Second, MNCs moved to Singapore in the mid-1960s because of unfavourable conditions in their home countries such as higher wages and increasing competition, which encouraged foreign firms to relocate to Singapore to take advantage of the ready infrastructure.[40] For instance, the British company AVIMO transferred the production of optical instruments from the UK to Singapore to compete effectively with Japanese products.[41] The following data from Mirza's research demonstrates this −

Table 1: Distribution of Manufacturing Foreign Direct Investment by country of origin, 1965-82 (in percentages)

COUNTRY	1965	1970	1975	1982
USA	14.6	34.5	33.1	34.0
JAPAN	17.2	6.8	13.4	16.4
UK	28.7	20.0	14.2	16.3
NETHERLANDS	25.5	18.4	14.0	14.7
GERMANY	N.A	0.3	3.1	2.3
SWEDEN	N.A	0.3	0.7	1.3
SWITZERLAND	N.A	1.2	0.9	1.8
OTHERS	14.0	16.2	18.9	10.4
TOTAL AMOUNT (US$ BN)	0.1	0.3	1.4	4.5

Source: Mirza, "Multinationals and The Growth Of The Singapore Economy", p.95

As Tan writes 'the government tried to turn Singapore into one of the most efficient business environments in the region' to attract MNCs, and 'by making Singapore a first-world city in a third world region, it hoped to provide an oasis for international investors in a region where business operations were often hamstrung by myriad regulatory and administrative hurdles.[42] Singapore's success in this sense was in its ability to invite other foreign firms to relocate to Singapore and leverage the strengths of other economies in the region to enhance its own productive and innovative capacity.[43] Thus, apart from endogenous factors of development in Singapore, there were also exogenous factors such as regional economic growth, and changes in the international economy requiring relocation of firms in labour-intensive sectors which were of crucial timing to Singapore's efforts.

[39] Ibid
[40] Hafiz Mirza, *Multinationals And The Growth Of The Singapore Economy* (London: Routledge, 2012).
[41] Ibid, p.99.
[42] Tan, "Invitation Strategy For Cutting Edge Industries Through Mncs And Global Talents: The Case Of Singapore."
[43] Ibid.

Dubai

Since historical GDP data depicting structural transformation in Dubai are unavailable, this study uses recent data on the structural contribution to GDP to assess the extent to which development policies have met the expectations of the rulers. This section briefly highlights the current economic structure and emphasises the developmental vision of the rulers for Dubai, after which it identifies the key factors in the development of the emirate.

Value in Million AED القيمة بالمليون درهم

Economic Activity	النقاط المئوية Percentage Point	نسبة النمو Growth Rate %	2019*	
			نسبة المساهمة % Percentage Contribution %	القيمة Value
Agriculture, forestry and fishing	0.0	-0.3	0.1	498
Mining and quarrying	0.0	0.0	1.5	6,387
Manufacturing	0.0	0.3	8.8	36,200
Electricity, gas, and water supply; waste management activities	0.0	0.5	2.6	10,653
Construction	0.1	1.2	6.3	25,805
Wholesale and retail trade; repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles	0.8	3.2	26.5	109,068
Transportation and storage	0.6	4.8	12.5	51,551
Accommodation and food service activities	0.1	2.5	5.0	20,547
Information and communication	0.0	0.3	4.1	16,923
Financial and insurance activities	0.0	0.2	9.7	40,070
Real estate activities	0.5	7.5	7.4	30,611
Professional, scientific and technical activities	0.1	2.6	3.7	15,042
Administrative and support service activities	0.2	5.6	3.1	12,722
Public administration and defence; compulsory social security	0.0	0.2	4.9	20,297
Education	0.1	5.9	1.6	6,469
Human health and social work activities	0.1	5.9	0.9	3,827
Arts, entertainment and recreation	0.0	0.9	0.3	1,349
Other service activities	0.0	1.0	0.5	1,872
Activities of households as employers; undifferentiated goods- and services-producing activities of households for own use	0.0	2.9	0.5	2,184
Gross Domestic Product	**2.7**	**2.7**	**100**	**412,077**

* 2019 data updated based to Economic Survey result 2020

Figure 5 Dubai Sectoral Contribution to GDP at Constant Prices 2019
Source: Government of Dubai, 2020

As the above table substantiates, the main drivers of the economy are entrepot activities like trade (26.5%), transportation and storage (12.5%), followed by financial services (9.7%), and real estate (7.4%). Scholars like Hvidt argue that Dubai had 'no intention of developing through industrialisation' and its focus was to

jump from a 'pearling society' to a service society.[44] However, from a historical perspective, this diversification outcome is interesting because rulers were keen to build a manufacturing-oriented economy. Archival reports from Euromoney Institutional Investors state that, even though growth rates have historically been low in the sector, development plans for Dubai in the early 1990s continued to be made under the assumption that the annual real growth rate in its manufacturing sector would meet 7%.[45] As of 2019, the growth rate of manufacturing was only 0.3%. Similarly, the latest development program, Dubai Industrial Strategy 2030, has been launched with the expectation that Dubai will leapfrog into knowledge-based and innovation-focused manufacturing industries such as aerospace, pharmaceuticals, and medical equipment.[46] Hence, there appears to be a conscious effort from policymakers in Dubai to centre the economy around manufacturing; however, the economy has developed an orientation towards services.

From the literature reviewed about Dubai's development policies four steps taken by the government stand out; first, efforts in building the entrepot facilities; second, state investment in building infrastructure, services, and heavy industries; third, creation of a business-friendly legal environment; and fourth, an immigration-friendly labour policy.

(1) Building entrepot facilities: Dubai's entrepot history is relatively short compared to Singapore. Although it was a British protectorate before independence, the sheikhdom received little support for upgrading its port facilities.[47] Development initiatives were a result of rulers' efforts and financial support offered by the merchant community. For instance, Sheikh Rashid Bin Al-Maktoum dredged the Dubai Creek in 1950, built a bridge across the creek, and upgraded the port capacity to make the city more business capable by financing it through creek bonds from Dubai-based merchants, borrowing £400,000 from the Kuwait Development Fund, and additional capital from the Qatari royal family.[48] Dubai also benefited from the Indian and Persian merchant communities whose networks facilitated major trade flows through the sheikhdom from as early as 1890 which continued to support Dubai's growth as a trading hub.[49]These instances are evidence of Dubai's focus on becoming an entrepot before joining the UAE.

(2) State investment in infrastructure, services, and heavy industries: Post-independence, Dubai channelled hydrocarbon revenues to improve infrastructure and services that augmented its entrepot

[44] Hvidt, 'The Dubai Model of Development', p.404.
[45] "Euromoney; London", Periodical, (1997), World Economic Analysis, United Arab Emirates Document no.:198889294, ProQuest One Business.
[46] "Dubai Industrial Strategy 2030", *United Arab Emirates Government Portal*, 2021, https://u.ae/en/about-theuae/ strategies-initiatives-and-awards/local-governments-strategies-and-plans/dubai-industrial-strategy-2030.
[47] Davidson, 'Dubai', p.67-69.
[48] Ibid.
[49] Fatma Al-Sayegh, "Merchants' Role In A Changing Society: The Case Of Dubai, 1900–90", *Middle Eastern Studies* 34, no. 1 (1998): 87-102, doi:10.1080/00263209808701211.

facilities, thus encouraging industrialisation. The following excerpt from an archival newspaper article demonstrates this.

"Beyond Oil – Dubai's 'Industrial Revolution' points the way"

"It is no accident that Dubai is leading the way in a policy of alternative development to oil…The country needed a diversified, economic base, and this, it was clear, would have to be created. Dubai traditionally looked at trade and the sea. These, therefore, had to be the point of departure for industrial expansion. ***First, there would have to be a deep-water port of huge capacity, the relevant industries that could make as many raw materials as possible that existed locally or could be economically brought in****. From these and other simple expedients, concepts of the industrial future began to arise."*[50]

Infrastructure projects taken up between 1970-85 such as Port Rashid, Jebel Ali Port, Dubai Dry Docks, and the expansion of the Dubai International Airport, are examples of construction projects that strengthen Dubai's transportation systems.[51]These ventures featured technologically advanced facilities, as demonstrated by the following archival article –

"Sophisticated facilities"

"The Sheikh has created the world's largest dry dock and the most comprehensive and sophisticated engineering facilities in the Middle East…A British manufacturer of the heavy plant went round the workshops and was amazed to find that Dubai's dry dock had facilities almost identical to those in his own factory."[52]

The government also invested in electricity, roads and transport systems, water desalination and supply systems, schools, and hospitals.[53] Dubai also initiated investments in social infrastructure through government-linked companies to promote it as the business hub in the Middle East. A key development was the establishment of its flagship airline 'Emirates' in 1985. The 'Emirates' follows the hub-and-spoke model of connectivity, where Dubai is the hub. This made Dubai an international destination. It also complimented Dubai's target for becoming a global logistics hub by augmenting air connectivity and making freight movement via sea-air combinations possible.[54]To promote industrialisation, state investment into capital

[50] "Beyond Oil", Newspaper Article, (1979), HS2305266500, Financial Times Historical Archive, Gale Financial Times Historical Archive 1888-2016.
[51] Richard Johns, "No Limit To Dubai's Ambition", Newspaper Article, (1972),HS2300974852, Financial Times Historical Archive, Gale Financial Times Historical Archive 1888-2016.
[52] "Dubai Dry Docks III - Sophisticated Facilities, HS2303861035", Newspaper Articles, (1979), Financial Times Historical Archive, Gale Financial Times Historical Archive 1888-2016.
[53] Shihab Ghanem, *Industrialization In The United Arab Emirates* (Aldershot [England]: Avebury, 1992).
[54] Rodrigue, Jean-Paul. *Developing The Logistics Sector: The Role Of Public Policy Dubai, Morocco, Panama*

intensive industries such as aluminium smelters (DUBAL), steel fabrication plants, cement factories, etc. were set up to aid construction, and subsequently, build more linkages to industrialise.[55] In addition, the government has giant profitable SOEs in virtually every sector, and where it does not directly own them, it follows an embedded autonomy approach where trusted members of the royal family are either appointed to the board of private companies or buy a small equity share through its sovereign wealth fund.[56] Under an unofficial umbrella term Dubai Inc., the government of Dubai owns Dubai Ports World, JAFZA, infrastructure giant Nakheel and Emaar, Du (telecom provider), etc. This structure provided significant control to the ruler over companies crucial to Dubai's aim to become an entrepot city and allowed for quick, efficient decisions to be taken in this direction.[57] Thus, infrastructure investments in ports, real estate construction and other services were built by the state to support its entrepot potential and invite foreign firms.

(3) Business-friendly policies: The emirate also constructed a policy environment that was conducive to attracting foreign firms. An essential component of this was the introduction of the free zone concept. The Commercial Companies Law of 1984 was a federal UAE law that held restrictive regulations, such as a local partnership with an Emirati and 40% local purchases.[58] However, Dubai initiated a free zone policy to create a separate jurisdiction in which foreign firms could operate under Emirate's pro-business regulations to encourage the relocation of MNCs.[59] The first case was the construction of the Jebel Ali Free Zone, which was set up in 1985 adjacent to Jebel Ali Port, with ready to move in office complexes, industrial sites, warehouses and was complete with leisure facilities for businessmen including hotels and golf courses.[60] JAFZA was established with Dubai's ambition to become a manufacturing distribution point for the Gulf.[61] Like Singapore, Dubai also aimed to use its entrepot facilities to invite foreign firms to re-export and then diversify to manufacturing.

(4) Open-immigration labour policy: Dubai allowed firms operating within free zones to bring in foreign talent as required with no limits, as the local labour force was not enough to supply the expected demand.[62] From construction of ports to managing SOEs and bringing businesses in the free zones and

And Colombia As Maritime Logistics Platforms. ResearchGate, 2017.

[55] Kristian Coates Ulrichsen, *The United Arab Emirates: Power, Politics And Policy-Making* (Routledge, 2017).

[56] Martin Hvidt, "Public − Private Ties And Their Contribution To Development: The Case Of Dubai", *Middle Eastern Studies* 43, no. 4 (2007): 557-577, doi:10.1080/00263200701348862.

[57] Hvidt, 'The Dubai Model'.

[58] Davidson, 'Dubai',p.114-119

[59] Ibid.

[60]"For Space Age Executives, A Grass Golf Course In The Desert", Newspaper article, (1979),HS2305266500, Financial Times Historical Archive, Gale Financial Times Historical Archive 1888-2016.

[61]Patrick Cockburn, "Jebel Ali - Port Is Test Case For Gulf Trade", Newspaper Article, (1982),HS2304444069, Financial Times Historical Archive, Gale Financial Times Historical Archive 1888-2016.

[62]Ulrichsen, 'The United Arab Emirates', p.86-136

mainland Dubai, there was a high reliance on expatriate labour for both white-collar and blue-collar jobs.[63] At the same time, it allowed firms to import cheap labour and initiated policies for the subsequent Emiratisation of the labour force.[64] Davidson highlights that these policies implemented extensively from the 1980s initially focused on targeted training and education of Emiratis and prepared them to join the workforce.[65] Since public sector jobs provided better salaries and perks, Emirati citizens preferred to work in the public sector over the private sector.[66] To address this issue, federal laws were passed in the late 1980s that granted special pension funds and guaranteed employee rights to Emirati citizenship.[67] This led the private sector to perceive national citizens as highly protected and less productive than foreign talent, and led them to continue hiring internationally for semi-skilled and skilled jobs.[68] The Kafil sponsorship system is another Emiratisation measure that requires a foreign entrepreneur to partner with a UAE citizen for doing business on the mainland. Davidson states that although the aim was to enable technology transfer and help nationals gain experience, the measure has had a parasitic effect, where nationals receive profits from private firms as a citizenship perk.[69] Although Emiratisation programs have continued, they have yielded little success. As of 2020, only 7.46% of the total labour force is UAE nationals.[70] This demonstrates a strong difference relative to Singapore.

The effect of the above policies has been that Dubai diversified its economy beyond oil, elevated itself from being a regional entrepot to a global logistics hub, the region's financial headquarters, a tourist hub, and created a foundation for information and communication sectors. Dubai had limited hydrocarbon reserves relative to Abu Dhabi, 4 billion barrels of oil compared to 92 billion barrels held by the latter, and was able to diversify its economy such that oil accounted for less than 1% of its GDP today.[71] Its oil production peaked at 410,000 barrels per day in 1991 and has been falling since.[72]After commerce, finance and insurance activities contribute around 9% to the GDP of Dubai. It is central to Islamic Financial Services and is home to around $222 billion of the $2 trillion that Islamic financial markets hold in combined assets.[73] It is useful to highlightthe following archival newspaper article here:

[63] Ibid.
[64] Christopher Davidson, *The United Arab Emirates: A Study In Survival*, 1st ed.,p.150-54 (Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2005).
[65] Ibid
[66] Ibid
[67] Ibid
[68]Hugo Toledo, "The Political Economy Of Emiratization In The UAE", *Journal Of Economic Studies* 40, no. 1 (2013): 42, doi:10.1108/01443581311283493.
[69]Davidson, 'The United Arab Emirates', p.152.
[70]"Share Of UAE Nationals In The Workforce", *Vision 2021 National Agenda*, 2021, https://www.vision2021.ae/en/national-agenda-2021/list/card/share-of-uae-nationals-in-the-workforce.
[71]"Oil In Dubai: History & Timeline", *Gulfnews.Com*, accessed 1 September 2021, https://gulfnews.com/business/energy/oil-in-dubai-history--timeline-1.578333
[72] Ibid.

"Dubai." The United Arab Emirates. Financial Times, 10 May 1976

"Progress towards industrialisation is slow but steady…The natural trading evolution of the Dubai merchant family businesses is also leading the Emirate towards the financial service industries…In the short history of the merchant traders of the Gulf States, a natural evolutionary pattern appears to be establishing itself…So it would seem that for the immediate future Dubai will still look to its income from oil and trading, whether in goods or money rather than industry."[74]

Domestic banks in Dubai are global leaders in Islamic financing and were also crucial in financing the emirate's development.[75] While transactions grew as Dubai's relevance as a global trading hub grew, the quadrupling of oil prices in 1974 was a key factor in the increase in foreign and local banks and the scope of financial transactions.[76] The Dubai Financial Market (DFM) was launched in 2000 and the Dubai International Financial Centre (DIFC) was created in 2004. It is a free zone dedicated specifically to financial services and follows English Common Law over regional Islamic law.[77] The DIFC hosts companies such as JP Morgan, Goldman Sachs, and other renowned investment banks. While it is successful as a centre of Islamic Banking, it is otherwise not as active as international financial centres. An example is the number of companies listed in the DFM, which is only 113.

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Another service-oriented development is the information and communication sector in Dubai. The creation of a dedicated free zone, the Dubai Internet City (DIC), in 1999 was the starting point for this. DIC is hailed as successful today by government sources and gulf media in terms of employment generation and the creation of a start-up ecosystem.[78] However, the information and communication sector contributes 4.1% to Dubai's GDP, and has a growth rate of only 0.3%.

It is evident that Dubai has been successful in diversifying its economy from hydrocarbon revenues and has been more efficient than other regional economies on this mission. However, despite driving infrastructure

[73]"Dubai Maintains Its Strong Position In The Islamic Financial Services Sector", *Oxford Business Group*, accessed 1 September 2021, https://oxfordbusinessgroup.com/overview/regional-base-dubai-solidifies-itsreputation- centre-sharia-compliant-financial-products.

[74]"Dubai", Newspaper article, (1976), HS2302972175, Financial Times Historical Archive, Gale Financial times Historical Archive 1888-2016.

[75]"Rise Of The UAE As A Banking Superpower", *The National News UAE*, 2011, https://www.thenationalnews.com/uae/rise-of-the-uae-as-a-banking-superpower-1.426904.

[76]Ibid.

[77]Ulrichsen, 'The United Arab Emirates', p.86-136

[78]Sam Bridge, "20 Years On: The Impact Of Dubai Internet City", *Arabian News*, 2019 https://www.arabianbusiness.com/technology/432010-20-years-on-the-impact-of-dubai-internet-city.

investments with an incentive to build an economy around manufacturing, the outcome has been an economy with strong service orientations. The next section provides explanations for this divergence.

Discussion

At the start of this study, three factors were noted to be different in this comparison: Dubai's high dependence on expatriates, its association with hydrocarbon revenues, and Singapore's location near Japanese industrialisation. This section uses these differences to explain the variance in Dubai's and Singapore's economic diversification.

First, there was a significant difference in the treatment of foreign labour and wage levels in Dubai and Singapore. Singapore suppressed wage levels, weakened labour rights, and promptly curbed excessive dependence on foreign talent. Dubai was unable to suppress wages, but strengthened labour rights for Emiratis and continued to have expatriates dominate the labour force in its economy. The emirate was unable to suppress wage levels because two labour economies operate in its territory: one of the UAE citizens and the other consisting of foreign talent. Since public-sector companies provide higher salaries, citizens are disincentivized from seeking employment in the private sector. As the emirate provides special rights to UAE citizens and strengthens their labour laws as part of their Emiratisation programme, it encouraged the private sector to employ foreign talent. This is the starkest difference in the development policies of the two city-states. Although Dubai focused on targeted education and training programs like Singapore, it was unsuccessful in embarking on the national labour force in the private sector due to their expectations for a premium salary.

This price distortion also has a far-fetching impact on Dubai's aspirations for building a knowledge-intensive manufacturing industry. Even though foreign talent in Dubai is underpaid relative to nationals, they are still paid twice as much as their home countries across jobs at all skill levels. Tong and Al Awad demonstrate that this is true not only for low-skilled and semi-skilled jobs, but also for high-skilled jobs by comparing the average wages of high-skilled expatriates from the US and the UK.[79] They compare their wage levels at home and in Dubai, control for purchasing power parities and find that the salaries are twice as that in their home countries. This salary structure is detrimental to high-value business activities, as their successful marketisation depends on production cost efficiency. For knowledge-intensive business models, R&D is one of the most expensive and crucial activities. Competition for such industries has historically arisen from the

[79]Tong, Qingxia, and Mouawiya Al Awad. "Diversity And Wage Inequality In The UAE Labor Market". *Journal Of Economics And International Business Management* 2, no. 3 (2014): 68.

global north and only recently from the global south (China). As employee costs in Dubai are twice those in developed countries, it makes innovative business models in the emirate incompetent in the face of global competition. This reasoning explains the challenges in the takeoff of the knowledge-intensive industry in Dubai.

Second, Dubai's diversification efforts had a convenient starting point relative to Singapore because of its hydrocarbon revenues. It received support in the form of financing infrastructure to upscale the emirate's entrepot facilities and more importantly allowed energy and capital-intensive industries such as aluminium smelters and steel fabrication plants to take off. Having hydrocarbon resources allowed Dubai to skip the first stage of industrialisation and begin with capital-intensive industries. This is justified because the emirate's natural advantage is the use of resource-intensive industries to develop. The facilities it set up were also technologically advanced as emphasised by the archival article in the case of engineering facilities at the Dubai Dry Dock. This emphasises that Dubai sought to attract similar high-value economic activities that were technologically advanced to its shores. This is understandable, especially since it had a small Emirati population, and any labour-intensive activity would have to be satisfied by importing cheap, unskilled foreign labour.

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The impact of initiating industrialisation through technologically advanced firms for development can be better explained using Helleiner's seminal work. Helleiner argued that Singapore could develop because it entered production chains by identifying a specific industry (electronics) to vertically integrate itself.[80] He argued that to scale to knowledge-intensive sectors it is easy to first relocate labour-intensive production processes of the industry and to then upgrade production activities vertically.[81] The logic is that even if R&D for labour-intensive activities is small, by relocating some part of the production chain, the opportunity to conduct research on making labour-intensive technology efficient increases, which itself is a skill-intensive process.[82] Since such production processes are conducted within MNCs, they would subsequently scale the model to optimise profits and adopt it across the firm. This further increases the scope of vertical technological upgrades in the economy.

Drawing information from the case study in reference to the above, Singapore's development model hinged on inviting labour-intensive manufacturing firms then developing a niche in electronics and knowledge-intensive industries. It was easier to invite firms, as labour-intensive industries are relatively easier to relocate

[80] G. K. Helleiner, "Manufactured Exports From Less-Developed Countries And Multinational Firms", *The Economic Journal* 83, no. 329 (1973): 21, doi:10.2307/2231098.
[81] Ibid, p.33.
[82] Ibid, p.33.

because of limited capital investments. As wages began to increase due to full employment, they directed labour-intensive industries to Malaysia and Indonesia and retained knowledge-intensive activities in the country. Singapore's experience demonstrated that knowledge-intensive industries cannot be uprooted for relocation; such industries are cultivated, albeit through foreign firms, over time. In the case of Dubai, except for construction, there was no requirement of labour-intensive manufacturing due to their small population size and as per Helleiner's theory relocating technologically advanced to a developing country is unrealistic. This comparison illustrates that it is difficult to create knowledge-intensive industries without first building a base of the specific industry in the economy.

The third difference was the potential benefits that Singapore could have reaped as being adjacent to Japanese industrialisation. As highlighted in the case study, Singapore had the opportunity to approach firms as the region was experiencing growth, but this was the internal condition that allowed the strategy to succeed. It is unlikely that Dubai was disadvantaged by the lack of this factor because the prime benefit for the East Asian and Southeast Asian countries was that it brought labour-intensive manufacturing. Second, concerns about Dubai's missing out on scaling towards knowledge-intensive industries because of an unfavourable geographic location are also unlikely. This is emphasised by Moyo's work, where she argues that in instances of successful historical industrialisation such as Germany, Japan, Korea, and Singapore, there was a pool of locally available skilled human capital which made industrialisation feasible.[83] Since wage levels of nationals are much higher in Dubai, it would require firms to import foreign talent for knowledge-intensive industries and thus reduce operational ease.

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Moyo's work can also be used as a guideline to explain why the emirate was able to diversify relatively easily in the service sector. Being an entrepot, Dubai had merchants settled from the Indian and Persian communities as early as 1890, and their expertise lay in trade and financial services. Al Sayehg also notes that the role of merchants in the development of Dubai's economy between 1900-1990 has been crucial in improving the emirate's potential as the global logistics hub.[84] Human capital in these fields is rich with generations of experience in trade and Islamic financial services, both of which have played an important role in Dubai's development.

The experience of Dubai's development adds a rich understanding of the role of domestic policies, demography, and the stage of industrial invitation in influencing firms' decision to relocate manufacturing facilities and subsequent knowledge-intensive development. It explains how in the absence of a suitable labour

[83]Theresa Moyo, "Development Of Human Capital For Industrialisation: Drawing On The Experiences Of Best Performers", *Africa Development* 43, no. 2 (2018).
[84]Al-Sayegh, 'Merchants' role in a changing society'.

force for manufacturing, the entrepot oriented services caught on better in response to the policy initiatives taken by the government. This study has not focused on the role of bilateral and multilateral trade agreements on FDI inflows in either country. This direction holds the potential to unearth how the political processes of both city-states played a role in their ability to attract foreign firms.

Conclusion

This study compares Dubai's and Singapore's development policies to explain the divergence in their developmental outcomes. It provided insight into how wage policies and the kind of manufacturing being invited for production at home were decisive in Dubai's service-oriented development. By studying development policies initiated retrospectively and assessing their present-day impact, the author has researched economic development in Gulf countries, where historical data are often inaccessible. This study is important for three reasons. First, it contributes to the literature by demonstrating the centrality of manufacturing to Dubai's policymakers. Second, by discussing the effect of domestic policies, particularly in wage levels, the study is of interest to policymakers in resource-rich developing economies and emphasises the dangers of this in a Gulf economy that is well diversified. Third, this research provides academics interested in the study of 'late development economies' with a rich avenue for comparison between the two countries which were previously not assessed against each other.

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China's Climate Diplomacy and Energy Security

By Sakshi Venkateswaran

Abstract

As China continues to assert itself on the global stage, its energy policies are increasingly intertwined with its broader Geopolitical ambitions. The country's investments in renewable energy are not just about reducing carbon emissions; they also serve as a strategic tool for enhancing energy security and reducing dependency on foreign energy imports. Moreover, China's approach to climate change diplomacy is shaping its relationships with other major powers, particularly the United States, influencing the dynamics of international cooperation on environmental issues. While China's progress in renewable energy is commendable, significant challenges remain, including the need to increase the domestic utilisation of renewable sources and afresh the logistical and infrastructural barriers that impede further development. Ultimately, China's journey toward becoming a renewable energy superpower will be a critical factor in global effort to combat climate Change and redefine the future of international relations

Key words: China, Renewable Energy, Climate Change Diplomacy, Energy Security

In the last two years, China has become the leading destination for energy investment. A significant portion of this investment lies in the renewable energy sector of China that has undergone rapid development, accounting for about 45% of global investment(126.6 billion)[1] in 2017. The country overtook Germany in the production of solar panels and solar energy generation in 2014 and in 2015 China's production of wind energy accounted for one third of global wind energy capacity and needless to say, China has always dominated the market in the production of hydro energy. This has led to widespread speculation of the country being a "renewable energy superpower" following a report by the Global Commission on the Geopolitics of Energy. It has also taken active steps to combat climate change in the form of revamping its energy policies. However, these positive shifts are not without issues. China still remains a net importer of coal and highest emitter of greenhouse gases. This article attempts to understand China's climate change diplomacy against the backdrop of its energy security concerns and if there is any truth to China becoming a renewableenergy superpower.

[1] Global Trends in Renewable Energy Investment 2018 | Capacity4dev. (n.d.). Retrieved from capacity4dev.europa.eu website: https://capacity4dev.europa.eu/library/global-trends-renewable-energy-investment-2018_en

The 2018 UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) report highlighted that there was only 12 years to control global warming temperatures to 1.5 °C following [2] which even a half degree rise would prove catastrophic in the form of unprecedented floods, droughts and millions being pushed towards poverty. Even maintaining the 1.5 °C would require a complete overhaul in the energy,[3] transportation, infrastructure and industrial sectors and global carbon emissions would need to reach net zero by 2050. The Paris Climate Accord was instrumentalized with the intention of capping carbon emissions and containing global warming temperatures below 2 °C. Since the Paris Agreement in 2015, perceptions toward climate change have seen massive shifts following extreme weather patterns in several countries. For one, the US has been strong in their intention to withdraw from the Paris Agreement while several others have taken steps to address climate change by decisive shifts in environmental and energy policies. Chief among them has been China's actions to counter the climate crisis by investing in renewable energy.

With a population of more than 1.4 billion and a boom in growth since the 2000s, China has been experiencing rising living standards and industrialization. As a consequence, China's energy consumption has seen a surge as well. Historically, China's major sources of energy have been its vast domestic coal reserves and imports of crude oil and natural gas from Russia and Middle East. This has resulted in China competing with the US for the position of being the largest emitter of carbon dioxide. In acknowledgment of this, the Chinese have been the first to invest billions in renewable energy.

China's Energy Landscape

China's investment in renewable energy began as early as 1949 with the construction of the world's largest hydroelectric plant, the Three Gorges Dam[4] over the Yangtze River. The reason the Chinese shifted towards hydroelectric energy was the rising dependency on imports and harmful effects to the environment due to the usage of coal. Prior to the Sino-Soviet split in 1960, China had been importing close to 50% of its oil from the Soviet Union. However, a combination of losing the Soviet's support, economic collapse and a shift from being a net

[2] Watts, J. (2018, October 13). We have 12 years to limit climate change catastrophe, warns UN. Retrieved from the Guardian website: https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2018/oct/08/global-warming-must-not-exceed-15c-warns-landmark-un-report

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exporter of oil to being a net importer in 1993 accelerated China's desire for energy self-sufficiency. Since the 2000s the country's oil and natural gas imports from Russia and Middle East have exhibited a dramatic increase. In 2016 China's imports of crude oil reached a record high of 68% [5]while natural gas imports hit 33% in 2017.

