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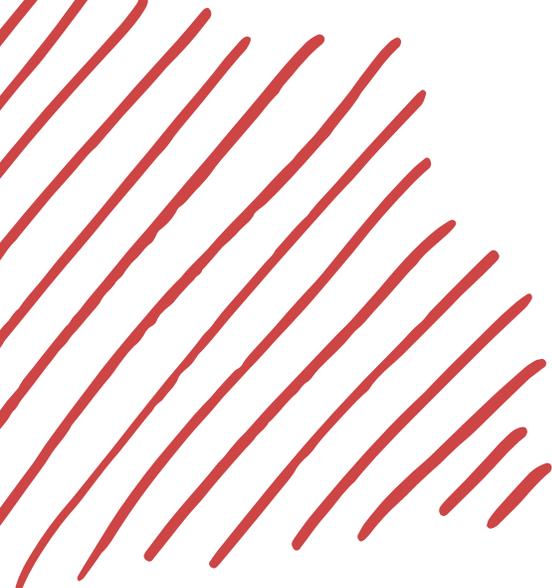


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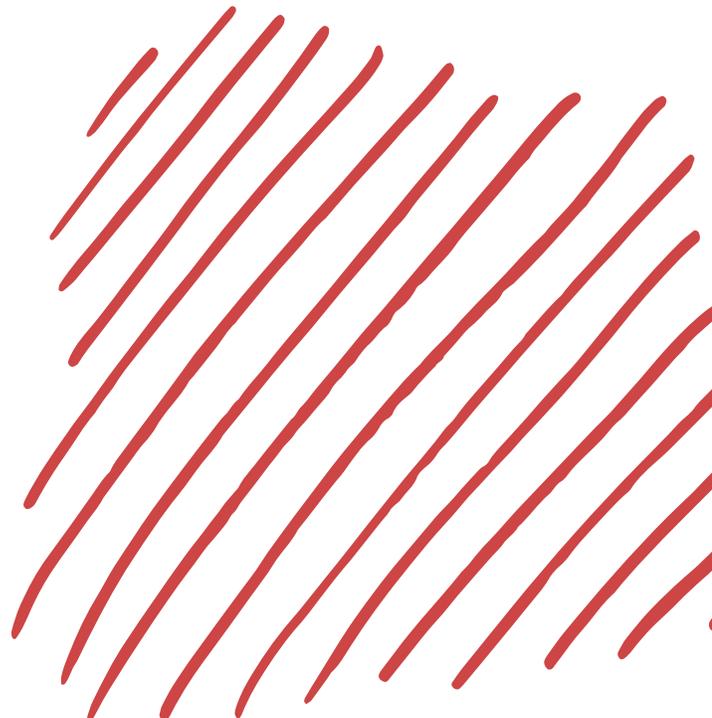
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A LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

The mission of the Stern Political Economy Exchange (SPEX), as laid out in our constitution, is to “create a global community to promote the necessary understanding of the complex interactions between business, politics, and economics.” In SPEX’s in-person meetings, we view this mission as the inspiration behind our lengthy and thoughtful discussions on current events, micro- and macroeconomic trends, and political themes appearing around the world. These group discussions were my own introduction to SPEX – during my first meeting, I quickly noticed that the club focused on finding and explaining the nuances of our world. I fell in love with SPEX’s ability to have inclusive conversations and promote diversity of opinion.

After becoming president of SPEX, I wanted to continue the club’s legacy of high-quality conversations on global issues. Upon the arrival of the COVID-19 pandemic, I was concerned about the club’s ability to maintain this same level of nuance and thoughtfulness in our virtual meetings. This is when the idea for the SPEX Journal was born. Early in the 2020-2021 school year, we at SPEX developed a plan to create a high-quality student publication dedicated to exploring global issues in an evidence-based fashion. This publication would give our students, new and old, the opportunity to conduct deep dives into topics of their own choice, looking for complexities, intricacies, and potential solutions.

Over the last year, we at SPEX have worked tirelessly to complete the dream of the SPEX Journal. In addition to our virtual meetings (which thankfully maintained a high level of quality and inclusion), our members took time out of their schedules to research, write, and rewrite, over and over and over again.

I want to take this moment to personally thank the SPEX Research Team for their contributions to this journal. Throughout a grueling year, they each displayed incredible dedication and an undeniable desire to learn. Not only that – they showed patience – patience with their research, with their writing, and with the editing process. Together, they continue the SPEX legacy of seeking to understand “the complex interactions between business, politics, and economics.” They were a tremendous group to work with, and it’s been my honor to edit their works.

Lastly, to our readers: I hope you enjoy what we at SPEX have put together for you. I hope you learn something new. And most of all, I hope you come away from this journal with a higher appreciation for the complexities of our globalized world. There’s immense beauty in the details.

-Eitan Dombey,
SPEX President



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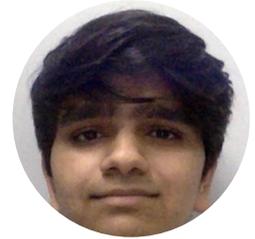


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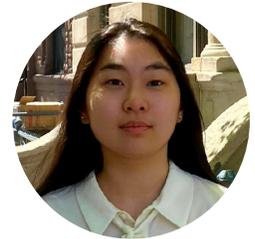


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THE HYPERINFLATION CRISIS IN VENEZUELA

An In-Depth Analysis

by Rhys Berenzy

Abstract

This paper aims to explain the various causes and effects of hyperinflation in Venezuela and provide a few potential solutions for this crisis. The first section examines several of the fiscal and monetary actions performed by the Chávez and Maduro governments leading up to the hyperinflation crisis. The next section presents some of the economic and social effects of this crisis. Lastly, the paper describes some of the recent economic developments and potential solutions to the situation in Venezuela. This paper serves to emphasize the importance of a stable government and the notion that the financial health of a country is very tightly tied to the overall well-being of its society.



Introduction and Background

Venezuela was once a prosperous country in South America with a real GDP per capita of around \$15,000 USD in the late 1970s, approaching the GDP of a highly developed nation. For reference, the United States had a real GDP per capita of around \$26,000 at that same time. Throughout the 1960s and 1970s, Venezuela had a booming economy thanks to surging oil prices. Venezuela was able to maintain harmony among its people by spending large amounts on public programs such as health care and education. When oil prices went down during the 1980s oil glut, Venezuela's economy contracted and their national currency, the Bolívar, became subject to high devaluation (albeit nothing close to the current crisis). Since the boom, the Venezuelan economy has not reached its previous economic superiority, and instead, has seen high inflation rates and low purchasing power. Volatility in the oil prices in the 1990s and early 2000s controlled Venezuela's economy, causing recessions and spouts of economic growth. Since 2015, Venezuela's economy has been in a prolonged economic downturn driven by several factors, which continue to have drastic implications on the economy (and ultimately caused the current hyperinflation crisis). This paper will explain in detail the various causes of the hyperinflation crisis and then demonstrate the serious economic impact these actions have had on Venezuela's currency, its overall economy, and society as a whole. To end, the paper will explore some potential solutions to this ongoing crisis.

Causes of Hyperinflation

The Social Programs of the Chávez Administration. In the early 2000s, when oil prices soared, Venezuela received windfalls of cash, leading to a surge in its economy. Instead of saving these recently acquired funds for a rainy day or investing in infrastructure, Hugo Chávez decided to spend most of the oil money as soon as it came in. This placed the economy into a precarious position in the case of a recession. In 2002, Chávez restructured many public policies and created the very populist "Bolívarian Missions" to boost his rapidly declining approval ratings and quell domestic infighting. These missions were a set of social programs created to improve society's

standard of living by strengthening public services, which included improving access to education, promoting literacy, and providing food subsidies and medical services. While these programs significantly improved the welfare system and reduced poverty from 48.7% to 32.1%, they came at a massive economic cost. Chávez used the oil money to fund these programs and also borrowed against future oil exports. This excess spending and borrowing caused the Bolívar to greatly devalue against the US dollar during Chávez's presidency. During his time in power, Chávez increased Venezuela's overall public spending, raising the debt from 28% to 58% of GDP. To finance this debt, Chávez borrowed from other countries at high interest rates; by 2013, Venezuela's foreign debt climbed to over \$120 billion. Chávez ran a deficit for nine of his years in power and massively expanded Venezuela's welfare state. Not only did he ignore the national budget, but he failed to maintain and improve the oil infrastructure and directed most of their efforts towards appeasing the populace. These short-term goals lead to massive debt accumulation which sowed the seeds for a future inflation crisis.

Economic Control during the Chávez Administration. In line with the United Socialist Party's platform, the Chávez government nationalized several industries to redistribute wealth and decrease the influence of multinational companies but ended up greatly increasing inflation. By 2006, oil had already been nationalized for around 30 years. Chávez decided to nationalize many other industries, from steel manufacturing to farming. Between 1998 and 2011, the number of private companies in Venezuela decreased from 14,000 to 9,000 as the government carried out widespread nationalizations, expropriations, and increased regulations. The results have been similar across the board: decreased production of goods and market disequilibrium. Additionally, Chávez set price controls for various goods causing shortages and hoarding. The combination of limited imports and price ceilings on various food staples made way for further shortages and temporarily capped inflation, but only hid the issue. The Chávez administration's price controls forced local businesses and producers to sell or produce at a loss, further exacerbating the existing shortages. Many businesses soon became bankrupt. The true

value of goods was reflected in the black market, in which goods often sold at many multiples higher than the mandated price ceilings. Chávez greatly cracked down on the black market and confiscated millions of tonnes in illegally imported goods. However, as Alberto Ramos from Goldman Sachs stated, “repressing the black market, smuggling or trading is going to deteriorate the economic picture even more. It will lead to even higher inflation and higher scarcity of goods.” Chávez’s attempt to control the Venezuelan markets ended up increasing poverty, malnutrition, and racked up the Venezuelan national debt due to the necessity for food imports (because of failing domestic industries), increasing the rate of inflation to almost 30% by the end of his presidency. Chávez’s economic mismanagement of the Venezuelan economy set his successor up for a difficult reign.

Overreliance on Oil. Venezuela has the largest proven crude oil reserves of any country in the world. They represent 25.5% of the total global reserves (or 303 billion barrels). Historically, Venezuela has thrived from their immense oil reserves; however, this has been a curse for them in recent years. Despite their vast resources, Venezuela has the worst growth rate in Latin America. Venezuela now has the worst economy in all Latin America, and arguably, the world. Venezuela has an extremely high oil dependency that now represents 99% of their total exports (a figure that has remained above 95% since 2015). Additionally, 60% of government revenues come from the sale of oil, representing 25% of GDP. The price of oil is directly reflective of Venezuela’s economy, as demonstrated by historical oil booms and crashes corresponding to Venezuela’s expansions and recessions. Despite this obvious overreliance on oil, the government has taken no initiative to diversify its economy. Under Chávez, Venezuela experienced a horrible case of Dutch disease, characterized by the great success of the oil industry causing a massive decline in other industries. This is because oil booms strengthened the Bolívar, making it more expensive for countries to import other Venezuelan goods. Even worse, when the price of oil decreased, other industries failed to recover. Venezuela’s most recent crisis spawned from the collapse of oil prices from a high of \$100 (per barrel) in 2013 to \$70 in 2014 and \$33 in 2016. Between 2013 and 2017, the economy

shrunk by 30%. This created an unmanageable situation, as debt had increased considerably and needed to be paid back. This prolonged downturn for Venezuela’s main industry (and the other industries’ weakness) sent the nation into a downward economic spiral causing further financial and social consequences.

Political Corruption in the Maduro Administration.

In 2013, Nicolás Maduro succeeded Hugo Chávez. He had worked under Chávez for several years and was handpicked as his successor. By Maduro’s first year in office, inflation had shot up to 56%, placing strain on the economy. Instead of getting to the root of the problem, Maduro became embroiled in various scandals around his efforts to gain more power. In 2015, the US Department of Treasury’s Financial Crimes Enforcement Network discovered that a European bank had accepted commissions for transactions of about \$2 billion related to “third-party money launderers, shell companies, and complex financial products.” These funds were stolen directly from Venezuela’s state-run oil company, PDVSA, and were used for the personal gain of Maduro and his cronies. This is just one of several instances of Maduro siphoning money from public funds into his own account. He also consolidated much of the government’s authority under his executive power. In 2016, the Supreme Tribunal of Justice announced that the president would no longer need legislative approval to hire and fire Central Bank directors, effectively granting Maduro full control of the Central Bank. Immediately, he canceled an oppositional effort to stabilize the economy and gave himself the right “to approve [his] own budget” (Guaido, 2016). A year later, the Supreme Tribunal granted Maduro the ability to exercise the faculties of the National Assembly “and take civilian, military, economic... measures to prevent a state of commotion.” This meant that Maduro gained even more power over the Venezuelan government, transferring much of the parliamentary responsibilities to the executive branch. By early 2018, Maduro ceased the publication of various economy metrics, including the CPI and GDP growth, and held almost total control of the national budget. These changes decreased transparency and insight into the Venezuelan economy and created more distrust in the international community towards Venezuela’s

actual economic health, which further burdened their economy.

Economic Mismanagement of the Maduro Administration (Until Hyperinflation in late 2017).

Apart from his complete financial mismanagement of government funds, Maduro also failed to adapt his strategy when confronted with high inflation at the start of his presidency. Maduro continued Chávez's massive spending on social programs, despite government revenues rapidly decreased due to falling oil prices. As a result, the Venezuelan government failed to make payments for various infrastructure projects such as the expansion of a railroad project owned by China Railway; the project has since been delayed indefinitely. This led to many foreign companies halting all business in Venezuela, further decreasing government revenues. Following prolonged food shortages and failed efforts to provide sufficient subsidies to the populace, Maduro resorted to printing money to pay for these expenditures. Increasing money supply in a time of high inflation are bound for disaster. Evidently, as excess currency was printed into circulation, prices of Venezuelan goods skyrocketed. Consumers, believing that prices would continue to rise, bought more goods, and increased short-term economic activity and raised inflation. This cycle repeated itself, and by November 2017, inflation stood at over 50%, meeting the technical threshold of hyperinflation. Maduro quickly instituted further price controls and fixed the exchange rate to the USD in an effort to stabilize the currency. In reality, these changes made it impossible to exchange the Bolívar in the forex market at the government-set rate, given the obvious overvaluation of the currency, which created additional domestic pressure.

Effects of Hyperinflation

Inflation Data and Government Response. This section will give more insight into the effects of hyperinflation and the government's response to the current crisis. In 2017, inflation stood at 438% and increased to a whopping 65,000% in 2018 before slightly decreasing to 20,000% in 2019 (Consumer Price Index). Note that various organizations and economists have estimated Venezuela's inflation; however, their results have varied significantly. Looking into the future, there is no immediate end

in sight for the hyperinflation crisis; however, the inflation rate has been slowing since 2019.

As inflation reached 200% just in the month of July 2018, Maduro decided to take action. On August 20, 2018, the Bolívar Soberano officially replaced the Bolívar Fuerte as Venezuela's national currency. In this historic change, five zeros were lopped off the currency at a rate of 1 Bolívar Soberano for 100,000 Bolívar Fuertes. Economists have said this change does not address the underlying issue causing hyperinflation—Steve Hanke, an economist at Johns Hopkins, called it “nothing but a facelift,” mentioning how other countries, including Zimbabwe and Yugoslavia, have tried the same tactic to no avail.

Earlier that year, the Venezuelan government began the issuance of the Petro, a cryptocurrency supposedly tied to the country's oil and mineral reserves (specifically in an area called the Atapirire parish). According to Maduro, the Petro would “boost economic sovereignty and help economic blocking against us” as well as supplement and strengthen the Bolívar, which it would supposedly be tied to. Steve Hanke believed it would be a complete scam at its Initial Coin Offering (ICO). This claim was proven true six months later when Reuters reporters revealed that there had been no government effort to extract any oil from the Atapirire parish. The few Petro buyers who were located on online forums reported that they were “scammed” and unable to use the cryptocurrency. Alejandro Machado, a cryptocurrency consultant, said, “there is no way link prices or exchange rates to a token that doesn't trade, precisely because there is no way to know what it actually sells for.” This demonstrates the utter failure of the Petro, another way Maduro has attempted to win public favor (or hide the appearance of hyperinflation) through fraudulent means.

Maduro has also increased the minimum wage several times to combat or quell hyperinflation by giving workers more disposable income. However, just like the other methods mentioned above, this is no way to address the fundamental issue. Both right and left-wing economists frown upon Maduro's attempt at fiscal reform, with Larry Elliot, stating that increasing the minimum wage would simply lead to higher inflation and more company failures.

Social and Human Implications. The above section's inflation figures translate into chaos and destitution for Venezuelan society, quickly turning it into one of the least stable countries in the world. Through Venezuela's hyperinflation crisis, unemployment has shot up alongside inflation. According to the IMF, in 2016, the unemployment rate stood at 21% and has continually increased to an estimated 47% in 2020. Additionally, Venezuela's GDP has shrunk from \$482 billion USD in 2014 to a mere \$98 billion in 2018 (and is actively decreasing). This crisis has affected those in all socioeconomic classes, but the lower class has particularly been affected as they do not have enough cash to access the black market. As a whole, this crisis has caused a massive decrease in business and investment activity, consumer spending, and government investment. A serious issue within the economy is the inability for civilians to purchase goods. The current minimum wage in Venezuela is 400,000 Bolívares, which is only three times the price for a dozen eggs, and soon to be the price of one loaf of bread. Another issue is that Venezuela hardly has any domestic production, forcing consumers to import what they need. In practice, shopkeepers are forced to purchase items with a rapidly depreciating currency and therefore charge higher and higher prices to their customers. As a result, individuals in Venezuela are unable to buy goods from shops using the Bolívar and have to rely on foreign currencies, which have only been available through the black market (until 2020, when Maduro began allowing the use of US dollars to sustain the economy). Those without access to US dollars are still scavenging through dumpsters and starving on the street. It truly is a humanitarian crisis.

Poverty rates have increased dramatically since hyperinflation began, with 94% of Venezuelans now living below the poverty line. 75% of Venezuelan adults have lost an average of 19 pounds due to the current crisis and these figures are only getting worse. As of March 2020, five million Venezuelans had fled the country, mostly to neighboring countries Colombia and Peru. These countries have been quite accepting towards the refugees as they provide labor for lower wages than their citizens will accept.