Concern regarding the emission of greenhouse gases and inefficient use of coal for power generation prompted a shift in the subsequent energy policies that China released. The Chinese established several economic and technological policies to promote energy conservation. An energy saving branch consisting of a three-tier system was set up within the central and local governments and enterprises in the 1980s. Under the 1988 Energy Conservation Law numerous policies were implemented beginning with the 'Energy Conservation Propaganda Week'[6] in an attempt to increase energy efficiency and energy conservation. The government also began providing loans and tax incentives to entrepreneurs who developed small hydropower and wind power plants.

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Even the 13th Five Year Plan by the Energy Bureau of China revieled its plans to restrict coal to 58%[7] of its energy mix by 2020 as opposed to previous levels of more than 60%. The country's shift to renewable energy has garnered itself the title of being the world's renewable energy superpower"; a title that has increasingly found its way into academic and policy circles.

China's Climate Diplomacy

Climate change or rather, the climate crisis has metaphorically lit a fire under the member states signed on to the Paris Agreement to combat the greatest threat posed to mankind. Germany has rallied several EU member states to achieve "climate neutrality" by 2050[8] with net zero carbon emissions. Amidst mounting public pressure and weekly climate protests by students (Fridays for Future), several governments have convened in Bonnin Germany9 from June 17th to 27th of this year for a climate summit to address the carbon emissions. China has been proactive in

[5] China's Overall Energy Balance. (n.d.). Retrieved April 25, 2024, from www.planete-energies.com website: https://www.planete-energies.com/en/media/article/chinas-overall-energy-balance

[6] Jiang, K., & Hu, X. (2008). Energy and environment in China (L. Song & W. T. Woo, Eds.). Retrieved April 25, 2024, from JSTOR website: https://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt24h83c.23

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[8] Germany to support EU climate neutrality by 2050 - leaked documents. (2019, June 17). Retrieved April 25, 2024, from Clean Energy Wire website: https://www.cleanenergywire.org/news/germany-support-eu-climate-neutrality-20SO-leaked-documents

[9] Archive, F. *our* online. (n.d.). Climate change: Diplomats and climate experts meet in Gennany as Arctic ice melts. The New Indian Express. Retrieved from https://www.newindianexpress.com/world/2019/Jun/17/climate-change-diplomats-and-climate-experts-meet-in-gennany-as-arctic-ice-melts-1991478.html

that regard; having already shifted to electric vehicles and invested in technologies of carbon capture and storage among other initiatives. China's share of electricity generation from renewable energy accounted for 26.4%in 2017.[10] The country has also made large investments in the power sector in Africa, specifically for electricity generation in the last 20 years. They contributed up to 30% of capacities of which 56%of the total capacity comprised of renewable sources in 2016.

Given these numbers regarding renewable energy and its position on climate change, it might be reasonable to speculate that China's behavior in the international system — its dispute over the South China Sea (SCS) with the Southeast Asian countries, challenging the established status quo of the US as a superpower, the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) and increasing energy diversification in Russia, Central Asia, Latin America and Africa — is an attempt at addressing its current energy insecurity.

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China claims the entirety of the SCS on the basis of historicity, what they refer to as the nine dash line; a claim that is contested by several countries in Southeast Asia. According to reports by the World Bank the SCS has proven reserves of natural gas and oil. China's rising energy security concerns over the Malacca Strait, Strait of Lombok, Sunda and Ombai Weitar and the Persian Gulf compound its behavior regarding the SCS as more than 50% of China's trade travels these waters. Another issue that arises is US's presence and influence it wields in the region. In the last 10 years China's imports of crude oil from the Middle East has been on the deadline. Russia, Angola, Brazil and Venezuela have increasingly taken up a major portion in China's energy mix (14%, 12%, 5.1% and 4% respectively). The influence that the US wields in the Middle East and the general instability pose a very credible threat to China's imports. Recently, with the US unilaterally leaving the Iran nuclear deal and the return of sanctions on the country, any state continuing to trade with Iran has been under economic fire from the US(China, India, Turkey etc.). In such a scenario China's focus on renewable energy would provean alternative as well as a challenge to the US's power in the international system.

Addressing the climate crisis has been on the agenda of energy policies of several countries. That China has taken a massive step towards that end impacts US's credibility on that front. The Trump administration has made their position on climate change explicitly clear with their decision to withdraw from the Paris Climate Accord.

[10] China's Overall Energy Balance. (n.d.). Retrieved April 25, 2024, from www.planete-energies.com website: https://www.planete-energies.com/en/media/article/chinas-overall-energy-balance

China's renewable energy generation will damage US's optics. Barring this, investment in renewable energy could have an effect on the economies of oil rich countries in the Middle East. China's ambitions to challenge the existing global order by strengthening their military and economy depend upon its strategies to combattheir energy insecurity. Hence, the strategic value in investing in renewable energy.

However, China's energy shifts do not come without its own set of logistical issues. In spite of leading most of the world in the production of wind, solar and hydro energy, the percent of these in domestic electricity generation remains low. Only 19.2%, 3.8% and 1.2% of hydro, wind and solar power was utilized for domestic electricity generation in spite of a net installed capacity of 344 GW, 148.6 GW and 77.5 GW respectively in 2016. Though there has been incremental rises in these numbers, China still has a long way to go before attaining energy self-sufficiency. China still relies on heavy imports of coal from its neighbours such as Australia, Mongolia, Indonesia and Russia. The country's usage of coal rose by 1% in 2018 though its share in the energy mix decreased to 59%, a 1.4% decrease from 2017.

Conclusion

The blame and burden for finding a solution to the climate crisis cannot solely rest on the shoulders of developing economies contrary to frequent statements made by the US President who blames Russia, China and India[11] for climate change while ignoring the US's emission of greenhouse gases. The bottom line is that the US and most of the West had almost 200 years to industrialize and develop their economies. Countries such as India and China have only experienced industrialization and a developing economy in the last 50 or so years. In such a situation, the scale to measure with whom the blame for climate change lays is skewed. Specifically in the case of China, a burgeoning population drove the need for rapid growth. Therefore, it is still a commendable fact that China has been environmentally conscious in the development of its economy. It remains one of the few countries on track to meet the Paris Climate Agreement targets for carbon emissions.

All this aside, it is *rather* premature to refer to China as a "renewable energy superpower" at this point in time. The numbers regarding the use of renewables in domestic electricity generation do not paint a picture of a country poised to change its energy dependency from fossil fuels to renewable energy. China's goal of becoming a global superpower by 2049 does not just include powering up economically and militarily.

[11] Reilly, K. (2019, June 5). President Trump Discusses Climate Change With Prince Charles and Blames Other Countries for Inaction, Despite U.S. Emissions Surge. Retrieved from Time website: https://time.com/5601169/donald-trump-prince-charles-climate-change/

Even a developed economy implies growth across the entire country and not just in certain provinces, as is the present situation in China. But it is increasingly becoming evident that any country that reaches their target to combat climate change along with being an economic and military powerhouse stand to become a global influencer and dictate the terms of the international system. If recent developments are any indication, China needs to continue its sustained efforts at decarbonization to attain the influence and recognition it seeks from the international community.

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Beyond unipolarity and the Euro–American horizons of IR thought: Reflections on the emergent world order

Anand Sreekumar

Abstract

Amidst the continuing conflict in Ukraine, the Russian President Vladimir Putin made a notable pronouncement of the end of the US-led unipolar world and the rise of a multipolar world order. Against this backdrop of the debate on polarity, my research paper seeks to address the following questions. To what extent have global institutions, mainstream IRT and academia as well as policies reflected if not reinforced Euro-American norms and interests? Does this purported shift to multipolarity require a shift in institutional and theoretical practices reflecting the broad concerns of the Global South? Using global and regional case-studies like India (especially in regard to the representation within academia and the glass ceiling affecting institutional practices like Young Professionals Programme), I draw from critical and post-colonial theoretical IR frameworks to argue for a comprehensive reform of the prevalent global institutional and theoretical structures.

Keywords: Multipolarity, Unipolarity, Euro-American norms, Global south, post-colonial theory, Global institutions, IR theory, Power dynamics, Russia-Ukraine conflict.

The Euro-American hegemony runs very deep, pervading a range of institutions, norms, global practices, knowledge and even academic teaching practices.

The month of February this year witnessed one of the most defining moments of the post-Cold war era. Marking a major escalation of the simmering conflict that began with the insurgency in Eastern Ukraine in 2014, Russia invaded Ukraine resulting in thousands of casualties and millions of refugees.[1] This conflict inevitably has given rise to a wide range of debates in the global arena, including global governance, institutions, conflict and security. In this regard, one of the most interesting debates that have seen a resurgence is the question of the future of the world order.

The notion of a shift to multipolar world order has emerged as a prominent theme in the wake of this crisis.

This is best exemplified by Vladimir Putin in his address to the St Petersburg International Economic Forum Plenary session, "a multipolar system of international relations is now being formed. It is an irreversible process; it is happening before our eyes and is objective in nature." It is indeed widely recognised that the brief period of unipolarity, dominated by the US, following the end of the Cold War, has given way to the era of multipolar world order, characterised by 'new powerful and increasingly assertive centres.' [2] However, even as this shift to multipolarity seems almost deterministic, there persist legitimate questions on the conduciveness of the current world order to the emergence of these multiple power-centres.

Against this backdrop, my work shall be organised as follows. I commence with a discussion on the shift towards multipolarity, providing the conceptual capital of notions like power and polarity. This shall be followed by my argument that the current global order, exemplified in its norms, institutions, and intellectual resources, fall severely short of the expectations required of the multipolar world order. To illustrate this point, I draw from the case study of India, in particular. I conclude by providing some prescriptions necessary for the transition to multipolarity to be meaningful. Towards this pursuit, I draw from critical post-colonial theoretical frameworks, employing secondary literature review as the overarching method.

Shifts towards multipolarity

Before proceeding to the premise of the shift towards multipolarity, a few conceptual clarifications are in order. Polarity in this context is understood as the modes of distribution of power in the international system. Typically, it is classified as unipolar (e.g. US hegemony in the post-Cold-War era), bipolar (e.g. Russia-US dominance during the Cold War era) and multipolar (e.g. Europe during the pre-World War era). [3] While there are myriad debates on what constitutes power in the global landscape, I draw from the useful typology provided most famously by Joseph Nye – hard, soft, and smart power. Hard power is often described as the typical carrot and stick approach, involving coercion and is often measured in terms of "population size, territory, geography, natural resources, military force, and economic strength." On the other hand, soft power is described as the ability to influence state preference using intangible attributes like "attractive personality, culture, political values, institutions, and policies" resulting in the perception of legitimacy or moral authority. Smart power is often understood as the instrumental deployment of a combination of both to secure political ends.[4]

The end of the Cold War era, prematurely lauded as the end of history by a scholar, resulted in a brief unipolar moment of US hegemony. As Putin puts it, the US was the predominant power with a limited

group of allies which resulted in "all business practices and international relations … interpreted solely in the interests of this power."[2] However, a range of factors in the twenty-first century led to a crisis in American leadership. The interventionist atrocities carried out in the wake of the September 11 attacks as well as the crisis of global capitalism during the financial crisis of 2008 led to a crisis in American leadership.[5] This period also saw the emergence of new powers like the BRICS nations, who posed a serious challenge to the notion of unipolarity.[3]

As Amitav Acharya and Burry Buzan argue, this diffusion of power has resulted in the 'rise of the rest' characterised by the absence of a single superpower. Instead, a number of great and regional powers have emerged with their respective institutions and models of growth. Such a world order is also shaped by a greater role accorded to non-state actors including global organisations, corporations, and social movements as well as non-state actors.[6] Thus, the current global landscape is often termed as multipolar, multi-civilizational and multiplex offering myriad opportunities and benefits for states.[7] The crisis in Ukraine has only bolstered this multipolar moment even further. Consider India as a case in point. The likes of the U.S. (and even China) have competed for India's affection and India's seemingly pro-Russia stance has not prevented Delhi's deeper engagement with her counterparts in the West. These initiatives can only enhance India's great power status, resulting in potentially a higher degree of multipolarity.[8]

Thus, even as there is an increasing scholarly and policy-based consensus on the shift towards multipolarity, there remain important reservations on whether the current global arena is equipped to deal with the seismic shifts posed by the emergent world order. In other words, does this purported shift to multipolarity require a shift in institutional and theoretical practices reflecting the broad concerns of the Global South? In the next section, I answer in the affirmative, arguing that the dominant norms, institutions, and intellectual resources are broadly skewed towards the preservation of Euro-American hegemony.

The maintenance of Euro-American hegemony: norms, institutions, and academia

The exercise of U.S. hegemonic power involved the projection of a set of norms and their embrace by elites in other nations.

Drawing from Persaud, I argue that dominant powers forge an "academic/foreign policy/security 'complex' dedicated to the maintenance of a hegemonic world order." [9] Such a complex is constituted by an intricate network of norms, institutions and theoretical/ intellectual practices which seek to uphold the status quo. In

this section, I examine each of these aspects in detail.

Consider norms, in the first instance. Norms can be defined broadly as the "collective expectations for the proper behaviour of actors."[10] When certain norms which serve certain interests are considered as general interests, it results in hegemony. The dominant powers socialise and hegemonise other countries into an ideological worldview that best serves their interests. In other words, actors have to orient themselves according to a 'logic of appropriateness' framed by these intersubjective notions. In the post World War era, the Roosevelt-led US administration projected a series of norms and principles guided by liberal multilateralism, to shape the post-war international order. Such a form of 'institutional materiality' posited a clear separation between the political and the economic realm. The embrace of these norms outside the US occurred through various modes of socialisation including external inducement (e.g. Britain and France), direct intervention and internal reconstruction (e.g. Germany and Japan) as well as military and economic dominance.[11]

The exercise of U.S. hegemonic power involved the projection of a set of norms and their embrace by elites in other nations. Socialisation did occur since U.S. leaders were largely successful in inducing other nations to buy into this normative order. But the processes through which socialisation occurred varied from nation to nation. In Britain and France, shifts in norms were accomplished primarily by external inducement; in Germany and Japan, they resulted from direct intervention and internal reconstruction. In all cases, the spread of norms of liberal multilateralism was heavily tied to U.S. military and economic dominance. [11]

Such norms are often manipulated (and flouted) to their advantage. For example, consider the liberal norm of conditional sovereignty, linked to human rights, spearheaded by the likes of the US and many countries in Western Europe. Assuming the primacy of the individual over the state, it has legitimised intervention on 'humanitarian' grounds. However, the execution of these norms has been far more uniform as best exemplified in their differential application in the wake of the atrocities in Kosovo and Rwanda. An intra-state conflict resulting in a humanitarian crisis in Kosovo precipitated a successful multilateral intervention. However, the same decisiveness was starkly absent with regard to a similar (if not greater) conflict in Rwanda which resulted in almost 800,000 casualties and more than two million refugees. Multiple studies have traced the rationale of intervention to the "strategic interests in Europe's future and the NATO alliance." Rwanda on the other hand was considered peripheral to the national interests of either Western Europe or the US.[12] This substantiates the argument that the norm of 'humanitarian intervention' is often tied more to brutal national interests rather than the protection of human rights.

A range of global norms, ranging from economic norms, dealing with the management of finance, to those dealing with water governance has been shown to be skewed towards the interests of great powers rather than participative in nature.

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onsider another instance. The Liberal International Order (LIO) asserts the concept of 'conditional sovereignty' where sovereign nation-states are bound to look after their entire populations. A failure to that end invites interference and comments from other nation-states and external agencies. This norm has been pushed forward and spearheaded by first-world countries like the US and Western Europe, much to their advantage. Contrary to this, the neo-Westphalian order is a proponent of the 'classical sovereignty' model where nation-states are sovereign within their own territory to administer in any manner they want, obviously with a necessary reverence to human rights, but others are not authorized to interfere in the same. China and other authoritarian regimes have been advocating for the same. So, while the LIO talks about the equality of every individual, the neo-Westphalian order focuses more on the equality of all nation-states.[13] Similarly, a range of global norms, ranging from economic norms, dealing with the management of finance, to those dealing with water governance has been shown to be skewed towards the interests of great powers rather than participative in nature.

Similarly, Cox and Gill have argued how global governance through institutions play a critical role in maintaining hegemony.[14] The multilateral institutions which the US had created both in the political and economic realm have played a critical role in the sustenance of Euro-American (and especially the U.S.) dominance. In other words, even as the international world order shifts to a multipolar one, it has not exactly been accompanied by multilateralism.[15] While multilateralism puts forward the interests of multiple states, most so-called multilateral institutions reflect and reinforce prevailing power configurations.

Consider the United Nations, for instance. It cannot be a mere coincidence that the UN has been ineffectual against most of the contemporary global challenges like climate change, the pandemic etc. when it has not been responsive to the reality of the increasing number of power centres in the multipolar world order.[16] The most glaring evidence is the UNSC. Despite an increasing number of voices on the rise of Asia, Africa, and Latin America, the P5 includes only one representative from Asia (which is China) and no members from either Africa or Latin America. In addition, while there has been more than a threefold rise in UN membership, the number of non-permanent seats has only risen from 11 to 15. Even at the administrative levels, the lack of non-western representation is indeed a concern. Besides the absence of a UNSC

permanent seat, it is also disheartening to see that it has been years since the Young Professionals Program has been held for the likes of India.

These same institutions are often undermined by the likes of the US, under the facade of NATO. Consider the harrowing intervention in Libya. The NATO intervention on supposedly 'humanitarian' grounds in 2011 led to the death of Muamar Gaddafi, violating the legal structures of the UN charter in the process and resulting in a proxy war. The result has been a prolonged state of near-anarchy characterised by arbitrary detentions, executions, mass killings and kidnappings. [17]

The WTO is plagued with similar issues. While it ostensibly reflects the 'global' norm of neoliberal free trade, it is "structured and ordered to promote monopolistic competition rather than genuine free trade. These institutional roadblocks include the exclusion of developing countries from several informal decision-making sessions, lack of transparency, coercive decision-making in meetings involving developing countries, astronomical costs involved in Dispute settlement Understanding and so on. The result is that the Western countries have an overwhelming advantage against their counterparts from the Global South. [18]

Lastly, as highlighted earlier, the international policy making apparatus cannot be divorced from the intellectual resources churned by IR academia. Zvobgo, in an insightful piece, has argued how the big three of IR theory – realism, liberalism and constructivism – are built on Eurocentric, raced and racist foundations.[19] The role of imperial policymakers in shaping contemporary IR knowledge has been well acknowledged. Kwaku Danso and Kwesi Aninghave argued about the prevalence of methodological whiteness, which projects White experience as a universal experience.[20] It is no coincidence that the principles of the Westphalian treaty are not significantly different from those underlying the current UN charter. Acharya has argued that racism was integral to the emergence of the US-led world order exemplified in the scant focus on colonialism in UNDHR as well as the "privileging of sovereign equality' over 'racial equality.'[21]

These forms of methodological whiteness have had devastating impacts across the world. The projection and the forceful projection of the Weberian state as the fundamental unit of security and conflict management has resulted in disastrous policy-level consequences in Africa which have always been characterised by a range of hybrid political systems beyond the nation-state.[20] Similarly, much of the problematic policies carried out today based on the binaries of 'developed' v/s 'developing' nations have direct continuities with the legacy of empire and race reflected in dichotomies like 'civilised v/s uncivilised'.

There also exists historical amnesia of racism in academia, whether in terms of representation or teaching practices. For example, in the US, only 8% of the faculty identify themselves as Black or Latino. Similarly, the configurations of colonialism and racism in building the modern world order are either glossed over or overlooked in most academia.[19] Indian academia is a case in point. As Behera argues, despite the strong tradition of Indian independent IR thought as well as the long history of colonialism, Indian IR has imbibed a definite set of givens including "the infallibility of the Indian state modelled after the Westphalian nation-state as well as a thorough internalization of the philosophy of political realism and positivism.[22] Rohan Mukherjee, for instance, has highlighted an unpublished survey of IR faculty within India wherein the majority self-identified as either liberal or realist.[23]

Thus, the Euro-American hegemony runs very deep, pervading a range of institutions, norms, global practices, knowledge and even academic teaching practices. In the next section, I conclude by outlining certain prescriptions for a future world order which responds to and is far more conducive to the inevitable multipolar shifts.

Conclusion

India has umpteen intellectual resources from Gita and the Sangam literature to stellar modern political philosophers like Gandhi, Tagore and so on, which need to be strategically combined with contemporary IR notions and questions of security, justice and so on.

This paper first established the backdrop of the shift towards multipolarity within the world order by outlining the myriad modes of power through which the 'Rest' has caught up with the 'West.' In the succeeding section, I demonstrated how a range of norms, institutions and intellectual practices had been historically constructed to maintain Euro-American hegemony as well as promote the interests of the West. In such a world order, certain parochial interests have masqueraded themselves as common or global interests. In the concluding section, I outline certain prescriptions which have become necessary for a more equitable, multi-civilisational world order.

Institutions like the UN require urgent and seismic reforms reflecting the interests of emerging power centres. The number of seats within the Permanent and non-permanent seats must be expanded to include more nation-states from Asia, Africa and Latin America. A revitalisation of the UNGA is highly overdue and requires a focussed and timely debate on the problems of the highest priority at any given time through rationalization of its agenda. [24] Similarly, the proposed WTO reforms, which seeks to move away from

multilateralism to impose plurilateralism, should be opposed at all costs. [25]

As Zvobjo puts it eloquently, how IR is taught perpetuates the inequalities which are detailed above. Besides the dominant IR triumvirate, there needs to be an increased focus on critical perspectives as well as increased engagement with the uncomfortable questions of race, empire, colour, and caste.[19] This should be complemented by more diversity in terms of representation within academia. In India specifically, there needs to be increased efforts to construct Indian or South Asian IR notions. India has umpteen intellectual resources from Gita and the Sangam literature to stellar modern political philosophers like Gandhi, Tagore and so on, which need to be strategically combined with contemporary IR notions and questions of security, justice and so on. However, as Mallavarapu reminds us, care needs to be taken to ensure they can address existing inequities in the world order without succumbing or falling prey to jingoism or nativism.[26]

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Geopolitical Implications of Transboundary Rivers in South Asia Region

Kumari Nishu Yadav

Abstract

The Contemporary era is Characterised by intensified competition for water resources among the nations, in the twenty – first century's global order, hydro-politics emerged as a crucial enemy that significantly impacted the strategic landscape and national security has become closely linked to several geopolitics' factors. South Asia is grappling with numerous internal issues, the three major river systems the Ganges, Indus, and Brahmaputra River basins serves as the geopolitical tensions in the region. The research examines the historical context and ongoing conflicts between India, Pakistan, China, and Bangladesh over these critical water resources. It investigates the causes of disputes, such as dam development and water-sharing agreements, as well as their implications for regional stability. The analysis emphasizes the critical need for collaborative management and long-term solutions to solve water security and promote regional harmony.

Keywords: Hydro-politics, *Transboundary water disputes, Geopolitical implications, South Asia, Conflicts*

Introduction

Water covers two-thirds of our world, yet only around 2.5 percent of it is fresh. The Nile, Rhine, Danube, Indus, Ganga, Brahmaputra, Columbia, and Mekong basins are only a few of the 276 transboundary rivers that contain around 60% of the freshwater supply on Earth. Forty percent of the world's population lives along these transboundary rivers, which occupy forty percent of the planet's land area. In Africa, transboundary rivers and lakes make up around 90% of the total, whereas in the Middle East, transboundary basins supply more than 60% of the household water supply. [1] Although it might be claimed that there is enough fresh water on Earth to cover everyone's basic needs, this water is not distributed equally. Largely populated areas, like the Middle East, North Africa, western parts of the United States, and northern parts of China, for example, all face severe freshwater shortages. Insufficient investment in hydrological infrastructure causes other states, like Pakistan, Afghanistan, and India, to face economic water scarcity. This is because these states are unable to collect water during the monsoon season and utilize it during the remaining dry season. As this, 1.6 billion people worldwide live in physical water scarcity, and by 2030,

[1] (UNESCO World Water Assessment Programme [554], UNESCO. Director-General, 2009-2017 (Bokova, I.G.))

this number is expected to rise as the world's population is predicted to live in water-stressed environments. A shortage of affordable water affects 1.6 million people.[2]

The worldwide quest for water is a transnational, non-traditional security problem in international politics that seriously threatens regional stability. Water is a basic human need that involves survival and basic nutrition. Rivers are especially divisive because they span political boundaries and are therefore the target of conflicting interests. Rivers are considered a national resource that governments have sovereign rights to employ as they think suitable for their interests. Most nation-states view themselves as sole owners of the segment of the river that flows through their territory. Because they might limit the number of water resources accessible to another riparian, dam construction, and water diversions by one riparian frequently create intense emotions in individuals who are negatively impacted by such actions. Conflict and tension frequently arise.[3]

> The Nile, Rhine, Danube, Indus, Ganga, Brahmaputra, Columbia, and Mekong basins are only a few of the 276 transboundary rivers that contain around 60% of the freshwater supply on Earth.

Rivers are controversial because they are an important resource that has played a significant role in human evolution throughout history. Extreme poverty can be lessened by utilizing water resources. Millions of people who depend on rivers for their livelihoods and who live near them are supported by river economies. Rivers are a renewable energy source with a variety of uses. They provide drinking water and are crucial for transportation, navigation, agriculture, flood control, and the production of hydropower.

Geopolitical Theories and Transboundary River Governance in South Asia

South-Asia Transboundary Rivers

A long history of human settlement and a diverse physical environment combine to create South Asia's rich cultural landscape. This region was probably inhabited by early people hundreds of thousands of years before modern humans approximately 75,000 years ago. In the Indus River basin, the first significant civilisation in South Asia emerged at around 3300 BCE. This civilisation, which was cantered in northwest India, Pakistan, and Afghanistan, depended on the monsoon rains to replenish the Indus River.

Water resources are a shared feature among South Asian countries, with transboundary water resources has in common. For all the South Asian mainland countries, transboundary water resources are more important. Most of the rivers in South Asia have international basins as they traverse one or more political borders. 20 significant rivers are shared by mainland countries, excluding the island nations of Sri Lanka and the Maldives. The Indus basin is shared by China, Afghanistan, Pakistan, and India, whereas the

[2] (The Governance of Transboundary Rivers Across the World)
[3] (Introduction to 'Transboundary River Cooperation: Actors, Strategies and Impact')

Brahmaputra and Ganges River basins connect China, India, Nepal, Bangladesh, and Bhutan. Nepal and India are joined by the rivers Kosi, Gandaki, and Mahakali. There are 54 major rivers between Bangladesh and India, including Brahmaputra, Ganges, and Teesta.[4]

India is the world's third-largest emitter of carbon dioxide in addition to ranking third in the construction of dams.

South Asia's great rivers are its cultural and economic pillars. Millions of people today rely on the Ganges, Indus, and Brahmaputra for their daily sustenance. These rivers helped some of the earliest civilisations in history to flourish. The river basins of South Asia, the majority of which originating in the Himalayas, sustain abundant ecosystems, and irrigate millions of hectares of land, contributing to some of the world's greatest population densities. Geopolitically, South Asia is a vast territory that has been divided and passed down by multiple nations. The populous South Asian nations of Bangladesh and Pakistan are not source of any significant rivers. Through India, they all enter Pakistan and Bangladesh. India's size—both geographically and demographically, as well as its economic and military ability—has given it the capacity to exert hegemony over its smaller neighbours. Furthermore, India benefits from the physical distance between its neighbours. The smaller governments have frequently felt envious, and suspicious of these geopolitical asymmetries. Since their colonial past, the smaller governments in the area have been increasingly aware of concerns related to national sovereignty, identity, and autonomy as well as the real possibility of cultural and economic domination by their more prominent neighbours.[5]

Climate Change and Transboundary Rivers Dynamics in The Region

Over time, the geopolitics of South Asia's transboundary rivers have been significantly shaped by the melting of glaciers. In South Asia, building dams in higher riparian areas is regarded as one of the main obstacles to settling transboundary water disputes. After the United States and China, India is the third-largest dam-building nation in the world.[6] Experts firmly believe that building dams haves the potential to negatively impact both human and ecological life, including the climate. They contended that when a reservoir is first water-logged, trees and other plants produce significant amounts of carbon dioxide, which causes the plants to weaken. When water passes through the dam's turbines, the plant drop litter that had been collected in the reservoir's basin rots and releases concentrated amounts of dissolved methane into the sky.[7] Because of these artificial water reservoirs, carbon dioxide is converted into the more harmful gas methane in the atmosphere, causing an increase in global warming which is 24 times more powerful than

[4] (Transboundary River Management in South Asia: The Exigency of Multilateral Institutional Framework)
[5] (Geopolitics of Water in South Asia)
[6] (Building of Large Dams and the Rights of Tribes in India)
[7] (Geopolitics of Water in South Asia)

that of carbon dioxide. India is the world's third-largest emitter of carbon dioxide in addition to ranking third in the construction of dams.[8]

Himalayan glaciers are retreating at a startling rate because of climate change. When we consider the increasingly severe effects of climate change— the most significant catastrophe of our time—the seriousness of the water insecurity scenario becomes apparent. The hydrological landscape of South Asia is changing because of this crisis in frightening and unheard-of way. 74% of people live in an area that is already known to be among the most water-stressed in the world, and they are facing extreme water stress.[9]

Transboundary collaboration can strengthen resilience against disasters, which are predicted to occur more frequently, as well as avoid and/or widen the body of information regarding adaptation strategies. The necessity of cooperation in adapting to climate change may catalyze more cooperation in transboundary basins.[10]

Water is a cross-cutting issue that requires attention at all levels and sectors. Water challenges are multifaceted and include various parties with competing needs that span political, institutional, disciplinary, and geographical boundaries.[11]

Indus Water Basin

The Arabian Sea is the eventual destination of the Indus River basin, which extends from the Himalayan Mountains in the north to the arid alluvial plains of Sindh province in Pakistan in the south. Approximately 520 000 sq.km, or 65% of Pakistan's land area, is covered by the Indus River basin. This includes the entirety of the provinces of Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, as well as the majority of Sindh province and the eastern portion of Baluchistan. The drainage area in India is approximately 440 000 sq.km, accounting for nearly 14% of the country's total area in Jammu & Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh, Punjab, Rajasthan, Haryana, and Chandigarh. Only around 14 percent of the basin's catchment area is in China, which covers only 1 percent of the country's territory, and 11 percent of Afghanistan's land area. According to estimates, the Indus Basin is home to at least 300 million people.[12]

The river flows are made up of glacier melt, snowmelt, rainfall, and runoff. The Indus River and several of its tributaries receive constant supplies from the glaciers, which serve as natural storage reservoirs.