Developments Towards Dollarization and Potential Solutions. As this is an ongoing situation, this paper will now provide some potential solutions and

exemplify the most recent developments relating to the crisis. In 2019, Maduro finally ended Chávez era policies of price and currency controls. He described lifting these restrictions as an "escape valve" but kept the Bolívar as the national currency. These actions functioned as an informal dollarization of the economy. *Econoanilitica* estimates that 54% of the transactions in 2019 and 66% of transactions in 2020 were made using US dollars. Although Maduro did not formally adopt the US dollar, the move represents a step in the right direction and has slowed the inflation rate. Most recently, on January 27, 2021, several Venezuelan banks began issuing debit cards to clients who have accounts in hard currency. It is predicted that this will improve liquidity and remove barriers to commerce and enterprise. Still, Maduro rejects a full dollarization (a complete abandonment of the Bolívar) as he wants to maintain monetary sovereignty and the appearance of control over the nation through not bowing down to foreign influences. Even so, this action represents a step in the right direction.

There are several potential solutions for solving this crisis. The first is a full dollarization. As the US is Venezuela's largest trade partner, it makes the most sense to convert the economy into USD. However, even though this may be highly effective in stabilizing the economy and improving government revenues, it would greatly reduce Venezuela's sovereignty and increase the transparency of their system (something Maduro is unlikely to agree to).

Another option is currency reform. This could include fiscal adjustments like reducing government subsidies and social programs. Alternatively, the government could increase oil production or even partially privatize the oil industry. These reforms could also include financing from abroad and from the IMF; however, this would necessitate international persuasion that the funds would be used transparently. Additionally, pegging the Bolívar to a foreign currency can slow price changes and increase its credibility. Of course, this approach involves similar drawbacks for Maduro's government as it results in less control over the economy.

Lastly, a currency board could be a potential solution. A currency board "is an extreme form of a pegged exchange rate" in which the nation's central bank powers are taken away.

According to Steve Hanke, a currency board “issues notes and coins convertible on demand into a foreign anchor currency at a fixed rate of exchange” and, over time, all domestic currency will be backed by reserves of a foreign one. The establishment of a currency board would prevent the government from printing money and misusing its monetary authority. Of these three solutions, the currency board would likely be the most effective, as it is much more likely to be enacted than full dollarization and would have more of an impact than solely reforming the currency. It must be noted that although these solutions have worked before to end hyperinflation in other countries, it requires the full support of the existing government, meaning Maduro would have to shift his nationalistic and authoritarian approach and encourage more foreign interaction.

Conclusion

The culmination of multiple poor government decisions over the course of two decades has decimated the Venezuelan economy. In hindsight, from an economist’s point of view, it couldn’t have seemed like a more obvious recipe for disaster. Still, the Chávez and Maduro governments exhibited short-sightedness and lack of proper economic planning. The nation’s overreliance on oil and lack of diversification in its economy—which made way for the Dutch disease—was the main precursor to this crisis. These choices, combined with massive spending on welfare programs during times of economic expansion and authoritarian currency controls, caused the crisis to spiral out of control. The hyperinflation crisis was further exacerbated by high levels of corruption among the nation’s elite, spanning from government to the military and police. Together, these factors have led to the greatest humanitarian disaster in the Western hemisphere—a disaster that continues to ravage Venezuelan society. There are, however, multiple ways to recover, including full dollarization, currency reform, and potentially most effectively, establishing a currency board. These solutions, coupled with a quick oil price recovery, (or a change in government) will be instrumental for a speedier recovery. Regardless of the potential success of these initiatives, it will take decades for Venezuela to return to the economic powerhouse status it once held. This paper has served to exemplify how

government action or inaction can make or break an economy and, ultimately, a nation.

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THE POLITICS OF A BROWNING AMERICA

by *Misha Nosenko*

Abstract

The United States is at a historic demographic tipping point. By several projections, the U.S. will become a majority-minority – that is, majority non-white – country by 2045. At the same time, the federal government is seen by many as largely broken, gridlocked, incompetent, and unable to adequately serve the American people. The January 6th storming of the Capitol highlighted the fragility of American democracy and the willingness of some, citizen and politician alike, to embrace dangerous authoritarian tactics. This paper aims to survey the connection between the changing status of the nation’s demographics and its government’s struggles. It opens with an exploration of the seismic cultural shift taking place throughout the nation. The following sections explore the history of party and ideology sorting since the middle of the 1950s. The paper’s last sections quantify the change in political attitudes caused by the prospect of racial change, as well as the tangible impacts on policy and political behavior those fears entail.



A Browning America

The United States is a changing country. Most Americans are now acutely aware that their nation is undergoing a seismic demographic shift that promises to make it a “minority-majority” nation by 2044.¹ 2013 was the first year ever that a majority of births were non-white. Additionally, 2030 will mark the point where native births will fall behind immigration as the main source of population growth. In several states, including Hawaii, New Mexico, California, and Texas, whites no longer constitute a majority of the population. From there, the demographic shifts will spread inward to the rest of the country, fueled by rapid expansion among minorities in lower age brackets.² In 15 years, states farther in from the Mexican border will see minority populations increase by upwards of 53%.³

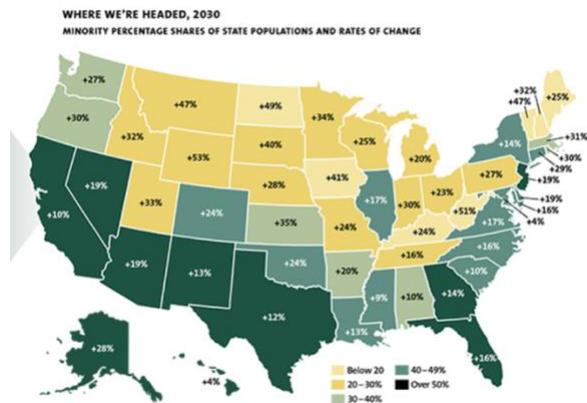


Figure 1 – Each states’ color fill represents current minority share of population, while percentages represent projected change over the next 10 years.

This rapid and unprecedented shift has already left its mark on American politics. The white majority has long been accustomed to holding almost absolute political power. Now, with minority voting at record high and the looming reality of a changing country, white politicians and voters (and the Republicans that mainly represent) them may seek to retain power by any means possible. This trend poses a direct and serious threat to American democracy, as demonstrated by the recent events

¹ Frey, William H. “The Browning of America.” *Milken Institute Review*, 19 Oct. 2015, www.milkenreview.org/articles/charticle-3.

surrounding the 2020 election. For the Republicans, retaining a monopoly on electoral power in an increasingly diverse republic can perhaps only be achieved through authoritarian tendencies. The goal of this paper is to look into how the continuous diversification of the nation is met by the populace and our political institutions, and what implications it will have for an already divided country. In particular, it will try to examine how this process stirs up both authoritarian and populist sentiments, as well as the tangible policy decisions and political actions that are taken as a result.

Party and Identity Sorting

Throughout the past several decades (starting just before the Civil Rights Act), the ideologies and, more importantly, the demographics of the Democratic and Republican parties have been diverging. In the 1950s, there was significant overlap between the ideologies of the two parties largely due to the presence of fiscally liberal yet racially conservative southern Democrats. These so called southern “Dixiecrats” represented a significant middle ground between the northern core of the Democratic Party and the Republicans, resulting in an era of relatively low polarization in Congress.

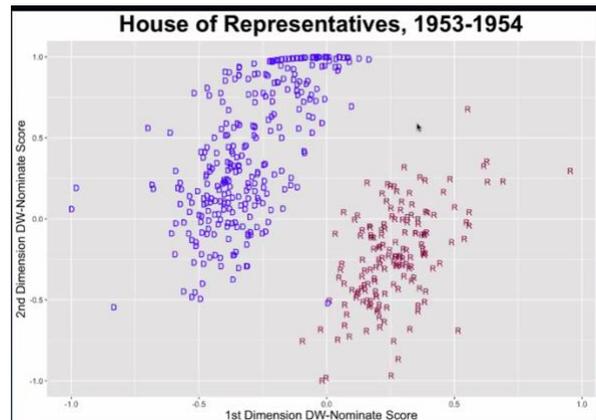


Figure 2 – 1st Dimension represents fiscal ideology, while the second dimension does so for racial ideology. Negative numbers represent more liberal views.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

The alliance between the northern and southern Democrats was one of uneasy cooperation. Northern liberals cared about securing the White House and passing their New Deal fiscal agenda, which meant working with southern politicians who gave them the numbers they needed. In exchange, southerners got to exercise their power in obstructing civil rights legislation virtually unopposed, as northern Democrats agreed to keep any such legislation off the Congressional agenda.⁴

That alliance, however, began to fracture. As the New Deal's agenda ran its course, liberal northern Democrats began to eye racial issues as the main mechanism keeping many Americans poor. At the same time, small-government, anti-redistribution conservatives – ideologies fitting for southern whites aiming to keep African Americans out of power – began to concentrate in the Republican Party. The tipping point came with the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Despite being supported by a higher proportion of Republicans, Democrats' decisive Congressional majority and control of the White House ensured they were given full credit for the bill's passage. This, coupled with the GOP's presidential nominee Barry Goldwater's vote against the bill, ensured that southern conservatives all but fully embraced the Republican party over the coming years. This shift ushered in a new age of division and polarized party sorting. The Democrats became the party of minorities and the urban centers, while the Republicans represented the rural white.⁵ This trend of political parties representing more than just political identities has continued to the present day. As Lilliana Mason describes it:

“The American political parties are growing socially polarized. Religion and race, as well as class, geography, and culture, are dividing the parties in such a way that the effect of party identity is magnified. The competition is no longer between only Democrats and Republicans. A single vote can now indicate a person's partisan preference as well as his or her religion, race, ethnicity, gender, neighborhood, and favorite grocery store. This is no longer a single social identity. Partisanship can now

⁴ “The Reign of the Dixiecrats.” *Why We're Polarized*, by Ezra Klein, Avid Reader Press, 2021, pp. 24–31.

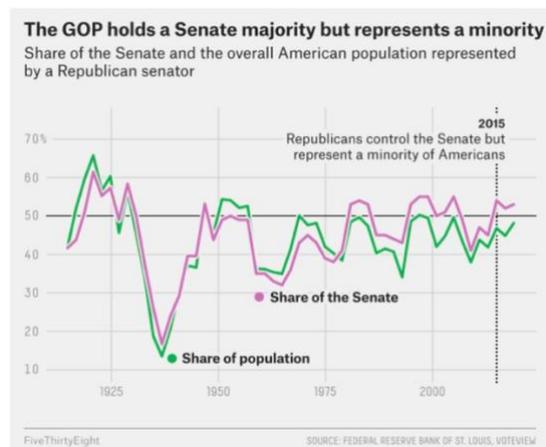
⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶ “Identities Politic.” *Why We're Polarized*, by Ezra Klein, Avid Reader Press, 2021, pp. 65–75.

be thought of as a mega-identity with all the psychological and behavioral magnifications that implies.”

The fact that our identities, including our race, are fusing into politicized mega-identities becomes important when considering that one party will be the primary beneficiary in the years to come. The Democrats, who have positioned themselves as the party for minorities and open immigration reform, will be far more likely to gather the most support from what will be a majority non-white population. And that puts the Republican party and their primary base at risk of being shut out of power permanently.

Additionally, the Republicans are already functionally the party of minority rule. Of the five presidential elections since George Bush's 2000 victory, a Republican has won three out of five terms despite winning the popular vote only in 2004. In the Senate, Republicans, who often constitute a majority, represent as many as 40 million fewer people.⁷ The party's primary support base has been dwindling for years, being concentrated in the shrinking demographics of the nation's sparsely populated rural areas. Thus, as the prospects worsen for a party already struggling to maintain a democratically legitimate hold on power, it may find it necessary to embrace and embolden undemocratic and populist tendencies such as voter suppression and election meddling.



⁷ Millhiser, Ian. “America's Anti-Democratic Senate, by the Numbers.” *Vox*, Vox, 6 Nov. 2020, www.vox.com/2020/11/6/21550979/senate-malapportionment-20-million-democrats-republicans-supreme-court.

We can see additional examples of the party's undemocratic leanings in its ardent use of both partisan gerrymandering and the filibuster, as well as its staunch support for the current system of elections. The current electoral system almost universally favors the Republican party – both the Senate and Electoral College give significantly greater electoral weight to overwhelmingly red rural areas – so they have a clear incentive to maintain the status quo. Further, tools of obstruction such as the filibuster proved invaluable to former Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell's successful partisan obstruction of the Obama administration's post-2014 agenda and continue to serve as an effective tool of minority obstruction.

Racial Threat

Yet a party can only play into the sentiments that already exist among the populace. The most consequential effects of the continuous change in demographics is how it drives the previously dominant white Christians farther towards dangerous political sentiments. Research from Maureen Craig and Jennifer Richeson found that, as Ezra Klein summarized:

“The barest exposure to the concept that whites were losing their numerical majority in America would not just make whites feel afraid but sharply change their political behavior... participants who lived in the western United States who read that whites had ceded majority status were more than 13 points likelier to subsequently say they favored the Republican Party.”

That is a monumental change, and this reaction isn't just constrained to the white population. Data about the massively growing number of Hispanics caused similar reactions among the black and Asian populations.⁹ Populist sentiments arising from a group's loss of power is an unavoidable and fundamentally human reaction.

Much of this can be attributed to what social psychologist Henri Tajfel described as “social identity theory.” Tajfel stipulated that we as humans define and categorize ourselves based on the groups that we identify with. Groups – such as social class, family, sports teams, and importantly for us race and political parties – give us a sense of self-worth and belonging, and as such we naturally strive to place ourselves within one or more of these groups.¹⁰ According to Tajfel, among our most basic of instincts is the impulse to divide the world into “us” and “them,” defining ourselves by who we aren't in addition to who we are. To enhance our self-image, we embellish our perceptions of our in-group while constantly finding ways to demean any and all out-groups through constant social comparisons.¹¹

This mental reliance on social categorization and hostile inter-group comparisons, coupled with the previously described fusion of racial and partisan identities is the root cause of much of the current polarization and racial extremism. As the two parties define themselves more and more as advocates for certain racial groups, our natural impulse to protect our in-group will inevitably lead us to more extreme views. As the declining white majority sees its monopoly on political power dwindle, many will turn to the more extreme wings of the Republican caucus which increasingly defines itself as the party for the white majority.

Even tiny, subtle exposure to the fact that their group's political power is dwindling leads people to sharply adjust their views further to the right. According to Jennifer Chudy, political science professor at Wellesley College, racial attitudes are often closely linked with emotions such as anger, and extremists that express anger at the system as a whole are likely to be motivated by racial grievances.¹² Such grievances originate from the fact that the country is rapidly changing, a fact which then quickly evolves into right-wing political extremism. That political extremism then coalesces almost entirely around one side of the aisle.

⁸ “Change makes us conservative.” *Why We're Polarized*, by Ezra Klein, Avid Reader Press, 2021, pp. 107-109.

⁹ Klein, Ezra. “The fractured politics of a browning America.” *YouTube*, uploaded by Vox, 23 August 2018, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SbjciJvacXY>.

¹⁰ Tajfel, Henri. “Social Identity and Intergroup Behaviour.” *Social Science Information*, vol. 13, no. 2, Apr. 1974, pp. 65-93, doi:10.1177/053901847401300204

¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹² “How Has the Radical Right Evolved Under Trump?” *Right-Wing Extremism*, FiveThirtyEight, 15 January 2021, https://fivethirtyeight.com/features/how-has-the-radical-right-evolved-under-trump/?cid=_inlinelrelated.

Because of the Democrats' increased focus on racial inequality and the increasing racial homogenization of the Republican Party, white find their home entirely in the latter.¹³ So, as Chudy describes it, "while the actual extremists represent a small group of the public, the share of Republicans who support their behavior, whether explicitly or implicitly, is not so small."¹⁴ The electoral implications are that an influx of mostly Democratic-voting immigrants will cause an uptick in racial tensions and fear, which then translates into increased Republican support among whites. Studies by Harvard's Ryan Enos found that presidential election results in Trempealeau County Wisconsin, where the Hispanic population grew by 1,200% from 2000 to 2015, flipped from +27% Democratic in 2008 to +13% Republican in 2016.¹⁵

These findings are particularly dangerous, as the Republicans now see that their only path to power is to stoke the tribal passions of a demographic which now needs to turn out in massive numbers to defeat the multi-racial Democratic coalition. Obama won the 2012 election with only 39% of the white vote. As a comparison, Michael Dukakis suffered a blowout defeat in the 1988 election while winning 40%. As the same diverse coalition that couldn't dream of an electoral win decades ago can now put a president in the White House, the implications are clear: The Republican party will need to up its focus on radicalized racial politics to increase turnout and support from the nation's fleeting white majority.

Consequences

In 2016, Donald Trump proved that a candidate who talked directly to the white population could still win big. His sentiments, geared at targeting and making public enemies out of minorities such as Hispanics and Muslims, resonated so strongly with the white population – specifically rural, non-college educated whites – that their support carried him to the White House. Conservative politics became radicalized due to the

advent of the Obama coalition and a browning nation, and Trump was merely "hunting where the ducks were."¹⁶ As Michael Tesler, a political science professor at UC Irvine says, the Republican party now has a major incentive to stoke racial fears among its supporters:

*"The Republicans now have a temptation to explicitly appeal to race. And you're seeing this throughout Republican primaries in the 2018 cycle, and you're seeing the reverse on the Democratic side: "Abolish ICE," is a good example. That is a policy that the Democrats would not have been on board with in the 1990, but their bases have moved and so incentives have moved as well."*¹⁷

One of the most significant ways in which the Trump coalition became a threat to American political institutions was with the recent undermining of the 2020 election. In particular, it came to a head in the months following the election and leading up to the January 6th insurrection. The massive polarization of American politics, in large part driven by demographic changes, has created an immensely hostile environment. The supporters of Donald Trump that went so far as to follow their leader into insurrection likely saw the other side of the aisle as dangerous and radical enough to be kept out of power through authoritarian means.

During his presidential term, Donald Trump routinely spoke directly to right-wing extremists that came to form a small but decisively loyal part of his party and support base. By echoing their language, condoning armed protests at government buildings and calling on them to support him, he emboldened and legitimized their movements, making them seem much less extreme. In doing so, he transformed the Republican Party from an institution which merely tolerated and harbored fringe groups such as white Christian nationalists into one that actively legitimized and emboldened their actions.¹⁸

Lastly, it would be potent to look at the case of Ted Cruz, one of Donald Trump's most ardent

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ "White identity under threat." *Why We're Polarized*, by Ezra Klein, Avid Reader Press, 2021, pp. 113–120.

¹⁷ Klein, Ezra. "The fractured politics of a browning America." *YouTube*, uploaded by Vox, 23 August 2018, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SbjciJvacXY>.