[8] (Will Himalayan Dams Solve India's Energy Woes?)

[9] (The views expressed by Asia Society staff, fellows, experts, report authors, program speakers, board members, and other affiliates are solely their own.)

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History

The Indus civilization, which dates back 4,000 years, was founded on irrigated agriculture. Canal irrigation development began in 1859, with the completion of the Upper Bari Doab Canal (UBDC) from the Madhopur Headworks on the Ravi River. Up until then, irrigation was performed by a system of stream canals, which was only used when river flows were particularly strong. These supplied water to kharif (summer) crops and retained soil moisture to rabi (winter) crops. *Figure:1* illustrates the distribution of the Indus River's tributaries and the geographical locations of basins shared by India and Pakistan.

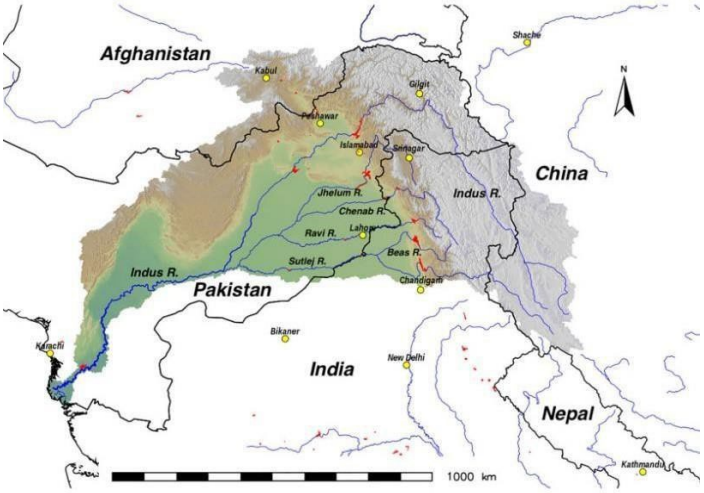

Figure 1: Indus River Basin

In the early 1900s, it became clear that the water resources of individual rivers exceeded potential irrigable land. The supply from the Ravi River, which serves as major area of Bari Doab, was insufficient, although Jhelum had an excess. The Triple Canal Project, an innovative solution, was built between 1907 and 1915. The project allowed excess water from the Jhelum and Chenab rivers to flow into the Ravi by connecting the Jhelum, Chenab, and Ravi rivers. The Triple Canal Project was a water resource management milestone, and it served as the foundation for the Indus Water Treaty (IWT), which was signed in 1960 to resolve India and Pakistan's dispute over the Indus River. [13]

The partition of India in 1947 divided the Indus River system and the enormous irrigation infrastructure within it between India and Pakistan. The Ferozepur and Madhopur headworks, which are critical for irrigation canals in Pakistani Punjab, were situated in Indian territory. In December 1947, a temporary agreement was made to allocate water from India to Pakistan. This agreement was due to expire in March 1948, when the two countries waged the first Kashmir War. On April 1, 1948, the Indian provincial

[13] (Transboundary River Basin Overview – Indus)

government in East Punjab cut off the water supply from canals heading into Pakistan. This proved India's enormous strength over Pakistan, as its upper riparian power in the Indus Basin. The water flowing through the Indus and its tributaries provides almost all of Pakistan's water supply and the northwestern areas of India are heavily reliant on the Indus Basin, but not as much as Pakistan.[14]

Although the first Kashmir War ended in late 1948, it did not result in a long-term collaboration strategy along the Indus River basin. Negotiations began immediately after the war ended, but there seemed to be little progress made. Since 1951, the World Bank has served as a mediator and, proposed a solution in 1954. After six years of negotiations, Indian Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru and Pakistan President Mohammad Ayub Khan signed the IWT in 1960. According to former senior water adviser for the World Bank in New Delhi, John Briscoe.

The IWT divided the rights to use the Indus River system between India and Pakistan. In addition to the Indus River, the pact addressed its five major tributaries: the Jhelum, Chenab, Ravi, Beas, and Sutlej. India was granted rights over the latter three, which were labeled the Eastern Rivers. Pakistan was granted rights over the western rivers of Indus, Jhelum, and Chenab. In addition, Pakistan was given a one-time payment of 62 million pounds sterling when India took over the Eastern Rivers canals that led to Pakistan.[15]

Water scarcity is currently a major concern in India and Pakistan. The Indian government declared that millions of lives and livelihoods are in danger as the nation "is suffering from the worst water crisis in its history."[16] Indeed, India's water availability per capita has fallen drastically and, if no improvements in water management are accomplished, it is anticipated to further decrease by 40-50% by 2050. Similarly, Pakistan is now one of the countries with the most acute water shortages in the world, relying on only 0.45% of total global hydric supplies. Alarmingly, in 2021, the Pakistan Council of Research in Water Resources predicted that, if no steps are implemented, by 2025 the country will only have access to very little clean water, or none. Given the water challenges that India and Pakistan are currently facing, the Indus River represents vital support to guarantee water, food, and economic security to their populations.

Geopolitical tension in the Indus Water Treaty

The IWT is regarded as one of the most effective examples of transboundary water-sharing, with the dispute resolution process being its most notable achievement. In fact, despite the countries' ongoing political conflicts, the Indus Commissioners have always maintained cooperative relations, to the extent that the treaty was not repealed even during the Indo-Pakistan wars. Given the IWT's flaws, India and Pakistan's water conflicts remains unresolved, and unless further cooperative efforts are undertaken, it is projected to

[14] (Transboundary River Basin Overview – Indus)
[15] (The Indus River Basin, 1999-2008 : An intellectual history in hydropolitics)
[16] ("India faces worst long term water crisis in its history -government think tank")

grow into a direct military confrontation in the future. Considering the significant water issues that India and Pakistan are currently facing, water security is considered a crucial issue of national security. [17]

Fears of future water shortages caused by dam construction have sparked diplomatic tensions between India and Pakistan. Disruptive political narratives in both India and Pakistan are thought to have increase the possibility of violence. In India, the narrative of Pakistani-affiliated Islamic terror cells assaulting civilians has been used to justify withdrawing from diplomacy and even threatening to cut Pakistan's water supply[18]. Meanwhile, Pakistani nationalist media blamed the country's floods on India's poor water management. Pakistanis are also concerned that India may utilize its upstream dams to restrict how much water flows into Pakistan via the Indus. This underlying hostility and mistrust between the two states has also been used to generate anti-Indian sentiment in Pakistan, offering a fertile basis for additional resentment and conflict.

In contemporary times, In August 2021, Pakistan raised objections to a 624 MW dam project on the Chenab River in Jammu and Kashmir, alleging a violation of the Indus Water Treaty. The Indian government insisted the dam adhered to treaty norms. The dispute adds complexity to Indo-Pak relations, impacting regional stability. In 2016, Pakistan raised concerns about India's Kishanganga and Ratle hydroelectric projects. Every time India planned a hydroelectric project on of the western river, Pakistan has challenged it by calling it for international relation.

IWT needs to be renegotiated, but the process comes with complications. However, if both countries handle the renegotiation appropriately, it may result in a superior version of the existing agreement.

Brahmaputra River Basin

The Yarlung Zangbo-Brahmaputra-Jamuna River Basin (also known as the Brahmaputra River Basin) is unique river system in South Asia. The river is the world's fourth largest in terms of yearly discharge. The river begins in China's Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR) and drains 580,000 km2 before flowing into the Bay of Bengal. China (which makes up 50.5% of the basin's total area), India (33.6%), Bangladesh (8.1%), and Bhutan (7.8%) share it. Despite being a significant river system in South Asia and offering enormous potential for regional development, relatively little progress has been made in managing this transboundary river at a regional level thus far. There is currently no international convention involving all four of the basin's countries for the management of the Brahmaputra basin. A few bilateral agreements, sometimes known as Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs), have been developed to address water-related challenges, like data exchange and flood forecasting. Negotiating a basin-wide management agreement for the Brahmaputra has been challenging due to the absence of a multilateral regional platform. [19]

[17] (Geopolitics of Water in India and Pakistan: Ongoing Tensions over the Indus River, 2022)
[18] (Water conflict and cooperation between India and Pakistan)
[19] (Water diplomacy as an approach to regional cooperation in South Asia: A case from the Brahmaputra basin)

Between the three riparian states, the river flows through a historically contentious area (see Figure 2- which illustrate the flow of the Brahmaputra River basin in the three-riparian state). The river has become securitised due to the contestation around boundary disputes and security concerns.

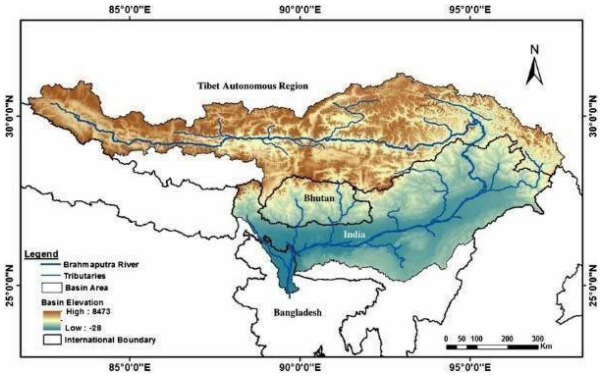

Figure 2: Map of Brahmaputra Basin.

Source: Indian Institute of Technology, Guwahati, India.

Hydro-Politics between Nations

The Brahmaputra Basin in South Asia has been identified as one of the basins most vulnerable to interstate water conflicts. Although there have been violent conflicts between China and India inside the borders of the Brahmaputra basin, there is little chance of a battle over water. This is partly because, despite its enormous volume, the river can do little to address India's serious water security issues, and partly because China contributes less to Brahmaputra's flow than is generally believed.[20] Due to adaptation measures implemented in India, the upstream Brahmaputra has been controlled and dammed, which will influence the lives of millions of people downstream of Bangladesh and India. Furthermore, there are more significant political and geographical problems at play in the water disputes between China and India. China concerning more general political and geographical challenges. China's intentions to build hydroelectric dams on the Brahmaputra River has led to increased mistrust in India. Both China and India are viewed as acting unilaterally and as being restrained from sharing information, especially when it comes to building dams.[21]

The wording in the Chinese government's November 14th Five-Year Plan framework, which outlines the country's growth objectives between 2021 and 2025, catalysed the most recent hostilities between China and India. "Implement... the downstream hydropower development of the Yarlung Zangbo River," according to the text, was the goal. Beijing refers to the first 2,840 kilometres of the river as the Yarlung as it winds through Tibet. After that, it crosses the Sino-Indian Line of Actual Control and becomes the

[20] (The Water Wars Myth: India, China and the Brahmaputra)

[21] (Transboundary water cooperation in South Asia: a case of Brahmaputra River Basin)

Brahmaputra, passing through a disputed region that China claims is southern Tibet and India considers to be Arunachal Pradesh. The river then flows 1,856 kilometres across Bangladesh and India before draining into the Bay of Bengal.

The wording is important because it suggests that the intention is to shift the location of Chinese hydropower development closer to Indian territory. Leaders in China's hydropower sector have been speculating about the construction of enormous dams in the "Great Bend" for more than 10 years; they could surpass the 22,500-megawatt Three Gorges Dam. Despite hydrological difficulties, such as being in an earthquake-prone area, this is the stretch of the river that is closest to India and is, in theory, perfect for producing energy. Such conversations confirm Indian analysts' fears that Beijing's goal is to reroute the Yarlung to improve irrigation inside China and to obtain influence over New Delhi by being able to regulate the river's flow, like what China has done to downstream Southeast Asian nations by limiting water flow along the Mekong. China has previously claimed that Yarlung dams are only "run of the river" constructions that are unable to store or divert water to allay India's worries. Chinese diplomats attempted to persuade India that the building would not endanger downstream neighbours after the most recent declaration. The strategic value of a new dam's capacity to reroute water may be limited because most of the Brahmaputra's flow originates from rainfall along tributaries on the Indian side of the border.[22]

The construction of Chinese dams on the Brahmaputra River is raising concerns about security and potential conflict. Millions in India's northeastern states could face drought and flooding, threatening fertile agriculture. China's control over this transboundary river demands that India not only maintain bilateral ties but also firmly protect national integrity and the livelihoods of those dependent on the Brahmaputra.

Ganges River Basin

The Ganges River rises at an elevation of 7,010 meters in the Central Himalayas, flows across the alluvial Gangetic Plains, and empties into the Indian Ocean in the Bay of Bengal. Ganges is a transboundary river with India occupies the majority (79%) of the river basin's total area, which is shared by Bangladesh, China, Nepal, and India. (Figure:3 Illustrate the flow of the Ganga River Basin) Bangladesh, on the other hand, is the country located downstream in the basin and only makes up approximately 4% of its total area, however, that still accounts for 37% of the basin. [23]

[22] (BRAHMAPUTRA: A CONFLICT-PRONE RIVER TAKES A STEP BACKWARDS)

[23] (A critical review of the Ganges Water Sharing arrangement)

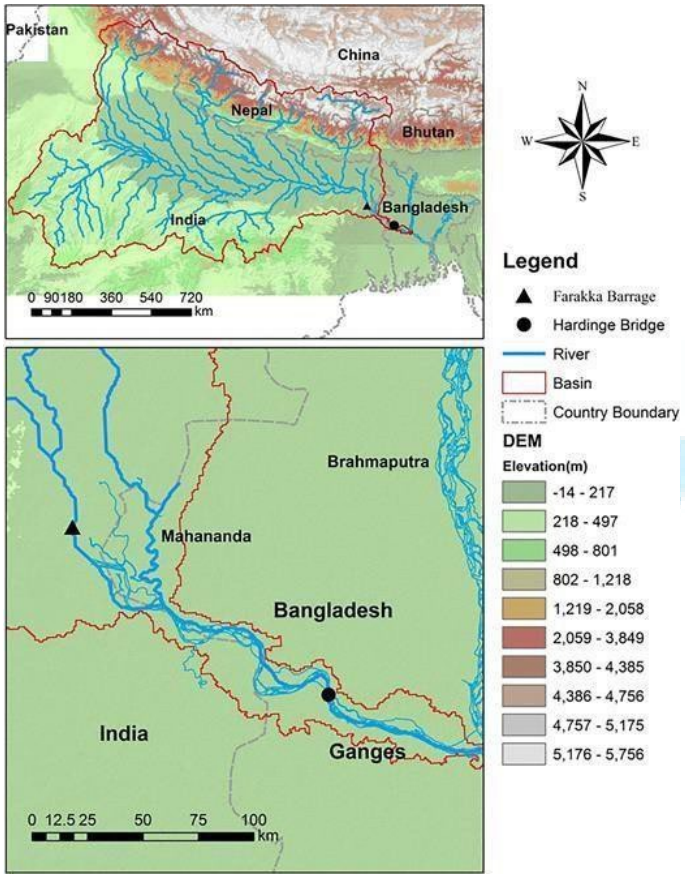

Figure 3: The Ganges River Basin

Up until 1975, Bangladesh's water needs were satisfied by Ganges' uncontrolled dry season flows. India's 1975 construction of the Farakka Barrage, which is located about 18 km upstream from the Indo-Bangladesh boundary, marked the beginning of the dispute between Bangladesh and India over Ganges water rights.[24]

History

The first significant Ganges water-sharing deal was reached in November 1977, just after India withdrew water unilaterally in June 1975 to November component of the 1977 Agreement was a guarantee clause that guaranteed Bangladesh 1977. It was for five years. The 1977 Agreement specified that the water would be shared in 10-day intervals during the dry season, which ran from January to May. A dry season flow schedule was developed using historical data from 1948 to 1973 which showed 75% availability of flow at Farakka. A crucial would get at least 80% of the planned flow if the actual flow at Farakka fell short of the schedule's stated amount. In 1983 and 1988, India and Bangladesh signed two "Memoranda of Understanding" (MoU) with minor modifications to the 1977 Agreement, following the agreement's expiration in 1982.

An Indo-Bangladesh Joint Rivers Commission (JRC) has existed since 1972. It was formed with the goal of maintaining communication to ensure the best efficient combined effort in maximizing the benefits of shared river systems.[25]

Resolution

An important step towards resolving a protracted dispute over the sharing of the Ganges water was taken with the signing of the Ganges Water Sharing Treaty (GWT, 1996) between Bangladesh and India on December 12, 1996, for a 30-year duration. The Treaty stipulated that during the dry season (January to May), the flow at Farakka would be divided into fifteen 10-day cycles and shared between India and

[24] (A critical review of the Ganges Water Sharing arrangement)
[25] (Ministry Of Jal Shakti, 2023)

Bangladesh following a special sharing formula. The Treaty also establishes the foundation for determining each nation's share of water using an indicative timetable that is based on the overall average historic flow at Farakka between 1949 and 1988. The fact that Bangladesh is the lower riparian state raises issues. This raises fears in Bangladesh that India, as the upper riparian and first to develop water resources, may have significantly more disproportionate influence over the rivers. Another major problem for nations is a lack of transparent data on transboundary rivers, which could lead to future serious conflict between the two countries. The river's physical distribution is such that it provides initial access to India, which is not India nor Bangladesh's fault.

One of the treaty's shortcomings was the unjustified assumption of future water availability at Farakka based on 40-year average flows. The treaty will expire in 2026 when the water-sharing arrangement between India and Bangladesh has been in effect for 30 years. As a result, the pact failed to enhance dry season water supply in Bangladesh significantly. Nonetheless, if modified through successful negotiations benefiting both countries' millions of citizens, the pact might still overcome water scarcity challenges and strengthen collaboration between riparian countries. [26]

Conclusion

Multilateral treaties that regulate transboundary rivers are lacking in South Asia. This is mainly because India, an intermediate riparian, employs several upstream and downstream concepts based on the river and the nation with which it interacts. Furthermore, the disputes over water between India, Pakistan, China, and Bangladesh revolve around shared rivers such as the Indus, Brahmaputra and the Ganges. China's upstream efforts, particularly dam construction, have raised worries in India and Bangladesh about reduced water flow and environmental damage. India's own dam projects heighten the tension in the Indus water Basin. Bangladesh, which is downstream, fears severe water shortages and flooding. Prospects are dependent on diplomatic diplomacy, collaborative river management, and sustainable practices to assure equitable water distribution and environmental protection. Strengthening regional cooperation and developing strong foundations for water-sharing agreements are critical to resolving problems and promoting mutual benefit.

[26] (A critical review of the Ganges Water Sharing arrangement, 2019)

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SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND SECURITY

India-China Geopolitical Tensions: Strategic and National Security Implications with respect to Maldives

Uttara Umesh M. & Aishwarya Sreenivas

ABSTRACT

The geopolitical landscape of the Indian Ocean is undergoing significant shifts, with the changing political dynamics in the Maldives, the evolving India-China relationship, and India's strategic moves in the Lakshadweep archipelago. This paper examines the intricate interplay between domestic politics, regional alliances, and strategic concerns in the Indian Ocean, focusing on the implications for India's national security. The Lakshadweep-Maldives-Chagos archipelago has historically been strategically important to India, and recent developments, such as the establishment of India's second naval facility in the Lakshadweep and the political shift in the Maldives, have brought this region into the spotlight. The changing India-China relationship, fuelled by China's growing influence in the Maldives and India's historical ties with the previous Maldivian administration, has raised concerns about the potential creation of a power vacuum in the Indian Ocean. The Maldivian President's call for the withdrawal of Indian troops from the country could potentially favour China's influence and jeopardize vital sea routes, increasing the risks of instability, piracy, terrorism, and other criminal activities. India's proactive diplomacy under its "Neighbourhood First Policy" aims to sustain its image as a great power while countering China's rise in the region. This research explores the relationship between China and the Maldives, its implications for India, and the patterns of investment by both India and China in the Maldives. The broader implications of the India-China geopolitical conflict on India's national security in international waters are also examined.

Key words: China, India, Maldives, Indian Ocean.

INTRODUCTION

The complexity of the geopolitical landscape in the Indian Ocean is becoming evident with political shifts in the Maldives, India's evolving relationship with China, and strategic moves by the Indian Prime Minister regarding Lakshadweep. This raises questions about the impact of these developments on national security.

Over the years, the attitudes of the Maldivian government towards India have fluctuated based on the ruling party in Male. The Maldives transitioned from a long-standing autocracy to a multi-party constitutional democracy in 2008 (US Department of State, 2023). India gained significant favor with President Maumoon Abdulla Gayoom from the Dhivehi Rayyithunge Party following its prompt response to the 1988 coup against him. In 2008, the parliament enacted a new constitution, replacing the 1998 Constitution and enabling the first multi-party presidential elections. Although Gayoom contested, Mohamed Nasheed, a pro-India candidate from the Maldivian Democratic Party (MDP), won. Nasheed's term was marked by domestic crises, leading to his resignation in 2012. During Abdulla Yameen's tenure with the Progressive Party of Maldives and its ruling coalition, China gained significant influence in the Maldives, striking major infrastructure deals and free trade agreements with Beijing. Yameen was succeeded by Ibrahim Mohamed Solih from MDP, to which former President Nasheed belonged. After this, India's relations with the Maldives stabilised, and India made significant investments in the Maldives to regain its influence in the region. During that time, Yameen's party launched an "India-out" campaign, which lobbied to limit India's influence in the area and strengthen China's presence. This sentiment was solidified after the 2023 elections with President Dr. Mohamed Muizzu's appointment to office.

China's growing influence in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR) is a source of concern for India, particularly in relation to the strategically vital Maldives. Given its position near India's west coast, the Maldives are crucial for trade, with two critical sea lanes of communication (SLOCs) located at its northern and southern ends: the Gulf of Aden and the Gulf of Hormuz to the north, and the Strait of Malacca to the south. These routes are of paramount importance for global maritime trade, and for India in particular, as approximately 50% of its external trade and 80% of its energy imports traverse these SLOCs (VIF Brief, 2021). India's heightened engagement with the Maldives is linked to increased maritime activity and trade in the Indian Ocean, as well as its aim to promote regional peace and stability. The Maldives is also central to India's SAGAR vision.

The political rivalry between India and China, two major Asian powers, has intensified since the 20th century, and this competition has extended to strategic investments in the IOR. The Maldives is the latest example of this regional power struggle.

The archipelago comprising Lakshadweep, Maldives, and Chagos has historically held strategic significance for India. The visit of the Indian Prime Minister to Lakshadweep in 2024,

which followed the Maldivian presidential elections, signalled a shift in India's strategy towards the new Maldivian government for its pro-China stance. After the visit, there was a call for Indian tourists to boycott the Maldives in favour of Lakshadweep. The Maldivian President's demand for the withdrawal of Indian troops from the region came amid rising tensions. This would create a power vacuum in the Indian Ocean, enhancing China's influence and posing a threat to vital sea routes. In a quick response, India established its second naval base (INS Jatayu) in the southernmost Lakshadweep Island, in close proximity to the Maldives. The proximity of the region to Somalia and Yemen raises concerns about increased instability and risks to regional security, including piracy, terrorism, and other criminal activities.

This paper analyses the interplay between domestic politics, regional alliances, and strategic concerns in the Indian Ocean, focusing on the China-Maldives relationship and its implications for India, particularly in terms of investment patterns. It examines the broader geopolitical conflict between India and China and its potential impact on India's national security in international waters.

A. INDIA'S STRATEGIC INTERESTS IN THE INDIAN OCEAN REGION

The Indian Ocean Region (IOR) plays a critical role in global geopolitics and power rivalries. Throughout the Cold War, the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans were the primary theatres of conflict. However, Southeast Asia was not considered a significant threat. In recent years, the focus has shifted to the East and South Chinese Seas, where there is considerable geopolitical turmoil (Mukherjee, 2017). In response to the lurking threat posed by China and the emergence of the Indo-Pacific as a new arena of competition, India has begun to build up its capacity and take a more forward-leaning stance (CFR, 2023).

The economic growth of India and China has fueled much of the geopolitical rivalry in the IOR. With a population of over one billion people, the demand for raw materials, energy, access to markets, and overall trade with other countries has increased (Mukherjee, 2017). Over half of the world's maritime oil trade passes through the IOR, and China, the world's largest goods trader, relies on ocean routes for 90% of its trade. In 2012, the Chinese Communist Party (CPC) adopted a policy of "Building a Strong Maritime Country" in recognition of the importance of maritime trade (Hui & Xianyu, 2016).

More than 90% of India's external trade by volume and 70% by value are conducted through sea

China's interest in the IOR consists of three elements: the Belt and Road Initiative, a Naval Modernisation Programme, and obtaining greater access to ports in the IOR. This is achieved mainly by granting economic and military assistance to countries in the IOR. China emerged as the largest source of economic and military aid to Sri Lanka (during the crisis), Bangladesh, and Pakistan. It also acquired its first overseas port base in Djibouti, Africa, allowing it to operate near the Straits of Hormuz, a critical checkpoint in the IOR (Mukherjee, 2017).

The importance of maritime trade in India is increasingly recognized as a crucial factor for sustaining economic progress. More than 90% of India's external trade by volume and 70% by value are conducted through sea routes (Mukherjee, 2017). India's strategy in the Indo-Pacific region encompasses three key aspects. Firstly, India has strengthened its ties with the United States of America, Japan, and Australia. Over the past decade, there has been a significant positive shift in US-India defence relations. In 2015, the Indian government approved the Defence Framework Agreement, and in 2016, the Logistics Exchange Memorandum of Agreement (LEMOA) was signed. Furthermore, the US has agreed to assist India in building its next-generation aircraft carriers (White House, 2022). Japan has also offered to support the development of power supplies in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands (JICA, 2022). In addition, strong bilateral relations are being developed with Australia.

Secondly, India's "Neighbourhood First" foreign policy aims to strengthen relations with neighbouring countries and IOR states. This policy is based on the idea that fostering relationships within the region is in India's best interests. India seeks to emerge as a "Net Security Provider" in the IOR, as outlined in its SAGAR policy (ORF, 2024). As part of this outreach, India has provided significant military, emergency, and development support to island nations such as the Maldives, Mauritius, and Seychelles. This includes improving maritime domain awareness (MDA).

Currently, Maritime Domain Awareness (MDA) necessitates the assembly, correlation, and synthesis of surveillance data gathered from a variety of sources, such as satellites, radar, reconnaissance planes, or human intelligence, to detect and identify actors exhibiting irregular or threatening behaviour. In this regard, the Quad comprising the US, India, Japan, and Australia made a significant move by establishing the Indo-Pacific Maritime Domain

Awareness Initiative (IPMDA). A crucial objective of IPMDA is to tackle Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) fishing concerns. Furthermore, India's Maritime Domain Awareness is attempting to address the rise in piracy and sea robbery incidents in the Indian Ocean Region, particularly in the Gulf of Aden. The threat of maritime terrorism intensified with the Israel-Palestine War and disruptions in maritime trade in the region. Additionally, the trafficking of contraband, such as drugs, humans, and arms, occurs primarily in the northwestern part of the IOR, along a route that extends from the Makran Coast to Maldives, Sri Lanka, Seychelles, and East Africa. (VIF, 2021). Moreover, India is monitoring China's increased military presence in the eastern Indian Ocean maritime domain, which can be attributed to the latter sending warships to the Gulf of Aden in 2008 for anti-piracy duties (White, 2020).

Lastly, India's naval modernisation, after years of delays, is gathering pace with acquisition of new ships and armaments. Whilst India's capacities in the IOR are reasonable, efforts to develop maritime assets are a step towards mitigating impediments. For example, the Navy's defence budget continues to increase every year. The portion of the Navy's budget devoted to purchasing new platforms and equipment increased by 45 per cent in 2022 alone, with most of this year's defence budget going to the Navy. It should be noted that most of this budget is spent on capacity development and not on cost (CFR, 2023). In line with this, the Indian Naval Indigenisation Plan envisions achieving self-reliance in maintaining and supporting its vital assets with indigenous production and development to counter import costs, embargoes, and procurement issues by foreign countries on a long-term basis (Indian Navy).

Recently, the Indian Navy commissioned a naval base named INS Jatayu on the Minicoy Island in Lakshadweep. The base marks the beginning of a phased expansion plan to bolster India's visibility and security near the nine-degree channel and major sea lanes of communication. The aim is to monitor the region's heavy maritime traffic and significantly improve maritime domain awareness. Furthermore, it aims to extend capacity building, operational reach, and sustenance in the area, thereby strengthening the Indian Navy's foothold on the Lakshadweep islands. (The Hindu, 2024)

B. CHINA'S INVESTMENTS IN THE IOR AND MALDIVES

In the post-colonial era, the relationships between China and each South Asian country have evolved uniquely in terms of international relations, geostrategic positioning, domestic politics, and economic conditions. China shares borders with all South Asian countries, except

Bangladesh and the island states of Sri Lanka and the Maldives (Anwar, 2020). These nations attract China due to their economic potential and young demographics.