¹⁸ How Has the Radical Right Evolved Under Trump?" *Right-Wing Extremism*, FiveThirtyEight, 15 January 2021, https://fivethirtyeight.com/features/how-has-the-radical-right-evolved-under-trump/?cid=_inlinelrelated.

supporters, in the quest to undo the presidential election. As mentioned earlier, the state he represents in the Senate, Texas, is already a majority-minority state. This means that Cruz has to contend to keep power in a state whose demographics no longer overwhelmingly favor him and will keep turning against him as time goes on. His successful 2018 reelection race against Beto O'Rourke was the closest in the state since 1978, a margin of 50.9 to 48.3. In that race, O'Rourke won the Latino vote 64 to 35 and the black vote by 89 to 11.¹⁹ Thus, in hindsight, Cruz's decision to follow Trump into subversion and insurrection makes sense – he is positioning himself as the successor to a white populist coalition that has proven itself to be the main path to power for Republican politicians in an increasingly diverse nation.

The same can be said of much the House Republican caucus. Marjorie Taylor Greene (R-GA) has long held and supported extremist views. Prior to her election, she repeatedly questioned whether the Pentagon was indeed hit by a plane on September 11th, called for the execution of top Democrats, and repeatedly called the Sandy Hook and Parkland massacres “hoaxes.” Yet, in the aftermath of her election to Congress in 2020, Republican leaders including Minority Leader Kevin McCarthy placed her on the Education Committee. Despite objections from many House members from both sides of the aisle, McCarthy refused to take any disciplinary action regarding Greene, forcing the issue to a chamber-wide vote. McCarthy's actions, or lack thereof, can also be seen as reluctance to stand up to the most fanatical parts of Trump's coalition, a crucial and nontrivial section of the Republican base. In a way, the party of Trump and Greene is a natural evolution of decades of Republican politics. In a bid to retain power, it will likely continue to embrace the ideals they represent and undermine American democracy in the process.

All of these examples show how the GOP, long the champion of small-government white conservatives, is transforming itself, its institutions, and its leadership into vessels of revanchist rage. The United States is changing, and in a way, that spells doom for the future electoral ambitions of Republican politicians. As such, Trump, Greene,

and what they represent are the most authentic expressions of modern Republican psychology. Their attacks against democratic institutions in the aftermath of the 2020 election were not met with universal condemnation, but with staunch support from a significant portion of Republican partisans, both civilian and politician. And even though they ultimately failed, the ideology, and more importantly, the shrinking identity they represent, will likely persist and radicalize as the country diversifies, constituting a major threat to the United States as it become the latest victim of democratic backsliding.

¹⁹ “2018 Midterms: EXIT POLLING.” *CNN*, Cable News Network, edition.cnn.com/election/2018/exit-polls/texas/senate.

REDUCING AMERICAN HEALTHCARE COSTS: CAUSES OF AND SOLUTIONS FOR THE U.S. PHYSICIAN SHORTAGE

by Nikhil Ghangurde

Abstract

In order to better understand the United States' relatively high healthcare costs and expenditures, this paper will examine labor shortages in the healthcare industry, mainly concerning primary care physicians. This paper first provides an introduction to the American healthcare system and its associated debate. It then poses a question of a political and economic nature to serve as a guide for research and discovery. Following that is a discussion on the U.S.' healthcare labor shortage, exploring its possible causes in demographic developments, licensing policy, and nursing regulation. Lastly, several policy recommendations are given to remedy the United States' undersupply of healthcare professionals and decrease healthcare costs.



Introduction

A prime point of political and economic debate in the United States surrounds how to “fix” the costly US healthcare system. In 2018, the U.S. spent 17% of its GDP on healthcare expenditures, while the average healthcare expenditures for nations in the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) stands at 9%.¹ A year later, the U.S. increased its healthcare spending to \$11,582 per person or \$3.8 trillion in total, translating to 17.7% of its GDP.² At the same time, the U.S. sees lackluster health outcomes, ranking lower than comparable OECD nations—most of which boast lower healthcare costs than the US—on most standard measurements of health.³ With almost double the OECD’s average healthcare expenditure value and relatively poor national health outcomes, it is clear the U.S. healthcare industry is in dire need of a “fix.”

Though past presidential administrations and Congresses have made efforts to revise the country’s healthcare system, it remains a sore spot of everyday American life. It is common to hear of lower-income Americans who find themselves unable to pay for necessary medication, surgeries, or treatments. Individuals in these circumstances often receive inadequate support from private health insurance providers and the government. Even more frustrating is looking across the border and seeing Canadian citizens enjoying a seemingly robust healthcare system that guarantees basic healthcare at little cost.

Bearing all this in mind, it is easy to jump on one of two prescribed political bandwagons: supporting substantial wealth redistribution to establish a single-payer healthcare system or promoting sizable deregulation to create competition and assume natural market equilibrium. While both ideas certainly have merit, this paper refrains from endorsing such a dichotomy and

instead seeks to explore one specific cause of high healthcare costs.

Many possible causes for high costs and expenditures have been put forth by politicians, political scientists, and economists alike. Among these are under-regulation in the pharmaceutical industry; market power consolidation among medical device manufacturers; unchecked hospital mergers; moral hazard in the fee-for-service model; and burdensome administrative costs and restrictions. However, an often-undiscussed cause is the current physician shortage in the healthcare industry. This shortage is present specifically among primary care providers; however, it is seen in specialized practices as well. This paper will analyze potential reasons for the nation’s inadequate supply of doctors, outline consequences of such a phenomenon, and suggest public policy proposals to resolve the healthcare industry’s labor shortage.

Existence of Shortage

The United States is currently experiencing a nationwide shortage of primary care providers and other specialized doctors. In 2011, the shortage numbered 17,722 primary care physicians.⁴ By 2020, this shortage grew to an estimated 45,400 primary care physicians (up 256%) with an additional shortage of 46,100 medical specialists, giving a total shortage of about 91,500 doctors.⁵ The Association of American Medical Colleges predicts that, by 2030, this shortage could grow to 121,300.⁶ It should be noted that the estimates for 2020 and 2030 were conducted immediately before the COVID-19 pandemic, meaning that these estimates may be conservative.

These shortages are distributed disproportionately around the country and are predicted to only worsen. Estimates say that, by 2030, the American South and American West will experience the greatest shortages, lacking a total of 92,172 physicians and 63,589 physicians,

¹ Corso, Kent A, et al. “The Physician Shortage: A Red Herring in American Health Care Reform.” *Military Medicine*, vol. 183, 1 Nov. 2018, pp. 220–224. NYULibraries, EBSCOhost.

² “Historical National Health Expenditure Data.” CMS.gov, U.S. Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services, 16 Dec. 2020, www.cms.gov/Research-Statistics-Data-and-Systems/Statistics-Trends-and-Reports/NationalHealthExpendData/NationalHealthAccountsHistorical#:~:text=U.S.%20health%20care%20spendi

ng%20grew,For%20additional%20information%2C%20see%20below.

³ Corso

⁴ Zhang, Xiaoming, et al. “Physician Workforce in the United States of America: Forecasting Nationwide Shortages.” *Human Resources for Health*, vol. 18, no. 1, Feb. 2020, pp. 1–9. NYULibraries, EBSCOhost.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ibid.

respectively. California, Florida, and Texas will see the greatest shortages, with each state experiencing a shortage of over 20,000 physicians. The only states predicted to see physician surpluses are Massachusetts, Vermont, and New York, with each having a slight surplus of about 100 physicians.

In addition to primary care, the labor shortage extends to specialized medical practices, most notably cardiovascular surgeons. One study estimates that, in 2020, there was a national shortage of 1,329 cardiovascular surgeons.⁷ That same study predicts a shortage of 896 surgeons in 2030, attributing the decrease to the expected integration of cardiovascular residencies.⁸ While it is clear that the US medical industry has a labor shortage in primary care and other specialized fields, the consequences of the shortage remain underdiscussed: lower quality of care, faster physician burnout, and increased healthcare costs to consumers.⁹

Possible Causes of Shortage

The American healthcare system is complex and bureaucratic; as such, there are myriad causes that may be involved in the national physician shortage. Hence, this paper does not claim that the following factors are the only reasons for the shortage. Instead, it seeks to explore possible causes that are readily accessible by public policy and have evident economic effects on the supply and demand of physician labor. To that end, the factors this paper examines are U.S. demographic changes, professional barriers to entry, nativist licensing laws, and outdated nursing regulations.

Demographic Developments. The US population is increasing and getting older, meaning Americans will require more general medical care. That being the case, market demand for primary care in the US is forecasted to dramatically increase over the next decade. In California, the elderly population is expected to double by 2030.¹⁰ In Florida and Texas, the elderly populations are forecasted to grow by 73% and 55%, respectively.¹¹ Meanwhile, about 1 in 3

physicians around the US are 60 years old or older, putting many current doctors in range of retirement.¹² In many parts of the country including California, Florida, and Texas, current trends in medical licenses show that the number of new doctors is insufficient to meet the possibility of current physicians retiring.¹³ The growing and aging US population will remain a sizable factor in the healthcare industry's labor shortage.

Another demographic development pertains to Obamacare, also known as the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (ACA). Obamacare had two provisions that greatly increased the number of individuals with health insurance and access to healthcare. One such provision was the individual mandate, which required almost all individuals to purchase health insurance. Another provision was the implementation of government health insurance plans for low-income Americans.¹⁴ Both features of Obamacare greatly increased the insured population, in turn increasing market demand for physicians. Even with the repeal of the individual mandate in 2019, the enactment of Obamacare greatly increased market demand for doctors, thus exacerbating the existing physician shortage in the US.