China has implemented an ambitious investment strategy in Asia, Europe, and Africa. Its interests in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR) are evidenced by its investments in Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Maldives, Bangladesh, and Myanmar. The central element of this strategy is the 'Belt and Road Initiative' (BRI), a term coined by Xi Jinping at the start of his tenure, inspired by the Han Dynasty Silk Road, trading routes that connected ancient China to the Mediterranean world. The BRI comprises the Silk Road Economic Belt and the Maritime Silk Road. Under this initiative, 138 countries have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with China (EBRD). This involves significant investment and development projects, such as the Hambantota port in Sri Lanka and the 'China-Pakistan Economic Corridor' (CPEC), which links Pakistan's Gwadar port on the Arabian Sea with Kashgar in China's Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region. Investments in this project exceed $60 billion, encompassing airports, railways, highways, and pipelines, among other trade and energy infrastructure (World Economic Forum, 2023). Additionally, the Gwadar port is leased to the Chinese state-run China Overseas Ports Holding Company (COPHC) for 40 years (Dinesh, 2021), exemplifying China's interest in the IOR, as discussed in Part A.

PENINSULA FOUNDATION

Following the maritime route down south, China's investment in the Maldives is estimated between $1.1 billion and $1.4 billion. Such economic engagements serve Chinese strategic ends and help expand their influence in the traditional Indian strategic backyard. Maldives have also been receptive to Chinese infrastructure loans and political persons expressing pro-China leaning (Pal, 2021).

China's significant infrastructure project in the Maldives includes the Sinamale Bridge, also known as the "Friendship" Bridge. The concept of connecting Male, Hulhule, and Hulhumale emerged in 2007 and remained a pivotal campaign promise in the 2008 elections. The bridge materialized under President Abdullah Yameen's administration (2013-2018), leveraging aspects of the BRI to enhance capital connectivity. However, the project faced controversy, including a corruption scandal leading to Yameen's electoral defeat and imprisonment. Additional issues involved environmental degradation, threats to marine life, international entanglements, and foreign debt, heightening concerns about Maldivian national identity (Saeedh & Feener, 2024).

China is the Maldives' third-largest export partner, closely followed by India (World Bank, 2024). In 2022, bilateral trade reached US$451.35 million, a 10.1% increase from the previous year, with China's exports at US$451.29 million compared to US$60,000 from the Maldives. The Maldives' tourism sector, heavily reliant on visitors, saw about 284,000 Chinese tourists in 2019, representing 16.7% of total foreign tourists (IDSA, 2024). In February 2023, both countries agreed on a mutual free visa policy.

Under President Yameen, the Maldives signed a Free Trade Agreement with China. However, its implementation faced challenges as his successor, Former President Ibrahim Mohamed Solih, deemed the agreement's terms unfavourable for the Maldives (NUS-ISAS, 2023).

The Muizzu government has pledged to implement the trade agreements. Since President Mohammed Muizzu's inauguration in November 2023, his pro-China and anti-India stance has shaped the nation's diplomacy. This is evident from the Maldives president's recent visit to China from January 8-12, 2024, marking the first foreign dignitary visit to China that year (IDSA, 2024). During the visit, Muizzu promoted Maldivian tourism to Chinese audiences, following derogatory remarks by Maldivian ministers about the Indian Prime Minister's visit to Lakshadweep (The Economic Times, 2024).

On January 10, 2024, the Maldives and China signed 20 significant agreements, enhancing bilateral relations. These agreements included MOUs on deepening Blue Economy Cooperation, digital economy investment, green development, the Social Housing Project on Fushidhiggaru Falhu, the expansion of VIA, Fisheries Products Processing Factories, the redevelopment of Male' and Villimale' roads, and tourism cooperation (President's Office, Republic of Maldives, 2024).

Key agreements attracting global attention are: "Grant Assistance between the Government of the People's Republic of China and the Government of the Republic of Maldives," the "Action Plan for Building a China-Maldives Comprehensive Strategic Cooperative Partnership (2024-2028)," and the "MoU on Jointly Accelerating the Formulation of the Cooperation Plan on the Belt and Road Initiative" (The President's Office, Republic of Maldives, 2024).

China views the Maldives as a crucial country in its maritime diplomacy because of its strategic location in the Indian Ocean. Generally, China's economic interests are more significant in Africa and the Middle East than in South Asia. This points to China's more outstanding strategic

interests in the IOR, which may soon be realized with its growing favourable ties to the current Maldivian government.

C. INDIA'S INVESTMENTS IN MALDIVES

The sharp rise in China's investments in the IOR challenges India's regional security. India must protect its position in the IOR amid declining diplomatic ties with China. In response to China's increased activity, India has also boosted its investments and strengthened maritime policies in the IOR.

India and the Maldives share a long history of cultural, economic, and political ties, with Indians forming the second-largest expatriate group in the Maldives and significantly contributing to the tourism sector. In 2019, the countries signed a Bilateral Agreement on the Exemption of Visa Requirements for Diplomatic and Official Passport Holders, enhancing cultural exchange. However, these relations face challenges from China's growing economic influence and pro-China sentiments.

India-Maldives relations are also viewed through investment and trade agreements, with comprehensive trade agreements since 1981 leading to increased trade and free-trade agreements with other South Asian countries since 2004. From 1988 to 2008, under President Maumoon Abdul Gayoom, India enjoyed favourable ties with the Maldives without Chinese interference. India's swift response with "Operation Cactus" during the 1988 Maldives coup fostered trust and long-term bilateral relations. This changed in 2013 under Presidents Mohammed Waheed Hassan and Abdulla Yameen, who welcomed Chinese aid and investment. However, despite "India-out" sentiments rising and fading in the Maldives, India has provided extensive economic assistance. It has undertaken bilateral infrastructure, health, telecommunications, and labour resource development programs. Some of India's significant projects have been completed or are in progress, including the Indira Gandhi Memorial Hospital, built with India Grant Assistance in 1995.

A significant hospital renovation was completed in 2017 at INR 52Cr, funded by the Government of India (GoI) (MEA, 2023). The Maldives Institute of Technical Education (also known as Maldives Polytechnic) was set up and completed at a cost of 12Cr INR after a MoU was signed between the countries in 1992.(MEA, 2023).

Along with the India-Maldives Faculty of Hospitality and Tourism Studies (launched in 2002 and officially handed to the Government of Maldives in 2014) and the Technology Adoption Program in the Education Sector in Maldives (2013), the most recent development project undertaken by India is the National College for Police and Law Enforcement (NCPLE). This is the largest project undertaken by India at a cost of INR 222.98Cr (MEA, 2023).

Following the general elections of 2019, India's new administration sought to counter Chinese influence and strengthen ties with the Maldives. In 2019, India provided INR 50 Cr to support socio-economic development projects in the education, health, and community development sectors, which were announced during the visit of the Indian External Affairs Minister (MEA, 2023). All of these projects have since been completed. During the same visit, an MoU for MVR 85 million in grant assistance was signed for High Impact Community Development Projects (HICDPs) through Local Bodies, with an additional MVR 100 million MoU signed in 2023. India also funded the restoration of Male's Hukuru Miskiiy (Friday Mosque) with an INR 8.95 Cr grant.

In March 2019, a Credit Line Agreement was signed between the Government of India, Government of Maldives, and EXIM Bank of India for "Infrastructure and Connectivity Projects under EXIM Bank Line of Credit of US$ 800 million" (MEA, 2023). The projects covered by this agreement included water and sanitation development in 34 islands, the Addu Development Project for roads and land reclamation to establish Addu as the "southern regional hub," expansion of Maldives Industrial Fisheries Company Limited (MIFCO) facilities, the Cancer Hospital, Gulhifalhu Port project, Hulhumale Cricket Stadium, airport redevelopment projects in Hanimaadhoo and Gan, and the Greater Male Connectivity Project (GMCP) (MEA, 2023).

The recent 2023 elections in the Maldives and President Mohamed Muizzu's victory pose challenges for India due to the new government's inclination towards China. The India-Maldives Trade Agreement of 1988 facilitates trade in essential goods. India imports 55 commodities from the Maldives (primarily scrap iron) and exports 1957 commodities (including minerals, machinery and electricals, vegetables, chemicals, pharma, and base metals). Total trade crossed $500 million for the first time in 2022. In 2023, India’s exports to Maldives was $ 543.83 million while imports from Maldives was $ 5.14 million (National Investment Promotion & Facilitation Agency 2022 and 2023). In FY 2021-22, India was the

Maldives' third-largest trade partner, was the 2nd largest trade partner in 2022, and the largest trade partner in 2023..

Another dimension of India-Maldives relations is defence and security. In 2016, an Action Plan for Defence was signed to strengthen this partnership (MEA, 2023). India provides training to the Maldivian National Defence Force (MNDF), covering up to 70% of their needs. Over a decade, more than 1500 MNDF trainees have been trained in India. Activities include EEZ patrols, anti-narcotic operations, sea-rider programs, adventure camps, HADR exercises, and Pollution Control. The Indian Navy has supplied MNDF with air assets for surveillance, MEDEVAC, SAR, and heli-borne vertical insertion (MEA, 2023). Defence cooperation extends to joint exercises, Maritime Domain Awareness, hardware gifting, and infrastructure development (MEA, 2023). Key projects include the Composite Training Centre, the Coastal Radar System, and a new Ministry of Defence Headquarters (MEA, 2023). In 2022, India announced the supply of a replacement ship for CGS-Huravee, 24 vehicles, and a second Landing Craft Assault to MNDF, just before the Maldives' Presidential elections (MEA, 2023). These investments reflect a strategic partnership with economic considerations.

CONCLUSION

"The supreme art of war is to subdue the enemy without fighting" - Sun Tzu

The Indian Ocean Region has traditionally been a site of regional disagreements, ranging from local power struggles to proxy wars. In the 21st century, these disputes have shifted to a psychological domain, with an emphasis on strategic naval presence and tactical exercises. China's maritime ambitions are apparent in its assertiveness in the South China Sea and its growing influence in the Gulf of Aden. Similarly, India is worried about China's increasing investments in the Maldives, just as it was concerned about the construction of Sri Lanka's Hambantota port.

The opaqueness of Chinese financial aid and development projects poses a threat to recipient nations and neighboring powers. India is struggling to discern China's true intentions and long-term plans. India's concerns are justified, as evidenced by the arrival of the Chinese research ship Xiang Yang Hong 03 in the Maldives shortly after a 20-point agreement. Civilian ships had spent more than three weeks surveying waters near the exclusive economic zones of India, the Maldives, and Sri Lanka, raising security alarms. Although China claims the ship's activities

are for 'peaceful purposes,' the potential for sharing research data with the military cannot be ignored in this geopolitically sensitive region (Reuters, 2024). Similar incidents have occurred, with an estimated 16 Chinese ships frequenting the Indian Ocean (Reuters, 2024). Notably, the Yuan Wang 5, a military vessel capable of tracking rocket and missile launches, docked in Colombo in 2022, causing unease in India (Reuters, 2024).

The strategic location of Maldives between the Strait of Hormuz and the Strait of Malacca has drawn the attention of rival naval powers. The Strait of Hormuz, which is critical for global oil flow, with an average of 21 million barrels per day in 2022, equivalent to 21% of global petroleum consumption, has made it a focal point for competition between China and India. Any disruption in oil transport through this strait can lead to significant supply delays and higher shipping costs, resulting in an energy crisis for the other country. Moreover, the strait is vital for goods trade between Europe and Asia, as evidenced by pirate attacks from Somalia and Yemen.

The Strait of Malacca connects major economies such as the Middle East, China, Japan, and South Korea, providing the shortest shipping route between the Indian and Pacific oceans. Any blockage here would result in financial and psychological losses, wasting time and resources. The strait handles 80% of Northeast Asia's oil imports and a third of global traded goods, including Chinese exports (Qu and Meng, 2012). Both China and India have vested interests in monitoring regional military activities in the Strait of Malacca.

India views pro-China relations in the Maldives as enhancing China's maritime presence, posing security threats in the Western Indian Ocean Region (IOR). However, this tension is unlikely to escalate to open conflict, as both countries have been engaged in diplomatic talks to resolve their differences.

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TRANSFORMATIONAL PARADIGMS

Ghosts in the Machine: The Past, Present, and Future of India's Cyber Security

Shashank Yadav

ABSTRACT

The article "Ghosts in the Machine: The Past, Present, and Future of India's Cyber Security" by Shashank Yadav provides a comprehensive review of India's cybersecurity journey, from its early days of electronic communications under British rule to the present-day challenges. It traces the evolution of cybersecurity policies, highlighting key historical milestones and policy gaps. The article critically examines the 2013 National Cybersecurity Policy, identifying its shortcomings in addressing modern threats, such as advanced persistent threats (APTs) and the role of AI and automation. The paper emphasizes the need for a robust, forward-looking cybersecurity strategy that integrates human factors, operational constructs, and technological advancements to ensure national resilience in cyberspace. The article also delves into the human dimension of cybersecurity, emphasizing the importance of situational awareness and the vulnerabilities posed by reliance on technology. It argues that the current cybersecurity policy framework in India lacks the necessary depth and foresight to tackle emerging threats, particularly in the context of international cyber operations and the evolving landscape of cyber warfare. The author calls for a more integrated and proactive approach to cybersecurity, one that aligns with national security objectives and addresses the challenges of the digital age.

Key words: Cybersecurity policy, National Cybersecurity Strategy, Communication

When the National Cybersecurity Policy was released in 2013, the response from experts was rather underwhelming [1], [2]. A reaction to a string of unpalatable incidents, from Snowden's revelations [3] and massive compromise of India's civilian and military infrastructure [4] to the growing international pressure on Indian IT companies to fix their frequent data breaches [5], the 2013 policy was a macro example of weak structures finding refuge in a haphazard post-incident response. The next iteration of the policy is in formulation under the National Cybersecurity Coordinator. However, before we embark upon solving our cyber-physical domain's future threat environment, it is perhaps wise to look back upon the perilous path that has brought us here.

Early History of Electronic Communications in India

The institutional "cybersecurity thinking" of post-independence Indian government structures can be traced to 1839 when the East India Company's then Governor-General of India, Lord Dalhousie, had asked a telegraph system to be built in Kolkata, the then capital of the British Raj. By 1851, the British had deployed the first trans-India telegraph line, and by 1854, the first Telegraph Act had been passed. Similar to the 2008 amendment to the IT Act which allowed the government to intercept, monitor and

decrypt any information on any computer, the 1860 amendment to the Telegraph Act too granted the British to take over any leased telegraph lines to access any of the telegraphs transmitted. After all, the new wired communication technology of the day had become an unforeseen flashpoint during the 1857 rebellion.

Post-independence, under the socialist fervour of Nehruvian politics, the government further nationalised all foreign telecommunications companies and continued the British policy of total control over telecommunications under its own civil service structure, which too came pre-packaged from the British.

Historians note that the telegraph operators working for the British quickly became targets of intrigues and lethal violence during the mutiny [6], somewhat akin to today's Sysadmins being a top social engineering priority for cyber threat actors [7]. One of the sepoy mutineers of 1857, while on his way to the hangman's halter, famously cried out at a telegraph line calling it the cursed string that had strangled the Indians [8]. On the other side of affairs, after having successfully suppressed the mutiny, Robert Montgomery famously remarked that the telegraph had just saved India [9]. Within the telegraph system, the problems of information security popped up fairly quickly after its introduction in India. Scholars note that commercial intelligence was frequently peddled in underground Indian markets by government telegraph clerks [10], in what can perhaps be described as one of the first "data breaches" that bureaucrats in India had to deal with.

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British had formulated different rules for telecommunications in India and England. While they did not have the total monopoly and access rights over all transmissions in Britain, for the purpose of maintaining political control, in India they did [11]. Post-independence, under the socialist fervour of Nehruvian politics, the government further nationalised all foreign telecommunications companies and continued the British policy of total control over telecommunications under its own civil service structure, which too came pre-packaged from the British.

The Computer and "The System"

Major reforms are often preceded by major failures. The government imported its first computer in 1955 but did not show any interest in any policy regarding these new machines. That only changed in 1963, when the government under the pressure to reform after a shameful military defeat and the loss of significant territory to China, instituted a Committee on Electronics under Homi Jehangir

Bhabha to assess the strategic utilities that computers might provide to the military [12].

In 1965, as punitive sanctions for the war with Pakistan, the US cut off India's supply of all electronics, including computers. This forced the government to set up the Electronics Committee of India which worked alongside the Electronics Corporation of India (ECIL), mandated to build indigenous design and electronic manufacturing capabilities. But their approach was considered highly restrictive and discretionary, which instead of facilitating, further constrained the development of computers, related electronics, and correspondingly useful policies in India [13]. Moreover, no one was even writing commercial software in India, while at the same the demand for export-quality software was rising. The situation was such that ECIL had to publish full-page advertisements for the development of export-quality software [12]. Consequently, in the early 1970s, Mumbai-based Tata Consultancy Services managed to become the first company to export software from India. As the 1970s progressed and India moved into the 1980s, it gradually became clearer to more and more people in the government that their socialist policies were not working [14].

In 1984, the same year when the word 'Cyberspace' appeared in a sci-fi novel called Neuromancer, a policy shift towards computing and communications technologies was seen in the newly formed government under Rajiv Gandhi [12]. The new computer policy, shaped largely by N. Sheshagiri who was the Director General of the National Informatics Centre, significantly simplified procedures for private actors and was released within twenty days of the prime minister taking the oath. Owing to this liberalisation, the software industry in India took off and in 1988, 38 leading software companies in India came together to establish the National Association of Software and Service Companies (NASSCOM) with the intent to shape the government's cyber policy agendas. As we are mostly concerned about cybersecurity, it should be noted that in 1990, it was NASSCOM that carried out probably the first IT security-related public awareness campaign in India where it called for reducing software piracy and increasing the lawful use of IT [5].

Unfortunately, India's 1990s were mired by coalition governments and a lack of coherent policy focus. In 1998, when Atal Bihari Vajpayee became the Prime Minister, the cyber policy took the most defining turn with the development of the National IT Policy. The IT Act, thus released in 2000 and amended further in 2008, became the first document explicitly dealing with cybercrime. Interestingly, the spokesman and a key member of the task force behind the national IT policy was Dewang Mehta, the then president of NASSCOM. Nevertheless, while computer network operations had become regular in international affairs [15], there was still no cyber policy framework or doctrine to deal with

the risks from sophisticated (and state- backed) APT actors that were residing outside the jurisdiction of Indian authorities. There still is not.

In 2008, NASSCOM established the Data Security Council of India (DSCI), which along with its parent body took it upon itself to run cybersecurity awareness campaigns for law enforcement and other public sector organisations in India. However, the "awareness campaign" centric model of cybersecurity strategy does not really work against APT actors, as became apparent soon when researchers at the University of Toronto discovered the most massive infiltration of India's civilian and military computers by APT actors [4]. In 2013, the Snowden revelations about unrestrained US spying on India also ruffled domestic feathers for lack of any defensive measures or policies [3]. Coupled with these surprise(?) and unpalatable revelations, there was also the increasing and recurring international pressure on Indian IT to put an end to the rising cases of data theft where sensitive data of their overseas customers was regularly found in online underground markets [16].

Therefore, with the government facing growing domestic and international pressure to revamp its approach towards cybersecurity, MeitY released India's first National Cybersecurity Policy in 2013 [17]. Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) also released detailed guidelines "in the wake of persistent threats" [18]. However, the government admitted to not having the required expertise in the matter, and thus the preparation of the MHA document was outsourced to DSCI. Notwithstanding that, MHA's document was largely an extension of the Manual on Departmental Security Instructions released in 1994 which had addressed the security of paper-based information. Consequently, the MHA document produced less of a national policy and more of a set of instructions to departments about sanitising their computer networks and resources, including a section on instructions to personnel over social media usage.

The 2013 National Cybersecurity Policy proposed certain goals and "5-year objectives" towards building national resilience in cyberspace. At the end of a long list of aims, the 2013 policy suggested adopting a "prioritised approach" for implementation which will be operationalised in future by a detailed guide and plan of action at national, sectoral, state, ministry, department and enterprise levels. However, as of this writing the promised implementation details, or any teeth, are still missing from the National Cybersecurity Policy. As continued APT activities [19] show, the measures towards creating situation awareness have also not permeated beyond the technical/collection layer.

In 2014, the National Cyber Coordination Centre (NCCC) was established, with the primary aim of building situational awareness of cyber threats in India. Given the underwhelming response to the

2013 policy [1], [2], the National Cybersecurity Policy was surmised to be updated in 2020, but as of this writing, the update is still being formulated by the National Cybersecurity Coordinator who heads the NCCC. The present policy gap makes it an opportune subject to discuss certain fundamental issues with cyber situation awareness and the future of cyber defences in the context of the trends in APT activities.

Much to Catch Up

Recently, the Government of India's Kavach (an employee authentication app for anyone using a 'gov.in' or 'nic.in' emails-id) was besieged by APT26 [20]. APT26 is a Pak- affiliated actor and what one might call a tier-3 APT i.e., what they lack in technical sophistication, they try to make up for that with passion and perseverance. What makes it interesting is that the malicious activity went on for over a year, before a third-party threat observer flagged it. Post-pandemic, APT activities have not just increased but also shown an inclination towards integrating online disinformation into the malware capabilities [21]. APT actors (and bots), who have increasingly gotten better at hiding in plain sight over social networks, have now a variety of AI techniques to integrate into their command and control - we've seen the use of GANs to mimic traffic of popular social media sites for hiding command and control traffic [22], an loT botnet that had a machine-learning component which the attacker could switch on/off depending upon people's responses in online social networks [21], as well as malware that can "autonomously" locate its command and control node over public communication platforms without having any hard-coded information about the attacker [23].

Post-pandemic, APT activities have not just increased but also shown an inclination towards integrating online disinformation into the malware capabilities.

This is an offence-persistent environment. In this "space", there always exists an information asymmetry where the defender generally knows less about the attacker than the opposite being true. Wargaming results have shown that unlike conventional conflicts, where an attack induces the fear of death and destruction, a cyber-attack generally induces anxiety [24], and consequently, people dealing with cyber attacks act to offset those anxieties and not their primal fears. Thus, in response to cyber-attacks, their policies reflect risk aversion, not courage, physical or moral. It need not be the

case if policymakers recognise this and integrate it into their decision-making heuristics. Unfortunately, the National Cybersecurity Policy released in 2013 stands out to be a fairly risk-averse and a placeholder document. Among many other, key issues are:

- The policy makes zero references to automation and AI capabilities. This would have been understandable in other domains, like poultry perhaps, but is not even comprehensible in present-day cybersecurity.
- The policy makes zero references to hardware attacks. Consequently, developing any capability for assessing insecurity at hardware/firmware levels, which is a difficult job, is also overlooked at the national level itself.
- There are several organisations within the state, civilian and military, that have stakes and roles of varying degrees in a robust National Cybersecurity Policy. However, the policy makes zero attempts at recognising and addressing these specific roles and responsibilities, or any areas of overlap therein.
- The policy does not approach cyber activity as an overarching operational construct which permeates all domains, but rather as activity in a specific domain called "cyberspace". Consequently, it lacks the doctrinal thinking that would integrate cyber capabilities with the use of force. A good example of this is outer space, where cyber capabilities are emerging as a potent destabiliser [25] and cybersecurity constitutes the operational foundation of space security, again completely missing from the National Cybersecurity Policy.
- The policy is also light on subjects critical to cybersecurity implementation, such as the approach towards internet governance, platform regulation, national encryption regime, and the governance of underlying technologies.

A Note on the Human Dimension of Cybersecurity

There exist two very broad types of malicious behaviour online, one that is rapid and superficial, and another that are deep and persistent. The present approaches to building situation awareness in cyberspace are geared towards the former, leading to spatiotemporally "localised and prioritised" assessments [26], matters pertaining to the immediate law and order situations and not stealthy year-long campaigns. Thus, while situation awareness itself is a psychological construct dealing with decision-making, in cybersecurity operations it overwhelmingly has turned into software-based visualisation of the incoming situational data. This is a growing gap which must also

be addressed by the National Cybersecurity Policy.

In technology-mediated environments, people have to share the actual situation awareness with the technology artefacts [27]. Complete dependence on technology for cyber situation awareness has proven to be problematic, for example in the case of Stuxnet, where the operators at the targeted plant saw on their computer screens that the centrifuges were running normally, and simply believed that to be true. The 2016 US election interference only became clearer at the institutional level after several months of active social messaging and doxing operations had already been underway [28], and the story of Telebots' attack on Ukrainian electricity grids is even more telling - a powerplant employee whose computer was being remotely manipulated, sat making a video of this activity, asking his colleague if it could be their own organisation's, IT staff "doing their thing" [29].

The use of computational tools and techniques to automate and optimise the social interactions of a software agent presents itself as a significant force multiplier for cyber threat actors.

This lack of emphasis on human factors has been a key gap in cybersecurity, which APTs never fail to exploit. Further, such actors rely upon considerable social engineering in initial access phases, a process which is also getting automated faster than policymakers can play catchup to [30]. The use of computational tools and techniques to automate and optimise the social interactions of a software agent presents itself as a significant force multiplier for cyber threat actors. Therefore, it is also paramount to develop precise policy guidelines that implement the specific institutional structures, processes, and technological affordances required to mitigate the risks of malicious social automation on the unsuspecting population, as well as on government institutions.

Concluding Remarks

There is a running joke that India's strategic planning is overseen by accountants and reading through the document of National Cybersecurity Policy 2013, that does not seem surprising. We have had a troubling policy history when it comes to electronics and communications and are still in the process of shedding our colonial burden. A poorly framed National Cybersecurity Policy will only take us away from self-reliance in cyberspace and towards an alliance with principal offenders themselves. Notwithstanding, an information- abundant organisation like NCCC has undoubtedly to make some choices about where and what to concentrate its attentional resources upon, however, the present National Cybersecurity Policy appears neither to be a component of any broader national security

strategy nor effective or comprehensive enough for practical implementation in responding to the emerging threat environment.

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COMMENTARIES

Balancing Civilizations: Neither Clash, mere Multiplicity nor Conversion

By Andreas Herberg- Rothe and Key-young Son

The modern world is a product of intense competition and conflict that evolved from the European 'system of states' propensity and greed for the acquisition of territory and resources through colonialism and imperialism. The post-1945 world continues to suffer the ills of Western domination and exploitation as is evidenced by the innumerable number of wars, conflicts, and interventions supposedly part of the imperial civilising missions. As the non-Western world rises the choices are either conflict or cooperation. The G20 Summit 2023 being held in New Delhi is an opportunity to recognise and chart a new path for the world. The authors, Andreas Herberg-Rothe and Key-young Son, emphasise the importance and need for cooperation and harmony amongst the civilisations of the world.

We propose the non-binary concepts of Clausewitzian floating equilibrium, Confucian harmony, and Arendtian politics of plurality as key ideas to avert and mitigate contemporary conflicts.

In many of the world's hot spots, both civil and governmental combatants have become embroiled in unending conflicts based on a binary position: "us against the rest." After two hundred years of imperialism and Euro-American hegemony that have produced varying degrees of adaptation or rejection of Western modernity, it may be time for the world's great civilizations to learn how to live harmoniously with one another. The world order of the twenty-first century will not be based entirely on modernist ideas and institutions such as nation-states, laissez-faire capitalism, individualism, science and technology, and progress. How then can we accommodate other civilizations and cultures?

We propose mediation, recognition, harmony and floating balance as key principles for inter- civilizational and inter-cultural dialogue and conviviality, accompanied by the awareness that we are all descended from a small group of African ancestors. Mediation and recognition between friends and enemies will be the initial recipes for transforming hostility into partnership, while harmony and floating balance between and within opposites, such as individual versus community, freedom versus equality, will help sustain the momentum for forging constructive relationships.

After the process of political decolonization in the twentieth century, we still need to decolonize our way of thinking. The values of the East and the West cannot survive in their absolute form in this globalized world.

As former Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin put it, "You don't have to make peace with your friends; you have to make peace with your enemies. As a legacy of previous centuries, however, the binary thinking of "us against them" has paradoxically retained a strong presence in twenty-first-century international relations. If this thinking continues to be the decisive force, we could repeat the catastrophes of the twentieth century. After the process of political decolonization in the twentieth century, we still need to decolonize our way of thinking. The values of the East and the West cannot survive in their absolute form in this globalized world. It is our deepest conviction that the Western and like-minded states could only hold on to values such as freedom, equality, emancipation and human rights if they could be harmoniously balanced with the contributions of other civilizations and cultures.

The concept of floating equilibrium, derived from our interpretation of the "wondrous trinity" of the Prussian military theorist Carl von Clausewitz, means not relativity, but relationality and proportionality. At the end of his life, Clausewitz drew the conclusion for the theory of violent conflict that every war is composed of the three opposing tendencies of primordial violence, which he compared to hatred and enmity as a blind natural force, to chance and probability, and to the subordination of war as a political instrument, which makes war subject to pure reason. With Clausewitz's concept, it is clear that war involves two extreme opposites - primordial violence on the one hand and pure reason on the other. By adding the third tendency, chance and probability, wars become different in their composition.

We use Clausewitz's concept as a methodological starting point to find a floating balance between various contrasts and contradictions that are evident in the current phase of globalization, which Zygmunt Bauman calls "liquid modernity". These contrasts include those between the individual and the community, equality

and freedom, war and peace, and recognition and disrespect. We argue that Clausewitz's wondrous trinity and "floating equilibrium" can be used as a way to interpret and mitigate today's conflicts, although Clausewitz developed these notions to analyze the warfare of his time.

Globalization has led to the "rise of the rest" or Amitav Acharya's "multiplex world" of nation-states, NGOs, global institutions, global terrorism, and violent gangs of young people from the suburbs of Paris to the slums of Rio who are excluded from the benefits of globalization. This includes both of the following macro developments:

On the one hand, globalization allows the former empires (China, Russia and India) and some developing countries with large populations (Brazil, Indonesia, South Africa) to regain their status as great powers. This development could lead to a global network of megacities competing on connectivity rather than borders, as in China's efforts to reestablish the ancient trade routes of the Silk Road. On the other hand, it dissolves traditional identities and forms of governance to some extent as a result of social inequality, leading to fragmented societies and a re-ideologization of domestic conflicts, as already seen with the rise of the far right in the US, Europe and Russia, but also Salafism, exaggerated Hindu and Chinese nationalist movements.

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The terrible inequalities in this world, where 1% of the world's population has as much as 99% of the "rest", or 62 billionaires own as much as 3.5 billion people, are the result of unrestricted and unbalanced freedom. We need to reinvent a balance between freedom and equality so as not to legitimize the inversion of freedom in the name of freedom by the aristocracy of property owners.

Failed states, the wave of migrants and refugees around the world, climate catastrophes, and growing inequalities are the result of the "liquid modernity" that accompanies the dissolution of individual, community, and state identities. Ideologies did not dissolve with the end of the twentieth century or the advent of globalization but rather shifted from modern, utopian ideologies such as socialism and democracy and their aberrations such as Nazism and Stalinism to postmodern ones. The rise of postmodern ideologies such as Salafism is the result of globalization and the West's refusal to recognize other civilizations and cultures. Moreover, the terrible inequalities in this world, where 1% of the world's population has as much as 99% of the "rest", or 62 billionaires own as much as 3.5 billion people, are the result of unrestricted and unbalanced freedom. We need to reinvent a balance between freedom and equality so as not to legitimize the inversion of freedom in the name of freedom by the aristocracy of property owners.

In short, we propose the non-binary concepts of Clausewitzian floating equilibrium, Confucian harmony, and Arendtian politics of plurality as key ideas to avert and mitigate contemporary conflicts. Both Confucian harmony and Hanna Arendt's concept of plurality are based on the harmonious relationship between different actors, or the floating balance of equality and difference, given that all human beings are similar enough to understand each other, but each is an individual endowed with uniqueness.

Due to the speed and scale of information processing and transmission, the contemporary world is turning much faster than the commonly known modern world. If modernity is a temporal and spatial playground for rationality, the contemporary world is rather a playground for the mixture of the Clausewitzian trinity: reason, emotion, and chance. This means that while we would like to use reason in making decisions, we are often swamped by emotion and ultimately forced to take chances, given the short time frame available for any reasonable calculation and the ever-changing, chameleon-like internal and external environments. As an analyst of war, Clausewitz had long studied this trinity, for war, as a microcosm of human realities, is where reason, emotion, and chance play their respective roles.

No matter how powerful a single state may be, it will remain a minority compared to the rest of the world. In this globalized world, there would be no room for any kind of exceptionalism, American or Chinese, but only a floating balance between the world's great civilizations.

It is a choice between repeating the same mistake of forcibly imposing our own values on the rest of the world, as we did in the twentieth century, or embarking on a new civilizational project of harmony and coprosperity. No matter how powerful a single state may be, it will remain a minority compared to the rest of the world. In this globalized world, there would be no room for any kind of exceptionalism, American or Chinese, but only a floating balance between the world's great civilizations. Such a floating balance is a kind of mediation between the opposites of Huntington's clash of civilizations on the one hand and the generalization of the values of only one civilization on the other. A mere multiplicity of approaches would only lead to a variant of the clash of civilizations. The first step in this direction is to recognize that in a globalized world, great civilizations must learn from each other for their own benefit and interest. If the values of the Western world lead to such terrible and immoral inequalities, we need to rethink our value systems - and if the concept of hierarchy in the Eastern world leads to violations of a harmoniously balanced society, we need to rethink those value systems as well. Whereas in classical Confucianism harmony was based on strict hierarchical oppositions, in a globalized world we need a floating balance between hierarchical and symmetrical social relations, combining Clausewitz and Confucius.

Feature Image Credit: Storming of the Srirangapattinam Fort by the British. Fourth Anglo-Mysore War, 1799. Consolidation of colonialism and imperialism. www.mediastorehoise.com

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Is Singularity here?

By Alfredo Toro Hardy

One of the most influential figures in the field of AI, Ray Kurzweil, has famously predicted that the Singularity will happen by 2045. Kurzweil's prediction is based on his observation of exponential growth in technological advancements and the concept of "technological singularity" proposed by mathematician Vernon Vinge.

The term Singularity alludes to the moment in which artificial intelligence (AI) becomes indistinguishable from human intelligence. Ray Kurzweil, one of AI's fathers and top apologists, predicted in 1999 that Singularity was approaching (Kurzweil, 2005). In 2011, he even provided a date for that momentous occasion: 2045 (Grossman, 2011). However, in a book in progress, initially estimated to be released in 2022 and then in 2024, he announces the arrival of Singularity for a much closer date: 2029 (Kurzweil, 2024). Last June, though, a report by The New York Times argued that Silicon Valley was confronted by the idea

that Singularity had already arrived (Strifeld, 2023). Shortly after that report, in September 2023, OpenAI announced that ChatGPT could now "see, hear and speak". That implied that generative artificial intelligence, meaning algorithms that can be used to create content, was speeding up.

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Is, thus, the most decisive moment in the history of humankind materializing before our eyes? It is difficult to tell, as Singularity won't be a big noticeable event like Kurzweil suggests when given such precise dates. It will not be a discovery of America kind of thing. On the contrary, as Kevin Kelly argues, AI's very ubiquity allows its advances to be hidden. However, silently, its incorporation into a network of billions of users, its absorption of unlimited amounts of information and its ability to teach itself, will make it grow by leaps and bounds. And suddenly, it will have arrived (Kelly, 2017).

The grain of wheat and the chessboard

What really matters, though, is the gigantic gap that will begin taking place after its arrival. Locked in its biological prison, human intelligence will remain static at the point where it was reached, while AI shall keep advancing at exponential speed. As a matter of fact, the human brain has a limited memory capacity

and a slow speed of processing information: About 10 Hertz per second (Cordeiro, 2017.) AI, on its part, will continue to double its capacity in short periods of time. This is reminiscent of the symbolic tale of the grain of wheat and the chess board, which takes place in India. According to the story, if we place one grain of wheat in the first box of the chess board, two in the second, four in the third, and the number of grains keeps doubling until reaching box number 64, the total amount of virtual grains on the board would exceed 18 trillion grains (IntoMath). The same will happen with the advance of AI.

The initial doublings, of course, will not be all that impressive. Two to four or four to eight won't say much. However, according to Ray Kurzweil, the moment of transcendence would come 15 years after Singularity itself, when the explosion of non-human intelligence should have become overwhelming (Kurzweil, 2005). But that will be only the very beginning. Centuries of progress would be able to materialize in years or even months. At the same time, though, centuries of regression in the relevance of the human race could also occur in years or even months.

Humans equaling chickens

As Yuval Noah Harari points out, the two great attributes that separate homo sapiens from other animal species are intelligence and the flow of consciousness. While the first has allowed humans to become the owners of the planet, the second gives meaning to human life. The latter translates into a complex interweaving of memories, experiences, sensations, sensitivities, and aspirations: meaning, the vital expressions of a sophisticated mind. According to Harari, though, human intelligence will be utterly negligible compared to the levels to be reached by AI. In contrast, the flow of consciousness will be an expression of capital irrelevance in the face of algorithms' ability to penetrate the confines of the universe. Not in vain, in his terms, human beings will be to AI the equivalent of what chickens are for human beings (Harari, 2016).

Periodically, humanity goes through transitional phases of immense historical significance that shake everything on its path. During these, values, beliefs and certainties are eroded to their foundations and replaced by new ones. All great civilizations have had their own experiences in this regard. In the case of the Western World, there have been three significant periods of this kind in the last six hundred years: The Renaissance that took place in the 15th and 16th centuries, the Enlightenment of the 18th, and Modernism that began at the end of the 19th century and reached its peak in the 20th.

Renaissance, Enlightenment and Modernism

The Renaissance is understood as a broad-spectrum movement that led to a new conception of the human being, transforming it in the measure of all things. At the same time, it expressed a significant leap in scientific matters where, beyond great advances in several areas, the Earth ceased to be seen as the centre of the universe. The Enlightenment placed reason as the defining element of society. Not only in terms of the legitimacy of political power but also as the source of liberal ideals such as freedom, progress, or tolerance. It was, concurrently, the period in which the notion of harmony was projected into all orders, including the understanding of the universe. During this time, the scientific method began to be supported by verification and evidence. Enlightenment represented a new milestone in the self-gratifying vision human beings had of themselves.

Modernism, understood as a movement of movements, overturned prevailing paradigms in almost all areas of existence. Among its numerous expressions were abstract art in its multiple variables, an introspective narrative that gave a free run to the flow of consciousness, and psychoanalysis, the theatre of the absurd. In sum, reason and harmony were turned upside down at every step. Following its own dynamic but feeding back the former, science toppled down the pillars of certainty. This included the conception of the universe built by Newton during the Enlightenment. The conventional notions of time and space lost all meaning under the theory of Relativity while, going even further, quantum physics made the universe a place dominated by randomness. Unlike the previous two periods of significant changes, Modernism eroded to its bones the self-gratifying vision human beings had of themselves.

The end of human centrality

Renaissance, Enlightenment and Modernism unleashed and symbolized new ways of perceiving the human being and the universe surrounding him. Each of these movements placed humanity before new levels of consciousness (including the subconscious during Modernism). In each of them, humans could feel themselves more or less valued, more secure or insecure with respect to their own condition and its position in relation to the universe itself. However, a fundamental element was never altered: Humans always studied themselves and their surroundings. Even while questioning their nature and motives, they reaffirmed their centrality within the planet. As it had been defined since the Renaissance, humans kept being the measure of all Earthly things.

Singularity, however, is called to destroy that human centrality in a radical, dramatic, and irreversible way. As a result, human beings will not only confront its obsolescence and irrelevance but will embark on the path towards becoming equals to chickens. Everything previously experienced in the march of human development, including the three above-mentioned groundbreaking periods, will pale drastically by comparison.

The countdown towards the end

We are, thus, within the countdown towards the henhouse grounds. Or worse still, towards the destruction of the human race itself. That is what Stephen Hawking, one of the most outstanding scientists of our time, believed would result from the advent of AI's dominance. This is also what hundreds of top-level scientists and CEOs of high-tech companies felt when, in May 2023, they signed an open letter warning about the risk to human subsistence involved in an uncontrolled AI. For them, the risk for humanity associated with this technology was on par with those of a nuclear war or a devastating human pandemic. Furthermore, at a "summit" of bosses of large corporations held at Yale University in mid-June this year, 42 percent indicated that AI could destroy humanity in five to ten years (Egan, 2023).

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In the short to medium term, although at the cost of increasing and massive unemployment, AI will spurt gigantic advances in multiple fields. Inevitably, though, at some point, this superior intelligence will escape human control and pursue its own ends. This may happen if freed from the "jail" imposed by its programmers by some interested hand. The natural culprits of these actions would come from what Harari labels as the community of experts. Among its members, many believe that if humans can no longer control the overwhelming volumes of information available, the logical solution is to pass the commanding torch to AI (Harari, 2016). The followers of the so-called Transhumanist Party in the United States represent a perfect example of this. They aspire to have a robot as President of that country within the next decade (Cordeiro, 2017). However, AI might be able to free itself of human constraints without any external help. Along the road, its own self-learning process would certainly allow so. One way or the other, when this happens, humanity will be doomed.

As a species, humans do not seem to have much of an instinct for self-preservation. If nuclear war or climate change doesn't get rid of us, AI will probably take care of it. The apparently imminent arrival of Singularity, thus, should be seen with frightful eyes.

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Why the Centre Must Act in Manipur

by Deepak Sinha

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The mainstream media recently reported that the Home Minister, Mr. Amit Shah, after having reviewed the deteriorating communal situation in Manipur, has directed his Ministry to organise a face-to-face meeting of representatives of both the Meitei and Kuki communities. While the intent behind this move is welcome, it can be nothing other than an exercise in utter futility. Truth is, talks would have had a positive impact if undertaken in full earnest when the ethnic clashes first broke out last year. Not only is it now a case of 'too little too late', but also suggests the MHA is completely out of touch with ground realities, as a civil war rages, that is slowly, but surely, engulfing the Northeast.

Over the past year we have been witness to a car wreck in slow motion that has destroyed decades of socio-political progress and economic development in the State. Incidentally, this was only possible thanks to the efforts and sacrifice on the part of the Army, Assam Rifles and the CAPF that waged a relentless campaign against separatist elements. Unfortunately, over the past year, the Central Government has remained curiously ambivalent and disconnected from the state. As Lt Gen Nishikanta Singh (Retd) recently tweeted, "I am just an ordinary Indian from Manipur living a retired life. The state is now 'stateless'. Life and property can be destroyed anytime by anyone just like in Libya, Lebanon, Nigeria, Syria etc. It appears Manipur has been left to stew in its own juice. Is anybody listening?"

The rift between the two communities appears unbridgeable as they face off along the Manipur River in Churachandpur District, and in Tengnoupal and Kangpokpi Districts. The Kuki/Zo communities find themselves totally isolated and besieged by militias owing allegiance to the majority community, openly supported by the State. The local government administration in the hill districts has become virtually non-existent. These communities can no longer travel to Imphal for any reason and in the event of having to travel outside the State are forced to make an arduous 16-hour road journey to Aizawl from Churachandpur. District Hospitals are perennially short of medical supplies and provide basic healthcare with funds collected from within the community. Reports allege that Lakhs of Rupees worth of medical supplies sent by NGO's as relief disappeared, allegedly with government connivance.

> The chief minister, Mr. Biren Singh, of the BJP, bears much of the responsibility for this tragic turn of events over the past year and is perceived to be openly supportive of the Meitei militias. Armed cadres belonging to the Arambai Tenggol and the separatist terror group, the United National Liberation Front (UNLF), openly roam the streets with their weapons, displaying their newfound power

Surprisingly, despite the difficulties and inconvenience caused by this blockade, the Kuki community as a whole, while keen on peace, is reluctant to join any attempt to bring about reconciliation. They are quite happy to be free of the earlier endemic discrimination and constant humiliation they were subjected to by Meiteis occupying the higher rungs within the state and district administration and the police. This new-found freedom has led to a change in attitudes within the community. They no longer wish for a return to the pre-violence days status quo but want the Centre to enact legislation that will give their districts greater administrative and financial autonomy within the state under Schedule 6.

The chief minister, Mr. Biren Singh, of the BJP, bears much of the responsibility for this tragic turn of events over the past year and is perceived to be openly supportive of the Meitei militias. Armed cadres belonging to the Arambai Tenggol and the separatist terror group, the United National Liberation Front (UNLF), openly roam the streets with their weapons, displaying their newfound power, and are bent on loot and terrorising the locals. While much of the mainstream media continues to avoid covering the dire situation there, the people have clearly shown their displeasure with the current state of affairs by voting in Congress MPs for both the Inner and Outer Constituencies.

This has come as a huge embarrassment for Mr. Biren Singh and his militias, as also for the Tangkhul dominated NSCN(IM). Despite the Nagas having been involved in the initial tribal protests opposing the grant of ST status to the Meitei community, which was the trigger for the targeting of Kukis and the ongoing violence, the NSCN ensured the Naga community remained 'neutral'. This has cost the NSCN(IM) hugely, both politically and in terms of credibility. By appearing to ally with the Meiteis, it has placed its claim for Greater Nagalim in complete jeopardy. This has led to rise of opposing factions within the Tangkhuls for the first time, challenging the dominance of the NSCN(IM). The Outer Manipur MP Elect, Alfred Kan-Ngam Arthur, himself a Tangkhul, is a beneficiary of this factionalism having won by 85000 votes. Given that the Naga talks with the Centre seem to be going nowhere, the NSCN(IM) finds itself becoming increasingly irrelevant, which may force it to take actions inimical to our national interest, in an attempt to gain sympathy within the community.

Outer Manipur MP Elect, Alfred Kan-Ngam Arthur, himself a Tangkhul, is a beneficiary of this factionalism having won by 85000 votes. Given that the Naga talks with the Centre seem to be going nowhere, the NSCN(IM) finds itself becoming increasingly irrelevant, which may force it to take actions inimical to our national interest, in an attempt to gain sympathy within the community.

The existing state of affairs was not possible if the Army, Assam Rifles and the CAPF were not side-lined by the Centre. This was done by removing AFSPA from the Meitei dominate valley, thereby ensuring the Army

and Assam Rifles have been put in veritable cold storage and left to fend for themselves with no clear mandate. As and when detachments are deployed for missions within the Valley, they are routinely subjected to harassment and abuse by the local police, Meitei Leepun, Arambai Tenggol and their separatist allies. There are numerous videos that have gone viral on social media showing cadres of the UNLF and Arambai Tenggol proceeding in armed convoys, in what appear to be SUVs looted from Automobile showrooms, openly threatening and abusing military personnel deployed at a checkpoint somewhere on the Imphal-Jiribam Road. The impact of all this on morale of troops is easy to visualise.

If it has already not done so, it is only a matter of time before the Chinese start pouring oil over troubled waters in this strategically important border state. This in turn, will add to the vulnerability that the entire Northeastern States already suffers. Clearly governance in the state is wholly compromised and in the hands of militant leaders, who are a law unto themselves. In these circumstances the Centre can no longer afford to be complacent and must act firmly with all powers at its command. There are four actions it needs to take. At the outset, it needs to appoint an experienced Governor who understands the complexities of tackling militancy, preferably a senior retired bureaucrat or military veteran from within the State.

Secondly, the Biren Singh government has lost its ability to govern, which implies the necessity for a declaration of President's Rule. Thirdly, there is a need to issue a proclamation declaring the complete state as a "Disturbed Area" thereby allowing for the promulgation of AFSPA for the entire state. The Army and Assam Rifles should be tasked to neutralise all those involved in waging war against the state. Finally, before the SF commence action grant of amnesty should be announced for all militant groups and their cadres that turn themselves in, along with arms and other war-like stores in their possession, within 72 Hours at designated camps. It is only then that talks would have some hope of success.

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Feature Image Credit: The Economic Times

Genomics and Life Sciences: Breakthrough Opportunities for Indian Agriculture and Public Health Sectors

By Prakash Chandar and Srinivasan Chandrasegaran

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Introduction

Life Sciences is the study of living organisms that include bacteria, plants, animals, and human beings. The blueprint of life is written in the nucleotide sequence of an organism's genome, which determines its form and function. For example, each human cell contains 3.2 billion base pairs (3.2x10 9 bp) within its genome. Scientists estimate that the human genome codes for about 20, 000 different genes, which give an individual his/her form and function. The genes are distributed among 23 pairs of chromosomes and code for all the human body's proteins. While the functions of several human genes have been deciphered, many others are yet to be determined. The gene function, in many cases, can be inferred by how well the gene and its protein sequence are conserved across species, and if the gene function of one of the homologs is already known. The gene function can also be determined experimentally by knocking out (deleting) or mutating that specific gene individually in a cell andobserving the resulting phenotype. Mutations in the coding region of critical genes can lead to formationof abnormal proteins, result in disease phenotypes, premature death, or failure of an embryo to develop. Furthermore, mutations that affect the regulatory genes can result in aberrant gene expression within cells and give rise to cancer phenotypes.

Genetics is the study of individual genes, genetic variation, and their roles in inheritance. In contrast, genomics is the study of the complete set of an organism's genes, and their interaction with each other. High Throughput DNA sequencing techniques have enabled scientists to decipher complete nucleotide sequences of genomes of several organisms and species, which has led to the development of the field of genomics. Bioinformatics is used to assemble the genome from the nucleotide sequence information, annotate the genes, and analyze the function, structure, and evolution of entire genomes. Genomics has enabled discovery-based research as opposed to traditional hypothesis-driven research. Systems biology has facilitated the study of complex biological systems that were not approachable previously. Genomics addresses all genes and the inter relationships to identify their combined influence on growth and development of the organism. Examples of genetic inherited disorders include cystic fibrosis, Huntington's disease, and sickle-cell disease. Examples of complex diseases that have been studied by genomics include asthma, cancer, diabetes, and heart disease.

Thus, genomics is an interdisciplinary field of biology focusing on the structure, function, evolution, mapping, and editing of genomes.

Breakthrough Opportunities for Indian Agriculture and Public Health Sectors

India faces the critical challenge of producing sufficient food for a growing population living in a changing climate. Potential future crops derived through genome editing and synthetic biology include those that better withstand pests, those that are salt and drought tolerant, that have enhanced nutritional value, and that are able to grow on marginal lands. In many instances, crops with such traits will be created by altering only a few nucleotides among the billions that comprise the plant genomes. With the appropriate regulatory structures and oversight in place, crops created through genome editing and synthetic biology might prove to be more acceptable to the public than plants that carry foreign DNA in their genomes (GMO). Public perception and the performance of engineered crop varieties will determine the extent to which genome editing and synthetic biology contribute towards securing the world's food supply. It is critical for India to make substantial investments in these transformative technologies to makethem readily available to indigenous Indian scientists so that they can be part of the upcoming revolution in agriculture.

With the appropriate regulatory structures and oversight in place, crops created through genome editing and synthetic biology might prove to be more acceptable to the public than plants that carry foreign DNA in their genomes (GMO).

Genome Editing (also known as Gene Editing)

Genome editing techniques - ZFNs, TALENs and CRISPR-Cas9 – all deliver a targeted chromosomal DSB within cells to stimulate recombination. Cells have evolved into two classes ofmechanisms to repair DSBs: 1) non-homologous end joining (NHEJ); and 2) homology directed repair (HDR). NHEJ is an error-prone repair mechanism that often results in a pool of mutants with variable lengths of nucleotide insertions and deletions, known as indels. Thus, NHEJ can be used to knock-out genes. HDR normally relies on recombination with homologous sequences of the undamaged sister chromatid, but cells can be tricked into using the investigator-provided donor DNA. HDR leads to the introduction of precise alteration to the genome that is specified by the donor DNA template. Thus, genome editing can be used to correct, introduce or delete almost any DNA sequence in many different types of cells and organisms. Genome editing seeks to modify genes of living organisms to understand

gene function and develop ways to use genes to treat genetic or acquired diseases. The 2020 Nobel Prize for Chemistry was awarded to Jennifer Doudna and Emmanuelle Charpentier for harnessing CRISPR- Cas9 system for genome editing and providing a simplified technique.

Opportunities for Indian Agriculture Sector

A few examples of genome editing applications in agriculture and animal husbandry are described below.

Anti-browning mushroom: Scientists at University of Pennsylvania reported engineering of the edible fungus – the common white button mushrooms – to resist browning. It was achieved by knocking out one of the six family of genes that encode polyphenol oxidase (PPO) enzymes. The targeted PPO gene was inactivated by deleting a few base pairs in the gene of the mushroom's genome using CRISPR-Cas9; this resulted in the reduction of PPO enzyme's activity by 30% in the anti-browning mushrooms. United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) has decided that it will not regulate a mushroom that has been modified genetically using CRISPR, making it the first CRISPR-edited organism to get approval from the US government. This means that the mushroom can be cultivated and sold without passing through the agency's regulatory process. Prior to this, several other plants have passed the USDA regulatory process that were made using ZFNs and TALENs. The gene edited mushrooms did not trigger USDA oversight because it did not contain any foreign DNA, such as virus or bacteria and therefore considered non-GMO. Similarly, gene editing has been used to generate anti-browning potatoes.

Changing flower color: Japanese scientists have used CRISPR-Cas9 to change flower color of the ornamental plant, Japanese morning glory, from violet to white. Japanese morning glory was chosen because its genome has been sequenced and DNA transfer protocols were well established to carry out gene editing. The researchers targeted a single gene, *dihydroflavonol-4-reductase-B (DFR-B)*, encoding an anthocyanin biosynthesis enzyme, which is responsible for the color of the plant's stems, leaves and flowers. CRISPR editing of the *DFR-B* gene inactivated the enzyme, resulting in an absence of the color pigment. Non-transformed plants with an active enzyme had violet stems and flowers.

Hornless dairy cattle: Over the last 10,000 years, humans selectively bred cattle to produce more meat or milk, selecting distinct genetic variation over non-domesticated cattle. Cattle have evolved horns to defend themselves against predators and gain reproductive advantage over competing peers by signifying health and vitality to females. Horns on dairy cattle can injure their handlers and other cattle.

Physical dehorning of cattle is widely practiced, which is a bloody and painful process that pits animal rights activists against it. Conventional selective breeding is a slow and expensive process, usually taking many generations before the trait is at a high frequency in the population. However, some cattle breeds, like the Angus beef breed, are hornless due to a natural genetic variation or allele that arose in the distant past.

Scientists have shown that the mutant allele, called *Polled*, prevents horn growth when an individual inherits one or two copies of the *Polled* gene from its parents, i.e., the *Polled* allele is dominant to the usual *Horn* allele, at one specific chromosomal locus of the cow genome. The complete DNA sequence ofthe cow genome including its genes is known from genomics. Dairy cattle do not carry the *Polled* allele and hence these animals have horns. Genome editing offered a simple and efficient way to transfer the small and natural *Polled* allele from beef cattle to dairy cattle, and quickly produce dairy cattle without horns and importantly while preserving the dairy cattle genetics of high yielding milk cows that were generated by classical breeding. Using TALENs, the researchers disrupted *Polled* locus and demonstrated the birth of two hornless male cattle in 2015, in reproductive crosses where the offspring normally should have been horned. These bulls then sired six hornless calves, which were born in 2017. Thus, genome editing technology is a safe and relatively fast way of transferring a small and naturally occurring genetic variant from one breed of cattle into another breed. Genome editing can speed up what humans have been doing for thousands of years using the very slow process of selective breeding for desirable traits.

Opportunities for Indian Public Health Sector

Genomics, through its impact on transformative technologies like genome editing and synthetic biology, has fostered applications in biotechnology, agriculture, and medicine. The “holy grail” of human gene therapy is how genes might someday be used, modified, or even changed to correct various human diseases. A few examples of genome editing applications in the public health sector are listed here.

Sickle Cell Disease: Mutations in hemoglobin can lead to two different disorders, namely sickle cell anemia and β-thalassemia. Successful *ex vivo* genome editing of a sickle cell disease patient with her own CRISPR-edited stem cells to increase the normal hemoglobin level was successful. Three years into the treatment, the billions of genetically modified cells that were infused into her body appear to be alleviating virtually all complications of her sickle cell disease. However, the long-term safety andefficacy of the treatment need to be monitored before it can be considered curative. A similar strategy is being pursued to treat β-thalassemia.

Hunter's Syndrome (MPS II): In 2017, Sangamo Therapeutics Inc. in the USA launched a Phase I clinical trial testing of ZFNs to correct Hunter's syndrome (MPS II) caused by iduronate-2-sulfatase enzyme deficiency, which is responsible for breaking down complex sugars in the body. Hunter's syndrome can cause abnormalities in the skeleton, heart, and respiratory systems. The clinical trial wasthe first for *in vivo* genome editing approach administered directly to patients, and the treatment was effective without side effects.

Chimeric Antigen Receptor (CAR) T-cell Therapy: Scientists are developing immunotherapy approaches to create 'off-the-shelf' universal donor T-cells that don't have to be developed for every cancer patient. This approach utilizes CAR T-cell therapies that use immune cells collected not from patients, but from healthy donors. The idea is to create so-called off-the-shelf CAR T-cell therapies that are immediately available for use and do not have to be manufactured for each patient. Cellectis (a French company) has launched a Phase I trial of its off-the-shelf CD19-targeted CAR T-cell product in the USA for patients with advanced acute myeloid leukemia (ALL). The company's product using patient's own cells has already been tested previously in Europe, in two infants with ALL who had exhausted all other options. Inboth cases, the treatment was effective. Other clinical trials that are underway include treatment for Leber Congenital Amaurosis (LCA), a common cause of inherited childhood blindness, and treatment for a rare protein-folding disease called hereditary transthyretin amyloidosis, a fatal disease caused by mutations in the gene TTR.

Synthetic Biology

Synthetic biology focuses on living systems and organisms. It applies engineering principles to develop new biological parts, devices, and systems by redesigning existing systems found in nature. Scientists use synthetic biology to design and construct novel biological modules and biological systems, or to redesign existing biological systems for useful purposes. Rapid advances in DNA sequencing and DNA synthesis techniques have made it possible to design and engineer viruses, biochemical pathways, assemble bacterial genomes, and synthetic yeast chromosomes.

Synthetic Biology Application in Medicine

Genomics has enabled important applications of synthetic biology such as rapid mRNA vaccines production. ***mRNA vaccine***: The goal of a vaccine is to stimulate the adaptive immune system to create antibodies that precisely target that pathogen. Traditional vaccines stimulate an antibody response by

injecting either a weakened virus, a dead virus, or a recombinant antigen-encoded (usually a viral coat protein) in a harmless carrier virus into the body. Antigens and viruses are prepared and grown outside the body. In contrast, mRNA vaccines introduce a short-lived synthetically created fragment of the RNA sequence of a virus into the individual being vaccinated. These mRNA fragments are taken up by immune cells (dendritic cells), which use their ribosomes to translate the mRNA into proteins (the viral antigens encoded by the mRNA). The mRNA is delivered by a co-formulation of the mRNA encapsulated in lipid nanoparticles that protect the mRNA strands and help their absorption into the cells.