Professional Barriers to Entry. American higher education is notoriously expensive, especially compared to Canadian and European education systems that receive numerous government subsidies. This financial burden, usually between \$150,000 and \$250,000, serves as an obvious disincentive to attending medical school. Additionally, attending medical school occupies much of a student's young adult years; school and residency programs can take up to ten years to complete for some specializations. The Association of American Medical Colleges states that this is likely a reason for physician shortages in the US, especially when degrees in engineering can land

⁷ Go, Michael R, et al. "An Updated Physician Workforce Model Predicts a Shortage of Vascular Surgeons for the Next 20 Years." *Annals of Vascular Surgery*, vol. 66, July 2020, pp. 282-288. NYULibraries, ScienceDirect.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Go; Zhang

¹⁰ Zhang

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ "Primary Care Doctors in the US." IBISWorld IExpertRisk Research Reports in the US, 2020. NYULibraries, IBISWorld.

high-paying jobs with significantly fewer financial and time investments.¹⁵

Even with this in mind, current data suggests that there is not a shortage of medical students in the US; rather, there is a residency shortage. In 1997, the federal government enacted a cap on Graduate Medical Education funding as part of changes made to Medicare. These funds go towards hospitals that host residency programs, enabling them to keep residency programs from becoming too costly under Medicare. In 2018, 37,103 prospective residents competed for 33,167 positions, meaning that almost 4,000 medical school graduates were left without a residency.¹⁶ Though well-intended, the cap on Medicare's Graduate Medical Education funding has created a bottleneck from American medical schools into residency schools, stifling the supply of physicians into primary care and other specialized positions.

Nativist Medical Licensing Laws. In the United States, the government's federalist structure allows each state to set up a medical board. These medical boards, usually comprised of local business leaders, physicians, government officials, and others, establish and enforce the standards and requirements for becoming a legally registered physician in their state. In this way, medical boards enforce competence in the medical and health industry. However, many state health industries use these medical boards to create discriminatory barriers to entry for skilled migrant doctors.¹⁷

One study found that, from 1973 to 2010, states "with greater [native physician] control over licensure requirements imposed more stringent requirements for migrant physician licensure."¹⁸ The study also found that medical boards that are financed by industry physicians, rather than public funds, also impose more onerous restrictions and requirements on migrant physicians.¹⁹ They often have to complete longer education, training, and residency requirements than their native

counterparts, despite residency admission requirements being equal for migrant and native physicians.²⁰

States with more stringent requirements for migrant physicians consistently receive fewer migrant physician residents than other states. As doctors tend to practice medicine in their state of residency, states with more stringent requirements thus have fewer migrant physicians to fill doctor shortages. Furthermore, these states see higher physician salaries and poorer healthcare quality than other states.²¹ The current structure of state medical boards in the US likely contributes to a shortage of migrant physicians, exacerbating a national physician shortage.

Lack of Advanced Practice Registered Nurse Independence. Advanced Practice Registered Nurses, or "APRNs," usually manage hands-on patient care and often assist in physicians' practices. In some states, APRNs are allowed to prescribe medications, manage their own practices, and determine healthcare plans—possessing more powers than traditional registered nurses but fewer than medical doctors. However, most states outright prohibit APRNs from performing these medical activities without the approval of a physician. This regulation is called the "joint protocol requirement" and it permits APRNs to practice only at partial authority, rather than full authority.²² These requirements currently exist in 28 states.²³ In these states, APRNs must be partnered with a physician through a "joint protocol" to prescribe medications or manage patient health plans, even though APRNs are educated in performing these functions independently.

States with joint protocol requirements experience amplified physician shortages. A study found that states with such legislation may experience an "out-migration" of APRNs to states

¹⁵ Mack, Eric. "Report: US Medicine Headed for a Huge Shortage of Doctors." Newsmax.com, 19 Aug. 2018. NYULibraries.

¹⁶ Zhang

¹⁷ Peterson, Brenton D, et al. "Doctors with Borders: Occupational Licensing as an Implicit Barrier to High Skill Migration." *Public Choice*, vol. 160, no. 1, 30 Jan. 2014, pp. 45–63. NYULibraries, EBSCOhost.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Ibid.

²² It should be noted that joint protocol requirements have different titles in each state; this paper uses the New Jersey term of "joint protocol."

²³ Cadmus, Edna, et al. "Access to Care in New Jersey: Making the Case for Modernizing Legislation." *Journal of Nursing Regulation*, vol. 11, no. 1, 11 Apr. 2020, pp. 36–41. NYULibraries, ScienceDirect.

without joint protocol requirements.²⁴ Another study also found that the growth of APRN populations was slower in partial authority states than in full authority states, suggesting joint protocol requirements are a significant disincentive to practicing advanced nursing in a given state. The study notes that “finding a collaborative physician, especially in shortage areas, may be difficult” for APRNs, further worsening the healthcare labor shortage in areas that already experience lower health outcomes.²⁵ By taking APRNs, which are licensed independent practitioners, and making them dependent on physicians, joint protocol requirements likely exacerbate the national physician shortage.

Recommendations

After outlining possible causes of the national healthcare labor shortage, this paper will suggest public policy solutions to correct the shortage. The hope is that these solutions will highlight straightforward ways in which the US can reduce its healthcare expenditures and costs.

Increase Residency Positions. On February 6, 2019, Senator Robert Menendez (D-NJ) introduced the Resident Physician Shortage Reduction Act to the United States Senate. The bill seeks to increase the number of residency positions in the US by 3,000 each year for the next five years. The plan is to accordingly increase the cap on Graduate Medical Education funding under Medicare each year. This legislation would add a total of 15,000 residency positions to be distributed around American medical schools, as the Secretary of Health and Human Services sees fit.²⁶ To ease the medical residency bottleneck and alleviate the nation’s physician shortage, this paper recommends that the US Senate, US House of Representatives and President Joseph Biden pass this bill into law.

Equalize Native and Migrant Licensing Standards. States with excessive physician influence on medical

boards impose overly onerous requirements and restriction on migrant physicians trying to attain licenses. This paper recommends that all fifty states transition their medical boards to public funding through taxation, rather than private industry or physician funding. This will hold medical boards more accountable to state legislatures and the public, rather than industry professionals with potentially nativist interests.

Equalizing standards between native and migrant licensees directly helps alleviate doctor shortages in each state and cuts healthcare costs to consumers. More than one third of all states “could reduce their physician shortages by at least 10 percent over five years by eliminating the additional licensing requirements imposed on” migrant physicians.²⁷ It is estimated that “this policy change could have saved the average state \$5.49 million in healthcare costs in 2010.”²⁸

While concerns about the quality of foreign-educated doctors are valid, opponents to this policy change should remember that the United States Medical Licensing Examination, which must be passed in order to attain a residency position in the U.S., has a pass rate of less than 50% for foreign-educated physicians.²⁹ This suggests a significant amount of physician quality-sorting occurs at this stage of the licensure process. Additionally, there are no differences between native and migrant physicians in patient health outcomes or disciplinary actions after securing residency in the US.³⁰ This policy will alleviate physician shortages, lower healthcare costs, ensure equity in the healthcare field, and maintain state independence in medical licensing.

Eliminate Joint Protocol Requirement. Joint protocol requirements are outdated and exacerbate current primary care physician shortages by barring licensed independent practitioners from practicing primary care independently. This paper recommends that the remaining 28 states that keep APRNs at partial authority repeal joint protocol regulations and allow APRNs to practice

²⁴ Cadmus, Edna, et al. “Access to Care in New Jersey: Making the Case for Modernizing Legislation.” *Journal of Nursing Regulation*, vol. 11, no. 1, 11 Apr. 2020, pp. 36–41. NYULibraries, ScienceDirect.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ United States, Congress, “Resident Physician Shortage Reduction Act of 2019.” [Congress.gov](https://www.congress.gov/bill/116th-congress/senate-bill/348/text), 2019. www.congress.gov/bill/116th-congress/senate-bill/348/text.

²⁷ Peterson

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Ibid.

independently at full authority. In New Jersey, an analysis “shows that 13 counties ... have a shortfall of primary care physicians. When the data are inclusive of [APRNs], the shortage is reduced from 13 counties to six counties.”³¹ Similar outcomes may be seen in other states with this policy, as APRN out-migration is avoided and APRNs are again incentivized to practice nursing in that state. It should be noted that this policy does not grant APRNs the same privileges as specialized physicians or surgeons; it merely grants them the capability to practice low-level primary care independently, thus alleviating the primary care physician shortage and reducing healthcare expenditures.

A Note on Outside Solutions. In explaining possible causes of nationwide physician shortages, this paper explored high costs of American education and certain features of Obamacare. While enacting universal tuition-free education or repealing parts of Obamacare may likely reduce physician shortages by increasing labor supply and decreasing healthcare demand, this paper seeks to avoid endorsing issues of such polarity. Instead, this paper hopes to provide nuanced and largely agreeable policy proposals that may decrease physician shortages and ultimately decrease healthcare costs to consumers.

Conclusion

As the nation struggles to find the best “fix” for its healthcare system, the public discourse continues to focus on the dichotomous “nationalize or privatize” debate. In an effort to explore public policy options, this paper shed light on the nationwide physician shortage, a likely contributor to high healthcare expenditures and costs. Possible causes of the physician shortage were explored and several public policy proposals, for both federal and state governments, were proposed. These proposals were to: increase residency positions around the country, equalize native and migrant licensing standards, and eliminate joint protocol requirements present in 28 states. These are straightforward solutions that can assist in alleviating the healthcare industry’s primary care labor shortage, ultimately decreasing healthcare costs to

consumers and improving health for American society at large.