The COVID-19 pandemic, and sequencing of the causative virus SARS-CoV-2 at the beginning of 2020, led to the rapid development of the approved mRNA vaccines. In December of 2020, BioNTech and Moderna, obtained approval for their mRNA-based COVID-19 vaccines. On 2 December, seven days after its final eight-week trial, the UK first approved an mRNA vaccine, granting emergency authorizationfor Pfizer-BioNTech's COVID-19 vaccine for widespread use. On 11 December, USA FDA gave emergency use authorization for the Pfizer–BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine and a week later issued similar approval for the Moderna COVID-19 vaccine.

The production advantage of mRNA vaccines is that they can be designed fast, manufactured quickly, and more cheaply using standardized protocols that are needed to improve responsiveness to serious outbreaks. Moderna designed their vaccine for COVID-19 in 2 days. Pfizer has optimized the manufacturing process for mass production to only 60 days, which is much faster than the traditional vaccines. The actual production time was only about 22 days: two weeks for cloning of DNA plasmids and purification of DNA, four days for DNA to RNA transcription and purification of mRNA, and four days to encapsulate mRNA in lipid nanoparticles. The rest were needed to perform rigorous quality control checks at each stage of the production run. Before 2020, no mRNA drug or vaccine had been authorized for use in humans, so there was a risk of unknown effects. The 2020 COVID-19 pandemic required faster production capability of mRNA vaccines and led to the emergency use authorization after the eight-week period of post-final human trials. Reactogenicity, the tendency of a vaccine to produce adverse reactions, was found to be like conventional non-RNA vaccines. People susceptible to autoimmunity may have an adverse reaction to messenger mRNA vaccines. The 2023 Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine was awarded to Katalin Kariko and Drew Weissman for the development of effective mRNA vaccines against COVID-19.

Early foresight and funding support for mRNA vaccine research came from the United States Research Agency, DARPA, which recognized the potential of nucleic acid technology for defense against

pandemics. It awarded a $25 million grant to Moderna that was critical to the development of the mRNA vaccine field. DARPA grant encouraged other government agencies and private entities to invest in mRNA technology. Large infusion of funds (~$2.3 billion in research and development) from US Government during COVID-19 pandemic, and faster FDA approvals of mRNA vaccines for emergency use authorization by United States Regulatory Agency, FDA, were also responsible for the rapid successof mRNA vaccines. In 2022, Moderna announced the development of mRNA vaccines for 15 diseases: Chikungunya, COVID-19, Crimean-Congo hemorrhagic fever, Dengue, Ebola, HIV, Malaria, Marburg virus, Lassa fever, MERS-CoV, Nipah, Henipaviral disease, Rift Valley fever, Severe fever with Thrombocytopenia, TB and Zika.

Finally, some thoughts about Indian Government's role in advancing these transformative technologies. Resistance to gene edited crops and GMOs need to be overcome by the Government and Indian population for successful use of genome editing for crop improvements. Exorbitant pricing of GMO seeds by commercial outfits to farmers may need regulation by the Government. Licensing of international patents and read through rights in the licensing agreements may also need to be examined carefully and regulated by the Government. Off-target effects with mutagenic consequences by genome editing technologies are still a major concern with medical applications. Continued improvements to reduce off- target effects are essential for patients' safety. Therefore, applications of genome editing technologies to human therapeutics will ultimately depend on risk versus benefit analysis and well- informed consent of patients. Also, affordability of these life-saving treatments may require regulation by Indian Government to benefit poor populations. One possible solution could be incorporating a common whole country-wide licensing for these transformative technologies at reasonable terms and pricing by the Government of India for use by Indian scientists for various applications.

Exorbitant pricing of GMOseeds by commercial outfits to farmers may need regulation by the Government. Licensing of internationalpatents and read through rights in the licensing agreements may also need to be examined carefully and regulated by the Government. Off-target effects with mutagenic consequences by genome editing technologies are still a major concern with medical applications.

In summary, genome-editing technologies and synthetic biology have revolutionized life sciences. Their impact on biology, agriculture, and personalized medicine has been tremendous and will be felt for years to come. Nobody thought that rewriting life was possible before. Genome editing and synthetic biology have changed all that. These fields have enabled scientists to do precise genome surgery and create new organisms from scratch, respectively. It is a wonderful and exciting time for young undergraduate and graduate students, and medical professionals to enter these fields seeking a research career in biology or precision medicine.

Acknowledgement

This commentary was compiled using the information, data, and dates from articles previously published in RESONANCE from our lab, and those available from Wikipedia, listed under Suggested Readings.

Suggested Readings

(1) Singh AK, Ramalingam S, Rao DN and Chandrasegaran S (2021) Genome Editing Revolution in Life Sciences. **Resonance 26**: 971-998.

(2) Sambasivam V, Rao DN and Chandrasegaran S (2020) Rewriting the Genome of the Model Eukaryote *Saccharomyces cerevisiae***. Resonance 25**: 801-816.

(3) Refer to topics mRNA vaccine and Synthetic Biology in **Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia.**

Feature Image Credit: Gene Solutions

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Trump followed four years later by Trump: Would America's trustiness and system of alliances survive?

By Alfredo Toro Hardy

Ambassador Alfredo Toro Hardy examines, in this excellently analysed paper, the self-created problems that have contributed to America's declining influence in the world. As he rightly points out, America helped construct the post-1945 world order by facilitating global recovery through alliances, and mutual support and interweaving the exercise of its power with international institutions and legal instruments. The rise of neoconservatism following the end of the Cold War, particularly during the Bush years from 2000 to 2008, led to American exceptionalism, unipolar ambitions, and the failure of American foreign policy. Obama's Presidency was, as Zbigniew Brezinski said, a second chance for restoring American leadership but those gains were nullified in Donald Trump's 2016-20 presidency leading to the loss of trust in American Leadership. In a final analysis that may be questionable for some, Ambassador Alfredo sees Biden's administration returning to the path of liberal internationalism and recovering much of the lost trust of the world. His fear is that it may all be lost if Trump returns in 2024.

-Team TPF

In seeking his second nonconsecutive term, former President Donald Trump will start out in a historically favourable position for a presidential primary candidate. Jonathan Ernst/Reuters. fivethirtyeight.com

According to Daniel W. Drezner: "Despite four criminal indictments, Donald Trump is the runaway frontrunner to win the GOP nomination for president. Assuming he does, current polling shows a neck-and-neck race between Trump and Biden in the general election. It would be reckless for other leaders to dismiss the possibility of a second Trump term beginning on January 20, 2025. Indeed, the person who knows this best is Biden himself. In his first joint address to Congress, Biden said that in a conversation with world leaders, he has 'made it known that America is back', and their responses have tended to be a variation of "but for how long?". [1]

A bit of historical context

In order to duly understand the implications of a Trump return to the White House, a historical perspective is needed. Without context, it is difficult to comprehend the meaning of the "but for how long?" that worries so many around the world. Let's, thus, go back in time.

Under its liberal internationalist grand vision, Washington positioned itself at the top of a potent hegemonic system. One, allowing that its leadership could be sustained by the consensual acquiescence of others. Indeed, through a network of institutions, treaties, mechanisms and initiatives, whose creation it promoted after World War II, the United States was able to interweave the exercise of its power with international institutions and legal instruments. Its

alliances were a fundamental part of that system. On the other side of the Iron Curtain, though, the Soviet Union established its own system of alliances and common institutions.

In the 1970s, however, America's leadership came into question. Two reasons were responsible for it. Firstly, the Vietnam War. The excesses committed therein and America's impotence to prevail militarily generated great discomfort among several of its allies. Secondly, the crisis of the Bretton Woods system. As a global reserve currency issuer, the stability of the U.S. currency was fundamental. In a persistent way, though, Washington had to run current account deficits to fulfil the supply of dollars at a fixed parity with gold. This impacted the desirability of the dollar, which in turn threatened its position as a reserve currency issuer. When a run for America's gold reserves showed a lack of trust in the dollar, President Nixon decided in 1971 to unhook the value of the dollar from gold altogether.

Notwithstanding these two events, America's leadership upon its alliance system would remain intact, as there was no one else to face the Soviet threat. However, when around two decades later the Soviet Union imploded, America's standing at the top would become global for the same reason: There was no one else there. Significantly, the United States' supremacy was to be accepted as legitimate by the whole international community because, again, it was able to interweave the exercise of its power with international institutions and legal instruments.

Inexplicable under the light of common sense

In 2001, however, George W. Bush's team came into government bringing with them an awkward notion about the United States' might. Instead of understanding that the hegemonic system in place served their country's interests perfectly well, the Bush team believed that such a system had to be rearranged in tandem with America's new position as the sole superpower. As a consequence, they began to turn upside down a complex structure that had taken decades to build.

The Bush administration's world frame became, indeed, a curious one. It believed in unconditional followers and not in allies' worthy of respect; it believed in ad hoc coalitions and "with us or against us" propositions where multilateral institutions and norms had little value; it believed in the punishment of dissidence and not in the encouragement of cooperation; it believed in preventive action prevailing over international law.

In proclaiming the futility of cooperative multilateralism, which in their perspective just constrained the freedom of action of America's might, they asserted the prerogatives of a sole superpower. The Bush administration's world frame became, indeed, a curious one. It believed in unconditional followers and not in allies' worthy of respect; it believed in *ad hoc* coalitions and "with us or against us" propositions where multilateral institutions and norms had little value; it believed in the punishment of dissidence and not in the encouragement of cooperation; it believed in preventive action prevailing over international law. Well-known "neoconservatives" such as Charles Krauthammer, Robert Kagan, and John Bolton, proclaimed America's supremacy and derided countries not willing to follow its unilateralism.

But who were these neoconservatives? They were the intellectual architects of Bush's foreign policy, who saw themselves as the natural inheritors of the foreign policy establishment of Truman's time. The one that had forged the fundamental guidelines of America's foreign policy during the Cold War, in what was labelled as the "creation". In their view, with the United States having won the Cold War, a new creation was needed. Their beliefs could be summed up as diplomacy if possible, force if necessary; U.N. if possible, ad hoc coalitions, unilateral action, and preemptive strikes if necessary. America, indeed, should not be constrained by accepted rules, multilateral institutions, or international law. At the same time, the U.S.' postulates of freedom and democracy, expressions of its exceptionalism, entailed the right to propitiate regime change whenever necessary, in order to preserve America's security and the world order.

Bogged down in Iraq and Afghanistan, while deriding and humiliating so many around the world, America's neoconservatives undressed the emperor. By taking off his clothes, they made his frailties visible for everyone to watch.

Inexplicable, under the light of common sense, the Bush team disassociated power from the international structures and norms that facilitated and legitimized its exercise. As a consequence, America moved from being the most successful hegemonic power ever to becoming a second-rate imperial power that proved incapable of prevailing in two peripheral wars. Bogged down in Iraq and Afghanistan, while deriding and humiliating so many around

the world, America's neoconservatives undressed the emperor. By taking off his clothes, they made his frailties visible for everyone to watch.

At the beginning of 2005, while reporting a Pew Research Center poll, *The Economist* stated that the prevailing anti-American sentiment around the world was greater and deeper than at any other moment in history. The BBC World Service and Global Poll Research Partners, meanwhile, conducted another global poll in which they asked, "How do you perceive the influence of the U.S. in the world?". The populations of some of America's traditional allies gave an adverse answer in the following percentages: Canada 60%; Mexico 57%; Germany 54%; Australia 52%; Brazil 51%; United Kingdom 50%. With such a negative perception among Washington's closest allies, America's credibility was in tatters.[2]

Is the liberal international order ending? what is next? dailysabah.com

While Bush's presidency was reaching its end, Zbigniew Brzezinski wrote a pivotal book that asserted that the United States had lost much of its international standing. This felt, according to the book, particularly disturbing. Indeed, as a result of the combined impact of modern technology and global political awakening, that speeded up political history, what in the past took centuries to materialize now just took decades, whereas what before had taken decades,

now could materialize in a single year. The primacy of any world power was thus faced with immense pressures of change, adaptation and fall. Brzezinski believed, however, that although America had deeply eroded its international standing, a second chance was still possible. This is because no other power could rival Washington's role. However, recuperating the lost trust and legitimacy would be an arduous job, requiring years of sustained effort and true ability. The opportunity of this second chance should not be missed, he insisted, as there wouldn't be a third one. [3]

A second chance

Barak Obama did certainly his best to recover the space that had been lost during the preceding eight years. That is, the U.S.'s leading role within a liberal internationalist structure. However, times had changed since his predecessor's inauguration. In the first place, a massive financial crisis that had begun in America welcomed Obama, when he arrived at the White House. This had increased the international doubts about the trustiness of the country. In the second place, China's economy and international position had taken a huge leap ahead during the previous eight years. Brzezinski's notion that no other power could rival the United States was rapidly evolving. As a result, Obama was left facing a truly daunting challenge.

To rebuild Washington's standing in the international scene, Obama's administration embarked on a dual course of action. He followed, on the one hand, cooperative multilateralism and collective action. On the other hand, he prioritized the U.S.' presence where it was most in need, avoiding unnecessary distractions as much as possible. Within the first of these aims, Obama seemed to have adhered to Richard Hass' notion that power alone was simple potentiality, with the role of a successful foreign policy being that of transforming potentiality into real influence. Good evidence of this approach was provided through Washington's role in the Paris Agreement on Climate Change, in the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action in relation to Iran, in the NATO summits, in the newly created G20, and in the summits of the Americas, among many other instances. By not becoming too overbearing, and by respecting other countries' points of view, the Obama Administration played a leading influence within the context of collective action. Although theoretically being one among many, the United States always played the leading role.[4]

Within this context, Obama's administration followed a coalition building strategy. The Trans-Pacific Partnership represented the economic approach to the pivot and aimed at building an association covering forty per cent of the global economy. There, the United States would be the first among equals. As for the security approach to the pivot, the U.S. Navy repositioned its forces within the Pacific and the Atlantic oceans.

To prioritize America's presence where it was most needed, Obama turned the attention to China and the Asia-Pacific. While America was focusing on the Middle East, China enjoyed a period of strategic opportunity. His administration's "pivot to Asia" emerged as a result. This policy had the dual objective of building economic prosperity and security, within that region. Its intention was countering, through facts, the notion that America was losing its staying power in the Pacific. Within this context, Obama's administration followed a coalition building strategy. The Trans-Pacific Partnership represented the economic approach to the pivot and aimed at building an association covering forty per cent of the global economy. There, the United States would be the first among equals. As for the security approach to the pivot, the U.S. Navy repositioned its forces within the Pacific and the Atlantic oceans. From a roughly fifty-fifty correlation between the two oceans, sixty per cent of its fleet was moved to the Pacific. Meanwhile, the U.S. increased joint exercises and training with several countries of the region, while stationing 2,500 marines in Darwin, Australia. As a result of the pivot, many of China's neighbours began to feel that there was a real alternative to this country's overbearing assertiveness.[5]

Barak Obama was on a good track to consolidating the second chance that Brzezinski had alluded to. His foreign policy helped much in regaining international credibility and standing for his country, and the Bush years began to be seen as just a bump on the road of America's foreign policy. Unfortunately, Donald Trump was the next President. And Trump coming just eight years after Bush, was more than what America's allies could swallow.

Dog-eat-dog foreign policy

The Bush and Trump foreign policies could not be put on an equal footing, though. The abrasive arrogance of Bush's neoconservatives, however distasteful, embodied a school of thought in matters of foreign policy. One, characterized by a merger between exalted visions of America's

exceptionalism and Wilsonianism. Francis Fukuyama defined it as Wilsionanism minus teeth. Although overplaying conventional notions to the extreme, Bush's foreign policy remained on track with a longstanding tradition. Much to the contrary, Trump's foreign policy, according to Fareed Zakaria, was based on a more basic premise– The world was largely an uninteresting place, except for the fact that most countries just wanted to screw the United States. Trump believed that by stripping the global system of its ordering arrangements, a "dog eat dog" environment would emerge. One, in which his country would come up as the top dog. His foreign policy, thus, was but a reflection of gut feelings, sheer ignorance and prejudices.[6]

Trump derided multilateral cooperation and preferred a bilateral approach to foreign relations. One, in which America could exert its full power in a direct way, instead of letting it dilute by including others in the decision-making process. Within this context, the U.S.' market leverage had to be used to its full extent, to corner others into complying with Washington's positions. At the same time, he equated economy and national security and, as a consequence, was prone to "weaponize" economic policies. Moreover, he premised on the use of the American dollar as a bullying tool to be used to his country's political advantage. Not only China but some of America's main allies as well, were targeted within this approach. Dusting off Section 323 of the 1962 Trade Expansion Act, which allowed tariffs on national security grounds, Trump imposed penalizations in every direction. Some of the USA's closest allies were badly affected as a result.

Given Trump's contempt for cooperative multilateralism, but also aiming at erasing Obama's legacy, an obsessive issue with him, he withdrew the U.S. from the Trans-Pacific Partnership, from the Paris Agreement on Climate Change, and from the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action in relation to Iran. He also withdrew his country from other multilateral institutions, such as the United Nations' Human Rights Commission and, in the middle of the Covid 19 pandemic, from the World Health Organization. Trump threatened to cut funding to the U.N., waged a largely victorious campaign to sideline the International Criminal Court, and brought the World Trade Organization to a virtual standstill. Even more, he did not just walk away from the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, in relation to Iran, but threatened its other signatories to impose sanctions on them if, on the basis of the agreement, they continued to trade with Iran.

Trump followed a transactional approach to foreign policy in which principles and allies mattered little, and where trade and money were prioritized over security considerations

Trump followed a transactional approach to foreign policy in which principles and allies mattered little, and where trade and money were prioritized over security considerations. In 2019, he asked Japan to increase fourfold its annual contribution for the privilege of hosting 50,000 American troops in its territory, while requesting South Korea to pay 400 percent more for hosting American soldiers. This, amid China's increasing assertiveness and North Korea's continuous threats. In his relations with New Delhi, a fundamental U.S. ally within any containment strategy to China, he subordinated geostrategic considerations to trade. On the premise that India was limiting American manufacturers from access to its market, Trump threatened this proud nation with a trade war.[7]

Irritated because certain NATO member countries were not spending enough on their defence, Trump labelled some of Washington's closest partners within the organization as "delinquents". He also threatened to reduce the U.S.' participation in NATO, calling it "obsolete", while referring to Germany as a "captive of Russia". At the same time, Trump abruptly cancelled a meeting with the Danish Prime Minister, because she was unwilling to discuss the sale of Greenland to the United States. This, notwithstanding the fact that this was something expressively forbidden by the 1975 Helsinki Final Act, represents the cornerstone of European stability. The European Union, in his view, was not a fundamental ally, but a competitor and an economic foe. Deliberately, Trump antagonized European governments, including that of London at the time, by cheering Brexit. Meanwhile, he imposed tariffs on steel and aluminium on many of its closest partners and humiliated Canada and Mexico by imposing upon them a tough renegotiation of NAFTA. One, whose ensuing accord did not bring significant changes. Moreover, he fractured the G7, a group integrated by Washington's closest allies, leaving the United States standing alone on one side with the rest standing on the other.

In June 2018, Donald Tusk, President of the European Council, expressed his bewilderment at seeing that the rules-based international order was being challenged precisely by its main architect and guarantor– the United States. Financial Times columnist Martin Wolf summoned up all of this, by expressing that under Trump the U.S. had become a rogue superpower.

Unsurprisingly, thus, America's closest allies reached the conclusion that they could no longer trust it. Several examples attested to this. In November 2017, Canberra's White Paper on the security of Asia expressed uncertainty about America's commitment to that continent. In April 2018, the United Kingdom, Germany and France issued an official statement expressing that they would forcefully defend their interests against the U.S.' protectionism. On May 10, 2018, Angela Merkel stated in Aquisgran that the time in which Europe could trust America was over. On May 31, 2018, Justin Trudeau aired Canada's affront at being considered a threat to the United States. In June 2018, Donald Tusk, President of the European Council, expressed his bewilderment at seeing that the rules-based international order was being challenged precisely by its main architect and guarantor– the United States. In November 2019, in an interview given to *The Economist*, Emmanuel Macron stated that the European countries could no longer rely on the United States, which had turned its back on them. Financial Times columnist Martin Wolf summoned up all of this, by expressing that under Trump the U.S. had become a rogue superpower.[8]

The return of liberal internationalism

Politically and geopolitically Biden rapidly went back to the old premises of liberal internationalism. Cooperative multilateralism and collective action were put back in place, and alliances became, once again, a fundamental part of America's foreign policy.

As mentioned, George W. Bush followed a few years later by Donald Trump was more than what America's allies could handle. Fortunately for that country, and for its allies, Trump failed to be re-elected in 2020, and Joe Biden came to power. True, the latter's so-called foreign policy for the middle classes kept in place some of Trump's international trade policies. However, politically and geopolitically he rapidly went back to the old premises of liberal internationalism. Cooperative multilateralism and collective action were put back in place, and alliances became, once again, a fundamental part of America's foreign policy. Moreover, Biden forcefully addressed some of his country's main economic deficiencies, which had become an important source of vulnerability in its rivalry with China. In sum, Biden strengthened the United States' economy, its alliances, and its international standing.

Notwithstanding the fact that Biden had to fight inch by inch with a seemingly unconquerable opposition, while continuously negotiating with two reluctant senators from his own party, he was able to pass a group of transformational laws. Among them, are the Infrastructure Investment and Job Act, the CHIPS and Science Act and the Inflation Reduction Act. Together, these legislations allow for a government investment of a trillion dollars in the modernization of the country's economy and its re-industrialization, including the consolidation of its technological leadership, the updating of its infrastructures and the reconversion of its energy matrix towards clean energy. Private investments derived from such laws would be gigantic, with the sole CHIPS Act having produced investment pledges of more than 100 billion dollars. This projects, vis-à-vis China's competition, an image of strength and strategic purpose. Moreover, before foes and friends, these accomplishments prove that the U.S. can overcome its legislative gridlocks, in order to modernize its economy and its competitive standing.

Meanwhile, Washington's alliances have significantly strengthened. In Europe, Russia's invasion of Ukraine and Washington's firm reaction to it had important consequences. While the former showed to its European allies that America's leadership was still indispensable, the latter made clear that the U.S. had the determination and the capacity to exercise such leadership. Washington has indeed led in response to the invasion, in the articulation of the alliances and the revitalization of NATO, in sanctions on Russia, and in the organization of the help provided to Ukraine. It has also been Kyiv's main source of support in military equipment and intelligence, deciding at each step of the road what kind of armament should be supplied to the Ukrainian forces. In short, before European allies that had doubted Washington's commitments to its continent, and of the viability of NATO itself, America proved to be the indispensable superpower.

Meanwhile, American alliances in the Indo-Pacific have also been strengthened and expanded, with multiple initiatives emerging as a result. As the invasion of Ukraine made evident the return of geopolitics by the big door, increasing the fears of China's threat to regional order, Washington has become for many the essential partner. America's security umbrella has proved to be for them a fundamental tool in containing China's increasing arrogance and disregard for international law and jurisprudence. Among the security mechanisms or initiatives created or reinforced under its stewardship are an energized Quad; the emergence of AUKUS; NATO's approach to the Indo-Pacific region; the tripartite Camp David's security agreement between Japan, South Korea and the U.S.; a revamped defence treaty with The

Philippines; an increased military cooperation with Australia; and Hanoi's growing strategic alignment with Washington. On the economic side, we find the Indo-Pacific Economic Framework for Prosperity and the freshly emerged Partnership for Global Infrastructure and Investment & India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor.

Enough would be enough

Although the Global South has proved to be particularly reluctant to fall back under the security leadership of the superpowers, Washington has undoubtedly become the indispensable partner for many in Europe and the Indo Pacific. Thanks to Biden, the United States has repositioned itself on the cusp of a potent alliance system, regaining credibility and vitality. What would happen, thus, if he is defeated in the 2024 elections and Trump regains the White House? In 2007, Brzezinski believed, as mentioned, that although America had deeply eroded its international standing, a second chance was still possible. Actually, with Biden (and thanks in no small part to the Russian invasion and China's pugnacity), the U.S. got an unexpected third chance. But definitively, enough would be enough. Moreover, during Trump's first term in office, a professional civil service and an institutional contention wall (boosted by the so- called "adults in the room"), may have been able to keep at bay Trump's worst excesses. According to *The Economist*, though, that wouldn't be the case during a second term, where thousands of career public servants would be fired and substituted by MAGA followers. The deconstruction of the so-called "deep State" would be the aim to be attained, which would translate into getting rid of anyone who knows how to get the job done within the Federal Government. Hence, for America's allies, Trump's nightmarish first period would pale in relation to a second one. Trump followed four years later by Trump, no doubt about it, would shatter America's trustiness, credibility, international standing, and its system of alliances. [9]

Notes:

[1] "Bracing for Trump 2.0", *Foreign Affairs*, September 5, 2023

[2] *The Economist*, 19th February, 2005; Walt, Stephen M, *Taming American Power*, New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 2005, p.72.

[3] *Second Chance*, New York: Basic Books, 2007, p. 191, 192, 206.

[4] Hass, Richard, "America and the Great Abdication", *The Atlantic*, December 28, 2017.

[5] Campbell, Kurt, *The Pivot*, New York: Twelve, 2016, pp. 11-28.

[6] Steltzer, Irwin, *Neoconservatism,* London: Atlantic Books, 2004, pp. 3-28; Fukuyama, Francis, "After the Neoconserv atives", London: Profile Books, 2006, p. 41; Zakaria, Farid, "The Self-Destruction of American Power", *Foreign Affairs*, July-August 2019.

[7] *World Politics Review*, "Trump works overtime to shake down alliances in Asia and appease North Korea", October 14, 2019.

[8] White, Hugh, "Canberra voices fears", *The Strait Time*, 25 November, 2017; Breuninger, Kevin, "Canada announces retaliatory tariffs", CNBC, May 31, 2018;
The Economist, "Emmanuel Macron warns Europe", November 7th, 2019; Kishore Mahbubani, *Has China Won?* New York: Public Affairs, 2020, p. 56; Cooley, Alexander and Nexon, Daniel, *Exit from Hegemony* , Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020, p. 70.

[9] *The Economist*, "Preparing the way: The alarming plans for Trump's second term", July 15th, 2023.

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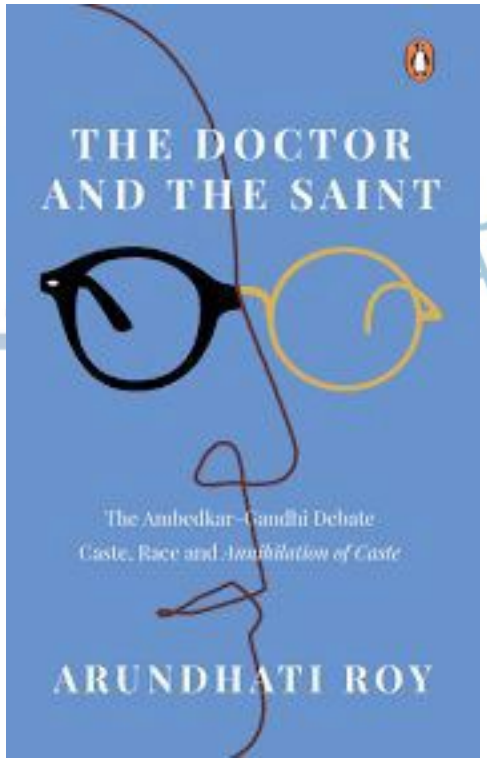
BOOK REVIEWS

Book Review

The doctor and the saint

Author: Arundhati Roy

Arundhati Roy is the author of a number of books, including The God of Small Things, which won the Booker Prize in 1997 and has been translated into more than forty languages. She was born in 1959 in Shillong, India, and studied architecture in Delhi, where she now lives. She has also written several non-fiction books, including Field Notes on Democracy, Walking with the Comrades, Capitalism: A Ghost Story, The End of Imagination, and most recently Things That Can and Cannot Be Said, co-authored with John Cusack. Roy is the recipient of the 2002 Lannan Foundation Cultural Freedom Prize, the 2011 Norman Mailer Prize for Distinguished Writing, and the 2015 Ambedkar Sudar award.



Publisher: Penguin Books Limited, 2019

Language: English

Pages: 192

Reviewed by: Shravya Ramesh

In The Doctor and the Saint, Arundhati Roy contends that the ideological clash between Ambedkar and Gandhi is far from a mere theoretical debate, asserting a profound influence on contemporary politics and the enduring structures of inequality in Indian society. The title reflects Roy's intention to highlight the significance of understanding Ambedkar (the Doctor) and Gandhi (the Saint) in relation to one another. Rather than presenting them in isolation, she argues that a comprehensive understanding of their respective legacies emerges from examining their interactions and contrasting views on caste and social justice. Published initially as a preface to an annotated edition of Ambedkar's Annihilation of Caste in 2014, this potent work was subsequently released as a standalone volume in 2017. It is a concise yet dense narrative of around 130 pages and stands out as a bold and revolutionary piece in Indian literature, providing a provocative examination of caste, entitlement, and social reform. The prose skilfully weaves historical dialogue with Roy's sharp critique, which is a testament to the author's literary prowess, as evidenced by her 1997 Booker Prize win. This book, though compelling and well-supported, reveals a clear bias towards Ambedkar. The confrontational writing style, while engaging, hinders balanced exploration and risks alienating some readers.

Educated at Princeton on a scholarship, B.R. Ambedkar was an Dalit (untouchable) from the Mahar caste, excluded from the traditional Chaturvarna system. He emerged as Gandhi's most formidable opponent, challenging him "not just politically or intellectually, but also morally." Despite his significant role in advocating for justice, Ambedkar's contributions have often been sidelined in favour of policies that reinforce the status quo, mainly by India's elite, who suppressed challenges to Gandhi's near-divine status. Although Ambedkar is celebrated as the Father of the Indian Constitution, his dissatisfaction with it is less acknowledged. His inclusion among the founding fathers of India reflects an attempt at political correctness through positive discrimination, says Roy. Despite this, his statue holding the Constitution stands as a powerful symbol of Dalit empowerment. Ambedkar, often portrayed as a moderate figure, was in reality a radical revolutionary.

The book explores Ambedkar's radical critique of Hinduism, which he referred to as "a veritable chamber of horrors." This provoked hostility from the Jat-Pat Todak Mandal, a Hindu reformist group that disinvited Ambedkar from addressing its upper-caste members after reading his speech in advance. This event underscores the deep-rooted nature of caste and the resistance to its eradication. Ambedkar went on to publish the speech as text, targeted at Hindu liberals whom he referred to as "the best of Hindus" and not the Hindu extremists, for he

believed it to be impossible to be a moderate and a believer simultaneously. Gandhi's counter-narrative was the "Ideal Bhangi," where he stated, "The Brahmin's duty is to look after the sanitation of the soul; the Bhangi's is that of the body of society." It is exposed as a superficial attempt to address caste while preserving the hierarchical underpinnings of Hindu society.

Roy argues that the evolution of Hindu identity from a caste-based to a political one has merely masked the persistence of caste, now intertwined with capitalism. The Baniyas dominate economically, comprising the wealthiest 1% in India. Ambedkar believed caste to be "division of labourers," not labour, whereas Gandhi, a Baniya (Vaishya), considered caste a fundamental aspect of Indian society. The book also critiques the role of the nation-state in homogenising and reinforcing caste divisions, resulting in the politics of representation. While Gandhi supported the Arya Samaj to integrate untouchables into the Hindu fold, thereby narrowing the focus to untouchability from entitlement that caste privilege provides, Ambedkar, along with contemporaries like Periyar, opposed this assimilation. They saw through the elite's attempts to co-opt reform for broader support while maintaining caste-based hierarchies. Gandhi's reform efforts often appeared performative, failing to dismantle the deep-rooted caste system. The caste system, deeply embedded and less visible than racism, has escaped significant international scrutiny despite its severe impact.

Roy challenges the sanctified image of Mahatma Gandhi, arguing that history has been generous in its portrayal of him. Gandhi's complex persona is marked by contradictions. Celebrated for his anti-colonial activism in South Africa, Gandhi was in fact an imperial collaborator. In 1906, he said, "We are in Natal by virtue of British power. Our very existence depends on it. It is therefore our duty to render whatever help we can." Gandhi's Satyagraha efforts with South African mill workers ironically aimed to expand the business interests of Indian merchants. Despite advocating for Indian rights, Gandhi viewed Africans as inferior and, in 1906, accepted that Indians were beneath whites. Furthermore, Gandhi performed the rituals of poverty while amassing power and wealth, funded by corporate interests. Sarojini Naidu remarked, "If only Bapu [Gandhi] knew the cost of keeping him in poverty!" Despite switching from a suit to Khadi, Gandhi died a wealthy man. In contrast, Ambedkar emerges as a figure of radical authenticity who switched to suit and died in debt. While Gandhi's Salt Satyagraha is widely celebrated, Ambedkar's Mahad Satyagraha—an important rally advocating for Dalits' access to common drinking water—remains lesser known. Between the struggles for salt and water lay a toxic universe of Indian politics.

The two leaders had their first official confrontation at the 1931 Round Table Conference, where Gandhi took issue with Ambedkar's critique of the Indian National Congress, equating

it to an attack on the homeland. Ambedkar famously retorted, "Gandhiji, I have no homeland." Unlike other minorities, Gandhi refused to recognise the untouchables, preferring to see Hinduism collapse rather than allowing them to gain autonomy. When the proposal for a double vote for Dalits and a communal electorate was announced, Gandhi undertook an indefinite hunger strike from prison, pressuring Ambedkar to withdraw the proposal and sign the Poona Pact, 1932. The book highlights that the Poona Pact is often misunderstood and celebrated for the wrong reasons: it did not signify a revolution against caste but instead solidified the impossibility of untouchables nominating their own representatives or forming their own political constituency.

Even in the 21st century, caste continues to predominantly dictate our society. Therefore, the Annihilation of Caste remains as relevant today as it was when first published. The Doctor and the Saint serves as a vital catalyst for critical thinking and action, reminding us that true progress can only be achieved through a deep understanding of our history and a commitment to building a more equitable future. Roy concludes by stressing the urgent need for a radical societal transformation to dismantle this oppressive system. She emphasises, "Not unless we read Babasaheb Ambedkar" can we hope to annihilate caste.

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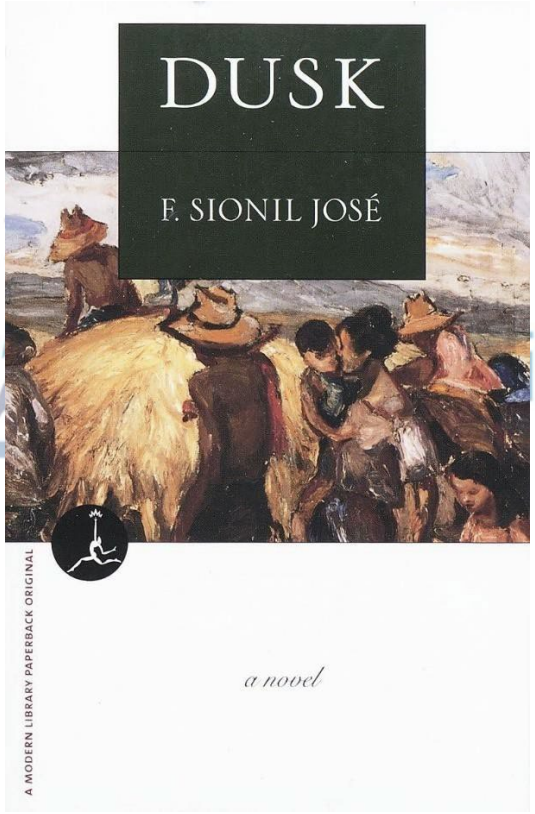
Book Review

The Role of Religion in "Dusk"

Author: F. Sionil Jose

Francisco Sionil José was a Filipino writer who was one of the most widely read in the English language. A National Artist of the Philippines for Literature, which was bestowed upon him in 2001, José's novels and short stories depict the social underpinnings of class struggles and colonialism in Filipino society.



Publisher: Modern Library Inc, 1984

Language: English

Pages: 352

Reviewed by: Niyanthri Arun

Written by one of the Philippines' most well-known writers, "Dusk" by F. Sionil Jose (1984) is the first in a five-story saga, considered to be one of the finest works of Filipino literature written in English. The story begins with the protagonist, Istak, unintentionally witnessing the priest of the Spanish convent that he attends having intercourse with a parishioner. The priest, out of a desire to keep this secret, commands Istak and his family to leave the church and the land they have farmed. Outraged by this, Istak's father murders the priest, after which the family is forced to escape the town and settle in a part of an unoccupied forest to evade the Spanish authorities, creating a home in a town they call Po'on. As time passes, Istak marries and is respected in the community as a healer and farmer. However, this peaceful lifestyle is interrupted as war begins brewing between Spain and the United States. Driven by his belief in an independent and peaceful Filipino nation, Istak chooses to fight for the rebels' side. This decision forces him to confront moral and spiritual dilemmas as he works with great freedom fighters to prevent the further treatment of his people as second-class citizens in their own country. The novel details the hypocrisy and authoritarianism of the Spanish elite—represented by the priest in the story—and serves as an account of colonial atrocities as well as the role of religion as a tool of oppression, a unique exploration of a technique used in many colonial endeavours.

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Though many of the characters in the novel itself are religious, including the protagonist, the personal empowerment that is gained from this individual practice of religion is separated from the domineering ideology propagated by the Spanish colonizers. Through this separation, the moral dilemma Istak faces becomes clearer: the church is at once his saviour and oppressor, and he must find a way to reconcile his faith with the knowledge that the church as an institution was not built for the benefit of his people. Istak was educated in the convent from a young age because an older priest recognised his potential and therefore had a strong belief in God and knowledge of scripture. Despite this, it is his involvement in the affairs of the church as an institution that causes his downfall. Despite this fact, his faith remains steadfast throughout the novel, as does his gratitude to the Spanish priest who recognised his potential. His discontent with the Spanish colonial system, therefore, stems from the power imbalance between natives and the Spanish, perpetuated by the church. This resentment is conveyed by the quote in which it is said: "It was the priest who ruled, and who enacted the laws of the Church and man, and added to such laws the lash of prejudice, for power was always white, Castilian, and not brown like the good earth." The Spanish version of Christianity at the time was meant to spread the mentality that they, as the people who brought religion to so-called uncivilised people, were

the superior race and favoured by God. Istak is thus outraged by the fact that the colonial system favours neither morality, justice, nor faith but instead blindly follows the authority of the Spanish elite.

This realisation causes his spiritual and mental transformation—he begins to foster more strongly anti-colonial ideas while recognising that God is not less accessible to him than to anyone else simply because of his skin colour, leading to his ultimate evolution for the better. Thus, his religion led to the growth of a nationalist spirit within him, leading him to aid revolutionaries fighting against the Spanish. This concept of nationalism is encapsulated in his internal monologue, in which he reaches the ultimate realisation that God is not only for the white man—when he thinks, “I should worship not a white God but someone brown like me. Pride tells me only one thing: that we are more than equal with those who rule us. Pride tells me that this land is mine, that they should leave me to my destiny, and if they will not leave, pride tells me that I should push them away, and should they refuse this, I should vanquish them." (143). Istak’s change in faith throughout the novel is a poignant portrayal of religion as a complex idea that can simultaneously fuel and end revolutions, adding nuance to the conversation surrounding the conversion of many indigenous people during the time of colonisation in the Philippines. His belief in a God who represents him motivates him to also take confidence in the fact that the identity of his people should be reflected in other aspects of their lives as well.

Dusk is a rousing story of survival and perseverance, as well as the fight for justice for a nation and the faith one holds to be true. In the process of telling this story, the concept of faith itself is questioned as it is separated from man-made religious institutions. By doing so, it reveals that this difference, once it is fully realised, can open the minds of a nation to make them realise that they need not be bound by their faith and that it can be used to break these forcefully made bonds instead. In short, it changes the perception of religion as a weapon of the oppressors to an equaliser that helps individuals realise their equal worth and prompts them to extend this concept to their families and further to their nation. This revelation that the colonisers have no right to justify their conquest in the name of having God’s favour, that grace resides in all, is encapsulated most succinctly by Istak in his moment of epiphany: “No stranger can come battering down my door and say he brings me light. This I have within me” (143). The unique perspectives and stirring writing in the novel make Dusk an essential read for anyone interested in Philippine history, the origins of nationalist ideals, the brutality of colonisation, or the impact

of religion and the moral conundrums it causes.

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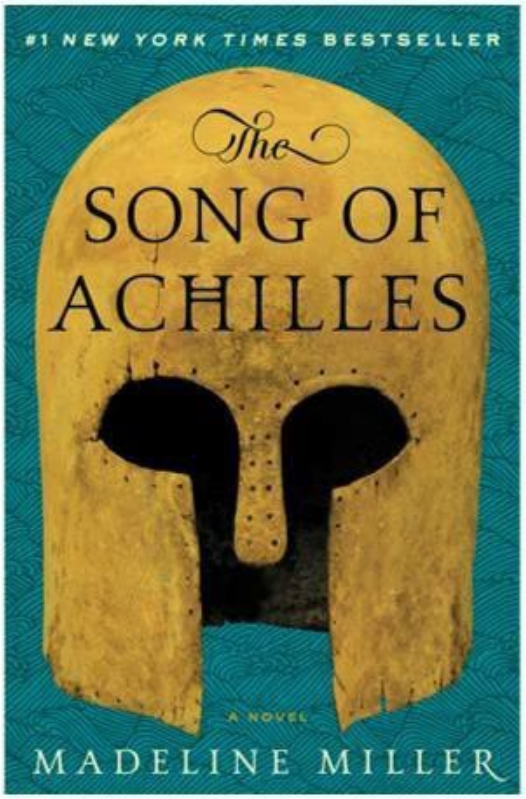
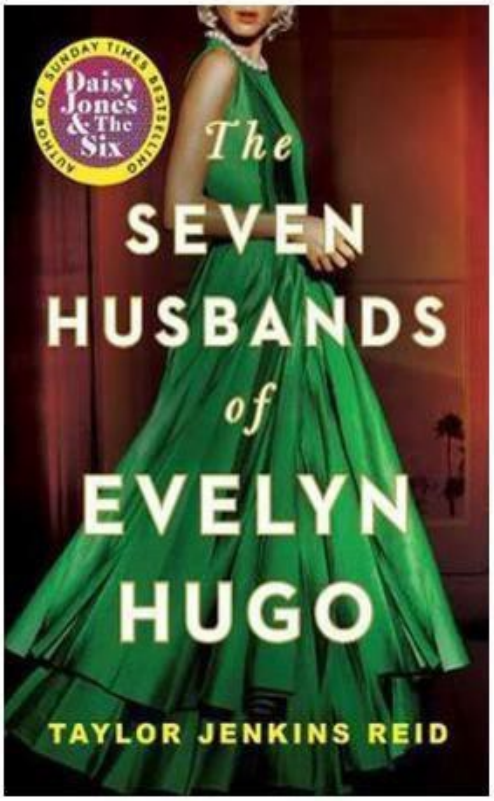
Book Analysis

Feminist analysis of Queer relationships in "The song of Achilles" by Madeline Miller and "The seven husbands of Evelyn Hugo" by Taylor Jenkins Reid





Publisher: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2011
Language: English
Pages: 416

Publisher: Atria Books, 2017
Language: English
Pages: 400

By: Samyuktha B

Introduction

"The Song of Achilles" by Madeline Miller and "The Seven Husbands of Evelyn Hugo" by Taylor Jenkins Reid are two of the most compelling works of contemporary literature. These two novels were published in 2011 and 2017, respectively, and both became bestsellers of their times. The understanding of queerness has evolved over the years and has been incorporated into the queer movements of the decade (2010s). The novels were published during the legalisation of same-sex relationships in countries like the United States of America and Ireland. The texts that I have chosen, though at the outset, come across as young adult fiction, have more nuanced elements that can add value to the existing understanding of queer relationships. Madeline Miller harnesses the richness of Greek Mythology and uses mythological realism, unlike the authors such as Plato and Homer from the ancient era, who have interpreted it in different ways. In her "The Song of Achilles", she attempts to give the readers an image of the probable homosexual relationship between the two heroes of the Trojan War, Achilles and Patroclus. On the contrary, Taylor Reid employs a modern setting of the story and the acceptance of same-sex relationships before the Stonewall Riots in the United States of America, specifically focusing on show business and celebrity culture. Both works of fiction throw light on the adversity and dilemma of queer individuals in coming out for fear of loss of respect and dignity and the ostracisation of homosexuality by human society. Through this review, I seek to critically analyse the two texts taking notes from the existing queer theorists and the ability of these books to transcend the gender spectrum and add value to contemporary queer literature.

Summary

"The Song of Achilles" by **Madeline Miller** revolves around the two great heroes of the Greek mythology Achilles and Patroclus who had played an indispensable role during the Trojan War. Achilles, often touted as the brave and chivalrous son of the King of Phthia, Peleus and the "sea nymph" Thetis, has a seemingly arrogant attitude towards the people in the court. Patroclus is banished to Phthia after he murders the son of a noble in his father, King Menoetius's court. It is at this juncture that the meaningful relationship between the arrogant Achilles and smart Patroclus actualises. Thetis, the sea Goddess and Achilles's mother disapproves of the relationship and devises a shrewd plan to separate them by sending Achilles to train under Chiron. Three years pass by and the pangs of separation hit Patroclus causing him deep hurt, and he decides to find Achilles to overcome this gut-wrenching pain. He finds

Achilles and both develop their war skills under Chiron, and during this period of training, they also have the opportunity to engage and explore physical intimacy. As this relationship grows, Mycenaean King Agamemnon calls for war and seeks Achilles's help in rescuing Helen from Troy. It had been prophesied that Achilles would die after the death of the Trojan Prince Hector and therefore, Thetis who fears her son's safety hides him in Skyros and also forcefully marries him to Deidamia (Lycomedes's daughter) who would later bear his son, Neoptolemus. Patroclus finds Achilles in Skyros, and both of them are discovered and invited to fight by Odysseus and Diomedes. Achilles joins the fight by promising not to confront Hector in the war and is aided by Patroclus who becomes his close confidante in the war. While Achilles is fighting the Trojans, Patroclus becomes a medic tending to the soldier's wounds. A decade-long fight ensues filled with plague, revenge and deceit, and eventually, Patroclus gets killed by Hector who is avenged by Achilles, and in turn, gets killed by Paris the Prince of Troy. The prologue also mentions Achilles and Patroclus finding joy in the realm of heaven after Thetis seems to accept the love that the two shared.

About the author

Madeline Miller is an American novelist who spent ten years of her life writing "The Song of Achilles". She won the Orange Prize for Fiction and was also critically acclaimed for the same. In 2019, she also received the Alex Awards. She is known for her works on mythological realism. Some of her works include Circe and Galatea.

"The Seven Husbands of Evelyn Hugo" by **Taylor Jenkins Reid** is classified as a work of historical fiction and narrates the story of Evelyn Hugo, a 79-year-old Hollywood Star who decides to give to the world a testimony of truth through her biography and assigns the work to a journalist Monique Grant. The book has seven parts each giving an account of her life with each of her husbands. The novel begins with Evelyn looking for an interviewer to review her auction of the gowns she had worn to raise money for breast cancer awareness and requests for Monique, a journalist with no connection whatsoever to the great Evelyn Hugo. During their first meeting, Evelyn informs Monique that the actual reason for choosing her was to write a

book on Evelyn's life and that this book would become her final confession. Though sceptical, Monique agrees and recording sessions with Evelyn commences. Evelyn Hugo, born as Evelyn Herrera, a Cuban American woman opens up about the various challenges that the show business industry put her through. From having to undergo a major physical makeover to facing abuse at the hands of her first husband Don Adler, she discusses in length with Monique her struggles as a fourteen-year-old girl. It is during her abusive marriage with Don that Evelyn meets Celia St. James, her fellow co-star. Evelyn realises that Celia is a lesbian and both start developing feelings for each other. However, fearing the tabloid culture and the impact it could have on their respective careers, they fail to act upon their urges. Celia eventually marries Mick, and Evelyn remarries Rex North to heighten her fame. Post this publicity stint, she divorces Rex and marries her lifelong friend Harry who is Gay and in a relationship with Celia's husband. Thus begins a tale of secret love. Harry and Evelyn give birth to a daughter Connor, with Celia's consent and all of them live in close quarters like 'friends who are family'. After many years, Evelyn betrays Celia and marries Max Girard, but she divorces him and gets back with Celia and reminds her that she is her "one true love". She then moves to Celia and her brother Robert (whom she marries under Celia's request) to Europe, and they spend Celia's final days there as she suffers from cancer. Connor (Evelyn's daughter) also suffers from breast cancer and dies young, causing her grief which had prompted her to raise awareness on the same. Before they moved to Europe, Harry kills himself and his lover in a car accident and Evelyn who arrives at the accident scene, shifts Harry from the driver's seat and the lover is blamed for drunk driving. Later it is revealed that the lover was none other than Monique's father James Grant and Evelyn hands her a letter in which James had refrained from going to Europe with Harry stating 'his family' as the reason. Evelyn informs Monique that she is to publish this work only after Evelyn's death, though confused she consents to the odd request, only to realise later that Evelyn was planning to take her own life. The next day, tabloids scream the news Monique had expected. The novel ends with Monique publishing the work and giving Evelyn the rightful stardom she deserved.

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About the author

Taylor Reid is an American author who began her career as an author at the age of 24. Some of her bestsellers include Daisy Jones & the six, Malibu Rising and The Seven Husbands of Evelyn Hugo, which won her critical acclaim and commercial success. Most of her novels are based on the themes of pop culture and Hollywood-inspired.

Analysis

Literature has been a witness to queer desires since time immemorial with authors and philosophers from the archaic period including Plato and Homer. There has been an exploration of various kinds of sexuality, and as Sedgewick espouses, these works have transcended the duality of heterosexuality and homosexuality. The works that I have chosen, though not explicitly classified as queer literature, the presence of certain elements makes it possible to evaluate the same using queer theory and queer models. Cart and Jenkins (2006) gave a three-pronged approach to analyse queer young adult literature that have been published post the Stonewall riots. This includes: "i) homosexual visibility ii) gay assimilation and iii) queer consciousness/community. Mollie et al., (2015) in their paper quote Britzman (1997), where the definition of sexual identities encompasses social norms and is constantly shifting, variable and fluid. The essentialism or the developmental undertone that is often attributed to the identities are often misconstrued because they are neither essential nor developmental but post structural. Both "The Song of Achilles" and "The Seven Husbands of Evelyn Hugo" can be analysed using a queer theorist lens, and for this, I seek to divide the two based on some common emergent themes.

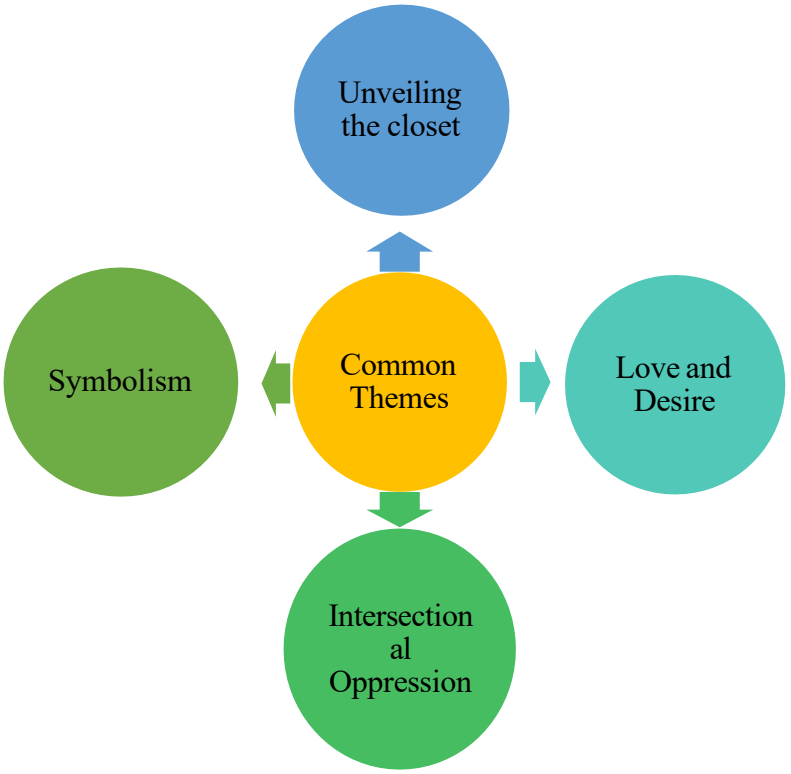

Fig 1. Common themes emerging from the novels

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Significance of Closeted-ness

The concept of 'closet' emerged to capture the intricacies of the various "social patterns of secrecy and sexual self-management" that structure the lives of homosexual individuals in a society that is focused on pushing the agenda of heterosexuality (Seidman,2015). The idea that 'coming out' would undermine the heterosexist norms is purely political in nature and also creates a division among those who are 'in' and 'out' of the closet. The same-sex couples in both the novels, Achilles and Patroclus, and Evelyn and Celia, remained closeted till their subsequent deaths and thereby reinforcing that mere homosexual visibility will not lead to a cleansing of the cultural mindset of the society that believes in the binary. This is also evident when Achilles and Patroclus share and develop deeper bonding during their training period with Chiron. The lack of the need to explain themselves to the world opened up a space for them to understand each other better. The society also pushes individuals to come out only to ostracise and dehumanise them, however, there is a reversal of this when the band of soldiers in Troy fighting alongside Achilles start doubting the relationship between him and Patroclus

and also created situations for them to break the truth, but despite this, they were unable to do so directly owing the power that Achilles held. “The Seven Husbands of Evelyn Hugo” also has similar instances of the paparazzi forcing Evelyn and Celia to come out, but Evelyn’s swift movement from one marriage to another constantly kept the world confused. As mentioned in the three-pronged approach of Cart and Jenkins, the homosexual visibility in both the novels is not very significant because of the fact that the protagonists are neither outed or choose to come out, but rather it is only the readers who get to understand the essence of the emotions and vulnerabilities of the characters.

Love and Desire

In “Towards a Multivalent Queer Love”, Anil Pradhan tries to delineate the hairline difference between passionate love and romantic love. Anthony Giddens also mentions that while passionate love is a much more universal phenomenon, romantic love is specific to cultures and can have varied interpretations of what constitutes romance. Madeline Miller makes a brilliant attempt throughout her text to show the evolution of the relationship between Achilles and Patroclus. During the initial days of Patroclus’s exile to Ptthia, he seeks to remain secluded, however, Achille’s chivalry draws him, and their conversations lead them to develop deeper emotional understanding. As Pradhan points out, it is not just mere lust or the need to explore sexuality that brings homosexual individuals together, and its authenticity can be evidenced through the devotion that the soul of Patroclus displays post Achille’s death. As Thetis inscribes Patroclus’s name into the tomb, Patroclus’s soul passes into the afterlife. Similarities can also be drawn to the Reid bestseller because Evelyn foregoes every sophisticated aspect of her life to give Celia the life wants in her last days. The way Reid has displayed the desire that Evelyn has for Celia and vice versa does not in any way come across as explicitly sexual. She describes their love for each other through her mastery of words. In addition to this, there should also be a mention of Stephen O. Murray’s taxonomy of homosexuality, since both Miller and Reid have put forth the notion of egalitarian homosexuality.

It is also to be noted that there is also a portrayal of the love of various kinds throughout both works. From the more obsessive motherly love, the bond between sister and brother and the compassion and respect among friends have been dealt with in detail in both books. The need for Thetis to protect her son (despite being a God herself) clearly shows the lion-cub attitude even among immortals. The relationship between Briseis and Patroclus and the grief she

encounters with his death shows that "the blood of the covenant is thicker than the water of the womb". Reid portrays the purest of friendships with the relationship between Harry and Evelyn, and this relationship can be placed on the continuum because when they decide to procreate, one might assume that the boundaries of friendship will be broken, however, the love that they share for each other only grows with a progeny. The core of their relationship continued to be the platonic friendship that Evelyn and Harry had.

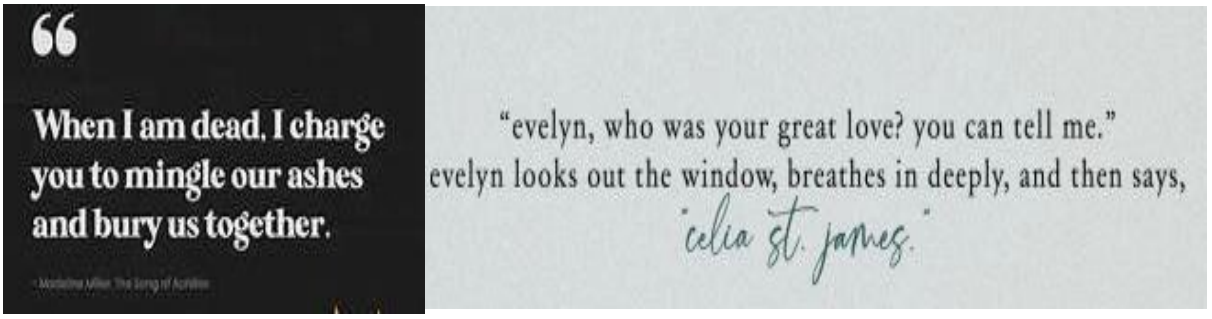

Fig 2 &3. Quotes from "The Song of Achilles" and "The Seven Husbands of Evelyn Hugo"

Intersectionality of Oppression

Kimberly Crenshaw's intersectionality (1989) has been used nowadays in the common parlance to analyse the "intricate patterns of difference and inequality" (Marlene, 2023). This can also be identified in both novels, with the difference in the portrayal of the masculinity of Achilles and Patroclus and in the discrimination that Evelyn faces owing to her ethnicity and the need to make her a sex symbol in the limelight culture. Miller makes a clear distinction between Achilles's masculinity that transforms from a boy-like to that of a warrior king. In contrast, Patroclus is sidelined as the older boy who remains overshadowed by Achilles' greatness. This can also be because the story is being told from Patroclus's perspective. However, this seems like an attempt by the author to enforce the binary of the dominant and the subservient. There is also a note of the chivalrous treatment of Briseis, a Trojan prostitute whom Achilles receives as a gift. Although he has no interest in her, he gets her owing to the belief that she may be mistreated elsewhere and also to redeem the guilt of killing her kin. However, his treatment of Deidamia the girl he marries under the compulsion of his mother Thetis, shows that women were merely pawns in the larger gamble of war and child-bearing machines.

The intersectionality of race, age, sexuality and gender play out in Reid's characterisation of Evelyn. Reid gives a more realistic account compared to Miller regarding the lived realities of an individual trying to create a space for herself in Hollywood. The marriage of a fourteen-year-old Evelyn to Don Adler and the marital abuse she faces, the constant need to prove her sexuality to the media, and the importance that is attributed to the looks of a woman and the "perfect curves", are all examples of the patriarchal norms that constrain any form of expression by a woman other than the heterosexual standards. The fear of othering both Evelyn and Celia go through has been described thoroughly making it a heart-touching read.