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³¹ Cadmus

FRANCO-MIDDLE EASTERN RELATIONS IN THE AFTERMATH OF THE FRENCH GOODS BOYCOTT

by Candice Saxod



Background

In October 2016, Samuel Paty, a French teacher, was beheaded in a terrorist attack outside of Paris after showing a satirical cartoon of Prophet Muhammad in his Freedom of Expression class. Throughout the decade, France had been exposed to significant terrorist threats—a danger that strengthened an anti-extremist sentiment and promoted a far-right and anti-immigrant wave. Paty’s assassination ignited a debate on national security and free movement, as French president Emmanuel Macron announced several protective measures, while other presidential candidates criticized the President’s lack of responsiveness to terrorist threats. Although a debate ignited within France, it spread like wildfire through the Middle Eastern states, which increasingly perceived France as an anti-Islam state. After noticing Macron’s unwillingness to back down, Turkish president Recep Tayyip Erdogan called for a national and regional boycott of all French goods and services. Today, the tensions between the countries remain; and yet, the boycott brought expected results — it emphasized Erdogan’s religious and conservative political agenda, but ultimately proved insignificant in altering France’s stance on terrorist threats.

The Origins Behind the Dispute

Freedom of speech is deeply rooted in French democracy and lifestyle, which is guided by the national motto “Liberté, Égalité, Fraternité” (translation: liberty, equality, fraternity). France is a dominantly and explicitly secular society, which has recently sparked debate about the line between enforcement of secularism and religious discrimination.

The assassination of Samuel Paty, committed by an 18-year-old Chechen refugee named Abdullakh Anzorov, reignited the long-simmering conflict over secularism and religion, which was aggravated after the Paris terror attacks in 2015 (in which 130 people lost their lives) (Mohamed, 2020). At the time, anti-extremist sentiments were already on the rise after two people were severely injured in a knife attack in front of Charlie Hebdo’s offices just a few weeks prior. The magazine had recently been making international headlines after publishing provocative covers and as the trial for the 2015 attacks’ assailants were ongoing.

The attacks attempted to spread fear and division across the country. While it did (to an extent), the greater reaction was a large-scale call for *freedom-loving* individuals to stand-up against *peace-threatening* individuals.

As a result of the violence and despicability of the attack, the French populace was left in a state of shock. Macron and his government were severely criticized for their responses to terrorist threats and, more generally, for their inability to promote national security. As critiques kept coming, however, France took relatively harsh measures and formally investigated seven people, including 2 minors and Abdelhakim Sefrioui, an Islamist militant who was initially believed to have played a significant role in the killing of Paty (Momtaz, 2020). Macron also announced new measures, such as the “reinforcement of Franco-Russian cooperation in the fight against terrorism and illegal immigration,” along with expulsion threats for foreigners menacing national security or presenting threatening ideologies (Tuysuz). Additionally, the French police carried out raids while securing the perimeters of places of worship, such as synagogues, which were verbally threatened by terrorists across various social media platforms.

The killing also led to mass teacher protests throughout France, with teachers denouncing high stress and insecurity within the school grounds. According to them, the rise of conservatism and extremism limits the content they can deliver to their students. As a result, security measures around educational buildings were reinforced in an attempt to avoid another tragedy (Braun, 2020). Moreover, the attacks significantly impacted France’s political scene.

Marine Le Pen, the president of far-right party Le Rassemblement National (RN), visited Paty’s school, claiming that “it is the role of an elected member of the Republic to participate in this tribute” (Boutin, 2020). Le Pen had faded out of the political scene after her defeat in the final round of 2017’s presidential elections. Through highlighting the government’s incompetency in combating and preventing radical Islamism, Le Pen utilized an opportunity to gain support and effectively launch her presidential campaign for 2022. The beheading of Paty provoked significant questions about Macron’s immigration policies, a factor potentially contributing to the RN’s expected 2022 presidential success.

Franco-Turkish Relations, Pre-Boycott

Before Paty's gruesome murder, Franco-Turkish relations had severely degraded due to "deeply rooted foreign policy differences" that go "beyond religion and freedom of speech." As Macron attempted to retain his conservative voters, who continue to find their way to the *Rassemblement National*, the current French president was left with no choice but to condemn extreme Islamism on French ground. The statements were controversial among some Muslims within the country, which caused further division between France's ethnic and religious groups. The statements were perceived as part of an anti-Islam pattern, following Macron's previous ban on Muslim women wearing Hijabs (which led to political disagreements with Muslim countries like Egypt and Bangladesh). Erdogan, the leader of Turkey's very religious and conservative Justice and Development Party, did not hesitate to criticize the French state's decision publicly. Macron, on the other hand, firmly responded that France "will not give up [its] cartoons" due to international pressure (Weil et. Al, 2020).

Samuel Paty's assassination heightened Franco-Turkish tensions, which had only worsened over the previous months. The Franco-Turkish interactions that followed were characterized by unprecedented verbal assaults from Erdogan, who claimed Macron's actions were illegitimate, and even called for the President to "get a mental check" as a consequence of his measures to battle "Islamist separatism" (Tuysuz et. Al, 2020). This moment marked the peak of tensions for both countries—Macron recalled the French ambassador in Ankara, condemned Erdogan's actions, and even asked for diplomacy from the Turkish president on Twitter: "President Erdogan's comments are unacceptable. Excess and rudeness are not a method. We demand that Erdogan change the course of his policy because it is dangerous in every respect" (Tuysuz et. Al, 2020).

The Repercussions of the Conflict

On October 26th, 20__ , Erdogan called for a Turkish boycott of French products, claiming that Macron was playing a dangerous game following his "anti-Islam" political agenda. This anti-French movement spread like fire throughout the Middle

Eastern region. Qatar, a major investor in the French economy (and the global fashion industry), condemned Macron's actions when Qatar University, one of the country's major universities, postponed its French Culture Week (NYU Libraries).

Additionally, Qatar, among other countries like Jordan or Kuwait, began removing French products from supermarket shelves. Brands ranging from L'Oréal to Givenchy and Dior remain nowhere to be seen in several Gulf states (BBC, 2020). Meanwhile, anti-French protests have lit up the streets of Libya, Gaza, and Syria. Through social media, the boycott was able to extend into Western Asia. For example, a very conservative Bangladeshi populace responded to France by burning Emmanuel Macron's effigy in Dhaka, the nation's capital (Euronews, 2020). The online movement spread to other states, including Saudi Arabia, in which a hashtag which called for the boycott of French chain Carrefour was the second-highest trending online search.

In Europe, Dutch Prime Minister Mark Rutte declared that Denmark stands united with France "for the freedom of speech and against extremism and radicalism." Similarly, Germany's foreign minister Heiko Maas has qualified Erdogan's insults as a "new low point" in democracy. Italy and the European Union also reiterated their support for the French decision to tackle "Islamist separatism."

Both leaders' polarized political perspectives created a geographically-divided battle between the two blocks—Western Europe's firm condemnation of radical Islam versus Middle Eastern countries' conservatism and high regard towards faith. On top of worsening an already tense political relationship, Erdogan's call to boycott France drew Turkey, who had been seeking EU membership for its trading advantages, further away from integrating into the Union (according to Trade Minister Franck Riester). Interestingly, the Franco-Turkish conflict actually enhanced unity between the 27 EU members while driving a potential Turkish entry away (France24, 2020). As a matter of fact, the Western countries' political differences with Turkey underline a great difficulty in the collaboration between the two sides.

From an economic perspective, the boycott has very minimally impacted the French economy. The boycott is expected to be short-lived, like the

first boycott in 2015 (Haine, 2020). Therefore, the future of French companies in the Middle East is not in permanent jeopardy, as companies expect their products to soon be back on the shelves. Considering the small size of the Middle Eastern market, even if the boycott lasts a long time, total company revenues will only be marginally reduced and are not expected to significantly affect the firms' overall profit levels. The fashion and beauty sectors were the least affected, as the Middle East and the Islamic world's markets represent only three percent of French fashion and beauty products exports. As such, the financial impact for these companies is negligible relative to their recovery from the COVID-19 health crisis. The boycott's economic insignificance is consistent with the research: boycotts and sanctions that look to "gain political benefit from economically strangling" trade with another country are rarely effective at a macroeconomic level (Haine, 2020).

Conclusion

The recent Franco-Turk conflict increased tensions between France and the greater Middle East, which were exacerbated by Erdogan's response to Macron's anti-extremist political agenda. In 2019, France was the second-most threatened European country by terrorism, further motivating Macron's stance towards the issue of Islamic extremism (Evans, 2019). France's position towards terrorists remains similar as Macron has continued to fight terrorism and call for new reforms, such as increased domestic surveillance.

Onlookers initially believed that Erdogan's words would strongly influence the wealth of France and its firms. Instead of grave economic effects, the French boycott of goods combined with Macron's crackdown on radical Islamism, greatly weakened diplomatic relations between these countries. Erdogan's call for boycott proved insignificant from an economic perspective but completely shook the political stage considerably. The extreme tension between the countries, which exposed France and its citizen to violence and threats from extremist Muslim communities, has reinforced the French anti-extremist sentiment. By retaliating in such a forceful manner, Erdogan hoped to have Macron back down. His act, however, did the opposite – it solidified the French government's and France's position, in attempting to secure their country from

the threats of terrorist attacks.