Symbolism

Miller and Reid effectively make use of symbolic representations in their respective novels to describe the journey of the characters. Miller uses a "Lyre" to portray innocence and the evolution of characters as well. Patroclus's lyre belonged to his mentally disabled mother who understood only the sounds of the lyre, and when Patroclus reaches Pththia this lyre draws Achilles to Patroclus and the boyish nature of Achilles allows him to take pleasure in playing it. The change of ownership of the lyre from the older Patroclus to the younger Achilles stands testimony to this innocence. Similarly, Reid uses the gowns to establish the achievements of Evelyn that she auctions before her death. These had been gowns that she had worn during the pivotal moments in her life which she foregoes for a more sensible deed, that is, raising funds for breast cancer and creating awareness on the same. Therefore, both the authors make a clever use of symbolism showing that the strong suit of literature lies in its details.

Strengths and Weaknesses

The Song of Achilles	**Strengths** The re-interpretation of a tale so well known and appreciated requires precision and Miller seems to have captured that in essence. The language used has been simple and easily understandable to a larger population thereby making it accessible to all sections of the society. The focus of her novel has been to highlight love and sacrifice and she does carry it effectively throughout the book.

	Weakness Despite the decent attempt at portraying the love of Achilles and Patroclus, the need to appeal to a heterosexual audience is evident with her need to distinguish between the masculinities of Achilles and Patroclus. The fate of certain characters like Deidamia also could have been highlighted. There has not been an outright description of the book as queer literature which can be misleading.
The Seven Husbands of Evelyn Hugo	**Strengths** Taylor Jenkins Reid's portrayal of love, sexuality and career-driven women will speak volumes to the reader. There is no unnecessary flowery language to appease the elite readers. A simple book for simple readers open to a conversation about the patriarchal nature of society. Despite the fact that it is a critique of patriarchy, she also gives the readers a sense of the good men, the effeminate yet heterosexual men thereby refraining from antagonising the entire male community. This adds value to the realities she describes throughout the novel.
	Weakness The novel despite trying to show a woman who is willing to break the stereotypes, portrays her as a woman who needs a child and perpetuates her lineage. The notion of a family being complete only with the coming of a child is again conventional and kind of reiterates the norms she is trying to break.

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Conclusion

Madeline Miller and Taylor Jenkins Reid have both made an honest attempt at exploring the intricacies of same-sex relationships. The focus has been primarily on the conception of identities and their perception among the larger society without the actual disruption of norms. Both novels cannot be classified as queer literature for the authors have not acknowledged it. However, the nuances of queer theorists like the performativity of Butler and the compulsory

heterosexuality of Adrienne Rich can be applied to the analysis of the protagonists which has made it a perfect material for understanding the contemporary understanding of queerness. Despite the novels being presented in a palatable form to the audience it has the potential to add value to the societal perception of queer relationships. “Cut the ending, revise the script, the man of her dreams is a girl” can be felt in the truest sense during the perusal of both the texts and both have an imminent potential to not just alter the psyche of the readers but also is evidence of the increase in the commercial success of books with queer characters.

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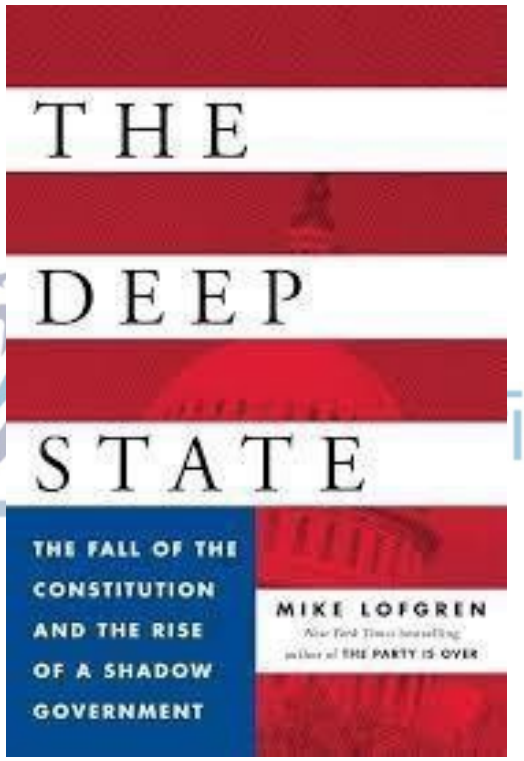
Book Review

The Deep State

Author: Mike Lofgren

Mike Lofgren is an American author and a former Republican U.S. Congressional aide. He retired in May 2011 after 28 years as a Congressional staff member. His writings, critical of politics in the United States, particularly the Republican Party, were published after his retirement and garnered widespread attention.



Publisher: Viking, 2016

Language: English

Pages: 310

Reviewed by: Sana Sapra

Republican party insider Mike Lofgren's bestseller, "The Deep State," aptly subtitled "The Fall of the Constitution and the Rise of a Shadow Government, is an engaging, well-written book that can hold the interest of a reader who has no prior knowledge on the subject. As a working-class citizen's look into the "circus being run from within the monkey's cage," it is an evocative analysis of the policies and impact of the puppet master's on Capitol Hill.

In the early chapters, the author cleanly captures the mundanity of Washington and the disillusionment of bureaucratic work that creates detachment from the 'real world' outside the Beltway. The reader is left with the understanding that the enigmatic 'Deep State', while insidious, is a product of the qualities that have arisen in human beings since time immemorial greed. What lends it its dangerous quality is the divorce it has from reality and the daily lives of ordinary working-class citizens. It is what led to the downfall of Wall Street and the housing market in 2008 and also what ensured that major bank executives and people in power went scott-free. This insulation and apathy coming from powerful people in the most powerful country in the world has had devastating effects on not only their own citizens but the rest of the world.

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Lofgren writes that the "birth of the atomic weapon was the moment of conception of the Deep State." No other government project had previously been shrouded in as much secrecy as the Manhattan project, with a complete lack of accountability for its handlers. Constitutionally, the POTUS and the actions of Congress are held accountable by the people, the voters, who can keep them in power for another term or ensure they are not elected again. This is not true for the deep state. The author describes the Deep State as an "iron cage"—"a metaphor representing the bureaucratisation of society and its relentless pressure on individual actors to conform to the ingrained expectations of the organisations they work for."

The Deep State ensures that the satellite corporations and campaign contributors are the ones with the power to keep elected officials in check, with no one to hold them accountable in turn. The inequality gap between the haves and have nots widens no matter the change in regime, and there results a vicious circle with no check on the system of the rich because the system is controlled by the rich. The Deep State has given rise to a plutocracy masquerading as the last vestiges of a democracy.

Throughout history, violence born of hubris has dogged the rise of empires. Man has only ever needed two things to wage war—the motive and the means. The United States has the ability to create both. The iron cage of satellite corporations and their subsidiaries resulted in America's positioning itself as a global leader to further their economic interests by using their expansive material power. To generate funding for their massive military while keeping the public in the dark, the government used fear as their primary weapon to keep their workings shrouded. Whether this was what their citizens wanted or not is irrelevant. As the author puts it, "Politicians do not seek to identify with the desires of the majority, except insofar as those desires happen to overlap with the preferences of those who are footing the bill."

With money running Washington and hidden agendas and secret agencies becoming part of life post-the Manhattan project, the position of head of state was shifted towards a ceremonial one. Even the words of those campaigning to be president are not their own, instead tailored to suit their financiers. The author writes that companies like Goldman Sachs and KKR were funding Hilary Clinton's candidacy at a rate of $20,000 per speech. Politicians are reduced to commodities, with corporations serving as brands to back them up. The'rebranding' of a politician works the same way as the revamping of an old car or laptop—ppeople look at you differently only because of the information they've been fed. This can be seen even in the current election scenario in America, with people clamouring to vote for Trump not because he was "nearly ssassinated," b but because "he took a bullet for the ountry." Making politicians accessible and bringing them to the masses is what advertising executives do, which only stands to highlight the dissonance most people from the Beltway have towards the desires of the public.

The author describes Washington as a bubble. The plutocracy has "disconnected itself from the civic life of the nation and from concern about its well-being." Post-9/11, the emphasis of the government on homeland security increased, and the military began to be used liberally by a civilian leadership that used the armed forces as a "first rather than last resort on dubious matters of national security." General Smedley Butler describes his time in the military as "I spent…most of my time as a high-class muscle man for Big Business, for Wall Street and the bankers. I helped make Mexico and especially Tampico safe for American oil interests in 1914... Looking back on it, I might have given Al Capone a few hints. The best he could do was to operate his racket in three districts. I operated on three continents."

The government being little more than a glorified, legal mob with large firepower, no checks and accountability, and the leader having to cater to the secret service who feeds him information is a direct result of the Deep State. The reason for stagnation in the government, for little change in policy areas that matter, is because of the strings being pulled by corporations in search of profit, heavily divorced from the needs of the general populace. The author states that due to the Deep State's entrenchment in surveillance, firepower, and money, along with leaders who double down on failed policies, the system is impervious to change.

The invasion of privacy post-the dotcom burst and the heavy surveillance that followed is a glimpse into the dystopian future we are headed towards—or might already be living in. George Orwell's 1984 has become a reality, and we can expect no help from the policymakers supposed to protect us, for they are also "captives" of the corporations that feed them information collected from civilians. The root of the Deep State is the capitalistic system and the unrestrained freedom given to the 1% of the USA. With both Democrat and Republican parties entrenched in the Deep State, it is difficult to bring about any real change. It is likely that every presidential term will have a president who is an iteration of their predecessor, with not much room for actual progress in public welfare unless it matches the aims of the Deep State.

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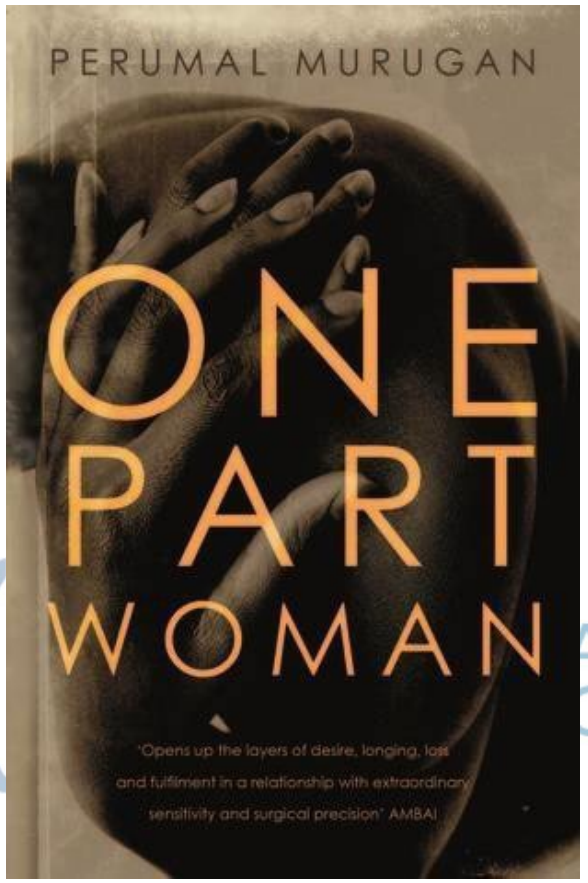
Book Review

One Part Woman

Author: Perumal Murugan



Publisher: Penguin Books Limited, 2013

Language: English

Pages: 240

Reviewed by: Samyuktha B

Introduction

"One Part Woman", originally "Maadhorubaagan", is a translated work of fiction by Perumal Murugan, a renowned author of critical acclaim. The translator Aniruddhan Vasudevan, a scholar in the subject of Anthropology, does a decent job of conveying the essence of the text. The original name of the book comes from a deity who is depicted as the androgynous form of Lord Shiva. The plot revolves around the lives of a young couple, Kaliyannan and Ponnayi, who bear the brunt of society for being unable to conceive and how their childlessness affects their marital life. Set against the backdrop of conservative and casteist villages of Tamil Nadu, this book traces the journey of the protagonists - Kali and Ponna- as insults are hurled at them for their inability to become parents. Both men and women shun them from attending auspicious festivals or including them in anything valued as necessary. The hardships they go through do not deter them from being in love. Despite twelve years of marriage, the man's lust for his wife is depicted in various instances. The crux of the story lies in the social essentialisation of women as mere child-bearing animals and the patriarchy entrenched in our society that treats a childless woman as the "non-norm" Also, the decisions in the life of a woman as a social agent are affected by the "rules" of the community. The couple's happy marriage is in shambles due to the wrath of such baseless superstitions and norms. (Murugan, 2010).

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About the Author

Perumal Murugan, who hails from Tamilnadu, is a prolific writer who is known for his dramatic storyline and the ability to communicate the emotions of the protagonist to the readers in a simple yet effective way. His literary career began with the publication of short stories, and his first novel was published in the year 1991. Most of his works revolve around the Kongunadu region of Tamilnadu because of his association with the place. He rose to critical acclaim with the publication of "Maadhorubaagan" in 2010, but in 2014 he was subjected to controversies, and litigations were filed against him for dishonouring the local deity of a temple which had allusions to the title, which the Madras High Court later cleared. As a professor of the Tamil Language, he has been a faculty and currently heads the Tamil Language Department of a government college in Attur. Some of his translated works include A Lonely Harvest and Trial by Silence (2018), both of which are the sequels of One Part Woman, Poonachi-The Story of a Black Goat (2017), and Estuary (2020). The commercial success of the books in both

Tamil and English is notable because of the sensitivity of the issues which he addresses. He delves into storytelling with the sole aim of capturing the readers' attention to the vices in the society that he wants to acknowledge.

Background

The story is set in the 1940s in the villages of Thiruchengode, which is home to numerous temples of historical importance. The temples of significance in the textual context are the Devatha or Maadhorubaagan and Karattaiyar Temples, which occupy either side of a hill. The tale of Devatha or Maadhorubaagan is instrumental to the plot. Devatha and Maadhorubaagan are often treated as adaptations of one another. The statue of Maadhorubaagan as a half-woman and half-man symbolises oneness, meaning a man needs to accommodate his woman within him, and it also depicts that a man can be feminine. The legend goes that the deity Devatha was a child of the local tribal community who strayed into the forest during which she was raped and murdered by a group of higher caste men from the village, and a few days post the incident, a flowery odour started emanating from under the tree where she was brutally murdered, and the villagers erected a statue in her honour. There was also a tale of the curse associated with the lineage of the men who had abused her that no man in their family would beget a female child, and if ever a male child was born, it would not live to see adulthood. This assumes significance because of the rituals associated with God, which is that to appease the anger of God, she is celebrated every year for eighteen days. This is substantial to the plot because of the event that takes place on the eighteenth day when extramarital sex, which is prohibited in a normative society, is permitted to give any childless couple a chance to have a child. The woman who is involved can choose any man to "impregnate" her whom she is to consider as a "God". (Murugan, 2010)

Kali and Ponna are a married couple who belong to one of the prominent higher castes in the village. They are a childless couple often taunted by the society for being so. Kali is mocked by men for his apparent impotence and Ponna for being infertile, which becomes the topic of discussion in any event they attend. Their attempts at trying medicinal herbs and to appease the gods with the hope of getting a child all end in vain. Despite these failures and insults, the passion that exists between them does not fade, and they learn to explore each other's sexuality through the years. However, the "elders" in the family are worried about the couple's future because, according to them, only a child can "complete" a family. Seerayi, Kali's mother,

discusses the eighteenth-day ritual with Ponna's mother, who agrees to it. Seerayi then takes up the conversation with Kali, who shudders at the thought of his wife mating with another man and refuses to assent to the "vulgarity". He even stops Ponna from going home for the festival for two consecutive years. But, both their families decide to take matters into their hands. Muthu, her brother, takes Ponna to the eighteenth-day ritual giving her the false premise of Kali's acceptance, who is ignorant of the occurrence. She, thus, goes through the ritual, and Kali, who had trusted his wife not to go to the festival, has his heart broken. (Murugan, 2010).

Analysis

Patriarchy in the guise of love

The novel, though written from a male perspective, tries to subtly yet compellingly capture the essence of patriarchy. Kali as a husband, is devoted to his wife, and incidents of his loyalty are conveyed to the readers when he talks about his unwavering love towards her despite their long childless marriage. But he also expects his wife to be at his service, both sexually and emotionally, at any point in the day, which shows that his understanding of masculinity is rooted in hegemony over women. Murugan uses the phallocentric symbolism of a tree to characterise and compare Kali's fertility to that of the tree's flowering. When a discussion on remarriage is brought up, he tries to consider it, but when Ponna is given the choice of having another man to impregnate her, he deftly refuses. He also starts doubting her chastity and innocence because he thinks she would assent to exploring the option of involving herself with another man. A socially constructed institution like marriage is grounded on "private patriarchy", which is the subjugation of women in a household or any private occupancy, and "public patriarchy", where the women are not given the freedom of choice in the public sphere (Soman, 2009). An ontological perspective of patriarchy shows that the essentialisation of women as emotional beings is inherent when the author portrays Ponna as an individual with no temperance.

Superstitious beliefs in maternity

Childlessness is the core subject in discussion throughout the novel. The women in the novel- Ponna, Seerayi, her mother-in-law, Ponna's mother and her sister-in-law- form an integral part of the narration because the women ostracise Ponna in her own family for having

a "vacant" womb. Her duties as a wife are criticised as she did not bear a child within a year of marriage, which can be compared to the discourse by Derrida on the representation of women where she had questioned the necessity to choose between being a wife and a mother (Hird, 2003). Her infertility was compared to that of barren land, which can be seen as inhumane. The physical and emotional torture that she accustomed herself to for having a child is beyond the comprehension of an urban woman. When the radical libertarian feminist Shulamith Firestone talks about women who should opt for "artificial embryos" (Tong & Botts, 2017), she does not seem to include women like Ponna, who believe that their sole purpose of being born is to enrich the lineage of her husband. The eighteenth day of the festival is essential in this context because the family of the childless woman encourages them to have an extramarital affair with an unknown person. The support of the family for such an offensive procedure shows that a woman's value is solely associated with child-bearing.

Caste and Gender in Indian Villages

Crenshaw's intersectionality can be used to address the caste connotations and incidents mentioned in the novel. Evidence of rampant casteism in the villages of Tamilnadu can be seen when Ponna, despite her maternal instincts to embrace a child of a lower caste worker, abstains from doing so because of the social hierarchy in the caste structure. The intersectionality theory focuses on identifying the intersection between two or more issues that affect an individual, for example, the Dalit woman whose child Ponna wishes to play with prostrates before her, which is a symbolic representation of occupying the lower echelons of the social strata, and she, as a woman is further marginalised and stereotyped. Ponna though not a part of this intersection, fails to acknowledge the disadvantage of the Dalit woman showing that sisterhood was not present in that. Ponna, despite her yearning to mother a child, makes an effort not to "pollute" herself, but as the story unfolds, she goes on to mate with a man of unknown identity, which seems contradictory to the values that she holds as an upper caste woman. With his exemplary writing skills, the author urges us to understand the stark differences that exist even among women in the same community. As a casteist patriarch, Kali is at odds with his brother-in-law concerning the festival where Ponna is to be impregnated, as they would not know the caste of the person whose child he would have to father, and this is also testimony to the theory of purity and pollution.

The author's ability to traverse the childless couple's journey is effortless, and the plot continuity seems to hold its readers in place. A topic as sensitive as this requires extensive research, which the author has carried out, which is evident in his description of the rituals and the deities in discussion. His metaphorical allusion of a Portia tree to Kali and Ponna's relationship shows his literary prowess. His views on gender roles and prevalent stereotypes in Tamil society show his ability to address issues from a feminist perspective. The book also touches on the aspects of superstition and belief in the Indian villages, which translates to patriarchy in the households, and the essence of this phenomenon has been captured clearly. Childlessness as an issue among the couple is addressed from both Kali and Ponna's point of view, which is commendable because pregnancy is often associated with motherhood, and the role of a man in raising a child is ignored.

Conclusion

Perumal Murugan, in his "One Part Woman", attempted to analyse the dynamics in a heteronormative marriage and the community influence in maintaining the sanctity of the institution. The entire community's identity, which is rooted in superstition, is questioned when these beliefs are thrust on the couple. The power of the society over an individual which forbids freedom of choice is conveyed compellingly. The narrative technique of describing the age-old traditions that destroy the marriage of a childless couple is put simply with the absence of romanticism, which justifies the intensity of the matter in contention. The topics of caste and sex that are still considered forbidden discussions have been dealt with vigour and confidence, which was contested by various groups for its outrightness. The plot, set in the pre-independence era acts as a lens to the prevailing cultural norms and provides a historical overview to the reader (Jose, 2019). Culture is a set of beliefs and values that humans hold for the regulation of society, but when individuals are excluded from the community for their inability to comply, then the culture that is given importance to human life should be condemned, which Murugan vehemently does.

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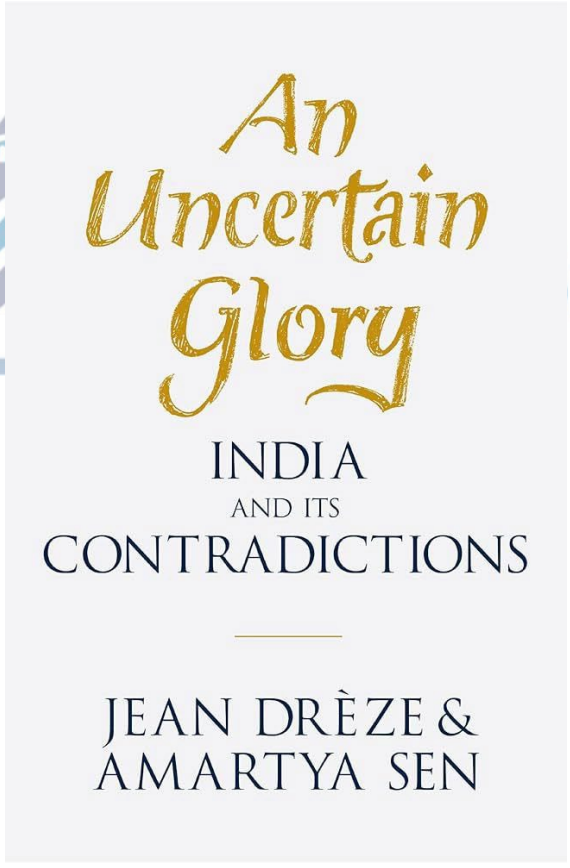
Book Review

An Uncertain Glory: India and its Contradictions

Authors: Jean Drèze, Amartya Sen

Jean Drèze has lived in India since 1979 and became an Indian citizen in 2002. He has taught at the London School of Economics and the Delhi School of Economics, and he is now a visiting professor at Allahabad University. He is the coauthor (with Amartya Sen) of Hunger and Public Action and India: Development and Participation. Amartya Sen is the Thomas W. Lamont University Professor and professor of economics and philosophy at Harvard University. He won the Nobel Prize in Economics in 1998. His many books include Development as Freedom, Rationality and Freedom, The Argumentative Indian, Identity and Violence, and The Idea of Justice.



Publisher: Penguin Books Limited, 2013

Language: English

Pages: 448

Reviewed by: Aryaman Tayal

In a landscape of burgeoning economic promises and ambitious proclamations, India's true socio-economic reality often resides in the shadows. When the first edition of Jean Drèze and Amartya Sen's book, 'An Uncertain Glory,' surfaced in 2013, India stood amidst a vastly different social, economic, and political backdrop. The nation grappled with economic slowdowns and persistent challenges within state-led initiatives. However, amid this turbulence, there emerged a rise of public engagement and a growing demand for transparency and accountability, often amplified by a vigilant media.

Now, in its second edition, the book revisits these poignant questions, painting a stark picture of India's present reality while confronting the notable dearth of updated statistics. Drèze and Sen adeptly delve into the evolution of India's landscape over the past seven years, particularly scrutinising the impact of the NDA government and its policies on the country's growth trajectory.

Centralising discussions around the pivotal domains of health, education, and social security, this book navigates the formidable challenges embedded within India's growth narrative. It puts India's progress in comparison to other South Asian countries and explores its standing amidst the broader spectrum of sub-Saharan economies.

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Growth for All?

The initial section dissects the foundational premise of 'An Uncertain Glory'—the contention that true development transcends mere economic growth. Drèze and Sen assert that a nation's progress should pivot on the enhancement of human capabilities and freedoms, challenging the conventional GDP-centric narrative.

India's journey from the shackles of colonial oppression to the fervent embrace of independence in 1947 stands as a testament to unparalleled achievements. Emerging from the yoke of relentless imperial rule, India's ascent to self-governance was fraught with daunting challenges and profound uncertainties. The historical context surrounding India's post-independence growth rate of approximately 3.5% annually unveils a complex narrative (Table 2.1). Despite the presence of progress inherent in this growth rate, the economic policies adopted in the aftermath of independence failed to catalyse a substantial transformation in the living conditions of the populace.

The book points out that aspirations accompanying the 3.5% growth rate were buoyed by the prospect of positive change, particularly considering India's tumultuous colonial past. However, the economic policies implemented during the early post-independence period

faltered in their intended objectives. They neither significantly amplified the growth rate nor precipitated a remarkable improvement in the living standards of the populace.

Shockingly, available evidence indicates a disheartening reality—there was a glaring absence of poverty reduction, especially in rural areas, throughout the three decades following the initiation of the First Five Year Plan in 1951. This stark revelation underscores the profound limitations of the economic strategies employed during this period, failing to address the entrenched socio-economic challenges plaguing the nation.

The juxtaposition of seemingly promising growth rates with the stark persistence of poverty and stagnant living conditions underscores the fundamental inadequacies within India's post-independence economic policies.

It is enunciated that there has been a boom in the middle class, which stands as a testament to India’s economic growth. However, this economic boom masks a complex reality—one where the fortunes of the privileged contrast starkly with the slow and often excruciatingly sluggish progress experienced by underprivileged groups.

The book points out that while the living standards of the affluent have soared beyond expectations, the narrative is vastly different for marginalised communities like rickshaw pullers, domestic workers, and labourers in brick kilns. For these segments, the reform-driven period hasn't heralded transformative changes. Though there have been marginal improvements in their lives, the pace of change has been agonisingly slow, barely denting their abysmal living conditions.

Health, Education, and Social Support

Education is a critical pillar of societal progress, yet India grapples with persistent challenges and shortcomings in this domain. Despite fervent pro-education sentiments during India's national movement, the expansion of school education has lagged significantly behind, especially when compared to East Asia.

India's educational disparity, particularly among women, stands starkly in contrast to the progress witnessed in East Asian nations like Indonesia, where literacy has become almost universal among younger age groups. The disparities within India itself are striking—Kerala, with its history of prioritising education, stands apart from the rest of the nation due to sustained efforts and a pro-education policy. However, this progressive outlook remains an exception in a largely educationally backward post-independent India.

The book pointed out that the educational landscape suffers from two principal deficiencies—limited coverage and poor educational standards. While some strides have been made in enhancing coverage, the quality of education in Indian schools remains a pressing concern. Rote learning prevails, often devoid of true comprehension, and basic skills like multiplication and division elude a significant proportion of students. Test results from various studies underscore the alarming reality that a substantial number of pupils lack fundamental knowledge and struggle with basic arithmetic.

Transitioning our focus to the critical domain of healthcare, we unravel a parallel narrative—one of systemic deficiencies and alarming under-representation in public discourse. This exploration takes us into the heart of India's healthcare challenges, where issues of child immunisation and public health expenditure come to the fore. The absence of these crucial concerns in mainstream dialogue poses a significant barrier to addressing the pressing health needs of the nation's populace.

The book points out that a strikingly low percentage of questions in the Indian Parliament, only 3%, relate to children, despite comprising over 40% of the population. Of these, a mere fraction pertains to early childhood care and development. Media coverage mirrors this invisibility, with the interests of young children virtually absent from the mainstream narrative.

This disregard extends to critical health indicators like immunisation rates. India's immunisation rates rank among the lowest globally, trailing even sub-Saharan African nations and falling below those of every other South Asian country, including Nepal and Pakistan. Bangladesh, in stark contrast, has achieved nearly universal immunisation rates of around 95% for each vaccine. India's sluggish progress in improving immunisation rates throughout the 1990s and early 2000s stands in sharp contrast to Bangladesh's significant strides during the same period.

The discussion on poverty navigates through India's socio-economic complexities, critiquing ideological extremities while advocating for a pragmatic approach. The struggle to elevate millions above the poverty line remains intertwined with the lack of access to essential elements of a decent life. The book scrutinises India's poverty line, spotlighting its outdated and inadequate standards, failing to address the enhanced requisites of dignified living. The authors caution against the pitfalls of an overreliance on market forces, drawing parallels with China's experiences and stressing the need for a balanced approach that acknowledges the limitations of a purely market-driven economy. This critique of the poverty line and the call for pragmatic economic policies echo the book's overarching theme of redefining progress beyond economic growth alone.

Drèze and Sen scrutinise the enduring disparities between India's privileged few and the vast underprivileged majority, highlighting the ineptitudes within the socio-economic structure. Despite being a thriving democracy, the authors underline the persistent lapses in accountability and representation, where the voices of the marginalised often remain marginalised in the political discourse. This examination serves as a stark reminder that India's democratic ideals are hindered by unresolved disparities and a lack of inclusive governance, accentuating the need for a more equitable, participatory system to uphold the tenets of democracy for all.

"An Uncertain Glory" by Jean Drèze and Amartya Sen serves as an eye-opening exposé of India's multifaceted challenges in societal development. Through meticulous analysis and compelling comparisons, the authors unveil a stark reality—India's economic growth stands juxtaposed against alarming shortcomings in social indicators, from education and healthcare to poverty alleviation. The book's compelling narrative underscores the urgent need for a recalibrated approach to progress, one that prioritises equitable distribution of resources, heightened governmental commitment to social welfare, and a recalibrated societal discourse that focusses on the holistic development of all segments of society. It serves not merely as a critique of existing systems but as a poignant call to action, urging policymakers and society at large to address the systemic deficiencies and inequalities that impede India's path to a more inclusive and prosperous future.

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