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THE RISE OF CHINESE SOFT POWER

Strategy & Effects of Scholarships to African Students

by Brian Xu

Abstract

Commensurate with China's rise as an economic and political power has been a concurrent rise in Chinese soft power. China's soft power and influence in Africa have been the focus of much debate and research. Despite the significance of the subject, little attention is being directed to the rise of China's power in Africa, especially in the realm of higher education. This paper will examine the role of higher education in China's projection of soft power, the strategies and policy tools used to boost its higher education status, and the efficiency of the transfer of African international students into soft power. This paper will analyze African international students at Tsinghua University as a case study.

Results show that China has definitely made progress in many fields of soft power and education. The quality of the international education of Chinese universities is now world-class and the push for scholarships is also engendering positive opinions and attracting talent. However, the experiences of students in China are mixed, with social alienation serving as a huge barrier to social integration, despite positive experiences in the academic sphere. Many graduates return to their home countries to leverage their Chinese education in the job market, preferring to work with Chinese companies and consumers. This paper calls for further research on the specific contextual factors of countries and how they shape post-graduation trajectories, as well as the social alienation of African students in China.



The Concept of Soft Power

Coined by Harvard University political scientist Joseph Nye, soft power is “the ability to get what you want through attraction rather than through coercion or payments.” The factors that soft power stem from are usually defined as “culture, values, and foreign policy.”¹ When a country’s culture includes universal values and its policies promote values and interests shared by others, it increases the probability of achieving desired outcomes because of the attraction that the culture creates. Narrow values and parochial cultures are less likely to produce soft power. The political values a government champions at home (for example, exercising democracy, competency), in international institutions (working with others), and in foreign policy (promoting peace and human rights) strongly affect the preferences of others. When a country has high amounts of soft power, other countries and actors are more willing to follow, assist, and cooperate with that country. A part of the reason the US Army and Navy has a presence all over the world with little challenge is that US values are seen as benevolent by most, bringing about assistance and cooperation from many partners.

Government policies can reinforce or squander a country’s soft power. Domestic or foreign policies that appear to be hypocritical, arrogant, indifferent to the opinion of others, or based on a narrow approach to national interests can undermine soft power. The steep decline in perceptions of the attractiveness of the United States after the Iraq invasion, as measured by polls taken in the spring of 2003 by the Pew Global Attitudes Project, offers a recent vivid example.²

Education as Soft Power

Today, winning hearts and minds is an important objective of international higher education; hence, educational exchange falls under the rubric of soft power.³ The idea of using

educational exchanges as a foreign policy tool dates back more than a century – The Rhodes Scholarships in the UK were instituted in 1902 for graduate students from the British colonies, the USA and Germany. During the Cold War, the Eastern Bloc and Western countries alike offered scholarships to students from developing countries to secure their loyalty and demonstrate ideological superiority. Today, with international students becoming more and more common in an ever-globalizing world, education is even more prevalent. Former Secretary of State Colin Powell, for example, said in 2001: “I can think of no more valuable asset to our country than the friendship of future world leaders who have been educated here.”⁴ Academic and scientific exchanges are central to the soft power theory, inspired by the USA’s ability to gain friends in the political elites of hostile countries through student exchanges. The theory states that students with pleasant first-hand experiences of life abroad will admire the host country’s political system and, in turn, push politics at home in the direction of the country they studied in. Joseph Nye specifically mentions the sons and daughters of Chinese leaders as examples of foreign elites who learn how democracies function while studying in the USA and subsequently spread democratic norms and ideas upon return to China.⁵ Beyond politics, education is a key medium for a country to promote its culture, as well as universal values and interests which earn the admiration, respect, and curiosity of others. However, economic investments in scholarships for foreigners alone provide no guarantee for the enhancement of soft power; students who are dissatisfied with their study-abroad experience are unlikely to adopt the values of their host countries. Other variables, such as the social interaction between foreign and domestic students, the quality of academic programs, and attitudes towards immigrants in the host societies will all be important factors in determining the effect of study-abroad.⁶ This is an area where personal anecdotes will be much more helpful than statistics

¹ Nye, 2. International higher education is a good way to improve all three. It shows off culture, values, domestic achievements, and spotlights peaceful and benevolent foreign policy of educating.

² Nye 6

³ Nye 4

⁴ <https://www.economist.com/special-report/2018/05/17/for-chinas-elite-studying-abroad-is-de-rigueur>

⁵ He specifically stated the case of Zhu Rongji, a second-generation party member that studied at Harvard and went on to lead market reforms such as the culling of zombie SOEs and opening private business licenses during Jiang Zemin’s administration .

⁶ Wojciuk, 18

to institution managers and policy makers attempting to grow their nation's soft power.

China's Educational Soft Power

Educational soft power in the People's Republic of China first came about in the period of Reform and Opening Up, as Deng Xiaoping pushed education policy reform by enacting the Four Modernizations in 1978.⁷ Afterwards, according to the new 'three-step development strategy' in 1987,⁸ priority was given to science and education in the next decade of economic and social development. This period introduced fundamental changes to the Chinese educational landscape, reintroduced the national standardized testing, or Gaokao,⁹ system, and brought back universities' student exchange programs. As a result, the literacy level increased from 78 percent in 1990 to 94 percent in 2009, and enrollment rates in higher education hit 26.7 percent in 2012, compared with only 3 per cent in 1990.¹⁰ China's educational reform from 2010 to 2020 focused on the modernization of its educational system across all levels, with emphasis on the internationalization of Chinese higher education institutions. This goal first became clearly visible in 1998, when the new Project 985,¹¹ aimed at promoting a group of elite Chinese universities to a world-class rank, was initiated. There are now thirty-two of such institutions in the Global Top 500.¹²

Because of these recent developments, more international students are flocking to China than ever before. According to China's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, over 440,000 foreigners studied in China in 2016, marking a 35 percent increase from 2012. China also attracts more international students than any other Asian power and ranks third globally, behind only the United States and the

United Kingdom. According to China's Ministry of Education, the total share of world international students seeking higher-education degrees in China grew by 13 percent over the past 10 years, jumping from almost 55,000 students in 2006 to nearly 210,000 students in 2016. These statistics alone indicate huge increases in Chinese soft power and national perception. In recent years, the Chinese government has made a renewed push to appeal to overseas students by offering a greater range of scholarships. The number of Chinese government-funded international students witnessed an almost six-fold increase over the past ten years. In 2016, 40 percent of all new international students received sponsorship from the Chinese government. They are usually recruited through Chinese embassies,¹³ their former universities in Africa, or Confucius Institutes.¹⁴

The most crucial and visible educational initiative directed abroad is the Confucius Institutes, organized by the Office of Chinese Language Council International, or *Hanban*, and affiliated with the Ministry of Education. Confucius Institutes, similar to the German Goethe Institutes or Spanish Cervantes Institutes, are non-profit public institutions funded by the Chinese government. They aim to promote Chinese language and culture abroad and facilitate all forms of exchange between China and the world. The institutes increase China's soft power by building a national image as a benign country (in line with its narrative of "peaceful rise and development"¹⁵) and tapping into Confucius Philosophy to exhibit China's universal values and interests shared by others, for which Confucianism is well suited.¹⁶ In the first decade since the program's inception in 2004, there were 465 such institutes and 713 Confucius Classrooms established in 123 countries, where 200,000

⁷ Consisting of Agriculture, Industry, Science and Technology, and National Defense, of which education and increase in technical prowess and efficiency was the backbone for all.

⁸ Which included reducing extreme poverty and improving livelihoods, of which secondary and higher education was identified a main source of poverty alleviation.

⁹ National college entrance examination

¹⁰ World Bank Data

¹¹ Project that channeled funding to around 200 Chinese universities to begin specialization in specific fields to increase professionalism.

¹² <https://www.usnews.com/education/best-global-universities/rankings>.

¹³ The selection process usually involved rigorous academic requirements, whether through academic competitions in many subjects or through testing and is highly competitive. This runs contrary to certain stereotypes that African students that receive scholarships are because of underprivileged backgrounds and nothing else.

¹⁴ Heidi and Haugen 12

¹⁵ Chinese official rhetoric used to describe China's rapid development into a great power and future contender for superpower status.

¹⁶ Respecting Elders, Humbleness, Benevolence, Honesty, Education and Social mobility are all values and virtues espoused by Confucianism, most of which can be considered universally pursued.

Chinese-language teachers were trained, and 25,000 scholarships for students were provided.¹⁷

In 2016, 40 percent of foreign students travelled to China to study the Chinese language, many of whom came from Confucius Institutes. While this figure is noteworthy, it marks a 15 percent drop compared with 2012. In general terms, the number of foreign students pursuing non-language degrees is on the rise. Since 2012, the number of foreign students majoring in education, science, engineering, and agriculture doubled.¹⁸ This suggests that China is no longer attractive for cultural reasons alone, and more and more students around the world are beginning to see China as a place to receive technical and professional skills and degrees. This is almost certainly due to China's economic development in recent decades that has transformed the image of the country from an agrarian economy to a world leader in many fields of employment.

China in Africa

Education has become an important sector of Chinese developmental aid in Africa, responsible for approximately 10 percent of total aid projects. This is targeted mainly at scholarships and training programs, but also includes educational infrastructure development, such as the construction of schools, libraries, and museums.¹⁹

At home, China seeks to draw more students from Africa and develop closer ties by providing economic incentives. At the 2015 Forum on China-Africa Cooperation, President Xi Jinping announced that China would implement "major plans" to boost cooperation with Africa, which includes supporting 30,000 African students with government scholarships. The efforts by the Chinese government have seen major results - the number of African students in China grew from just 1,793 in 2003 to 61,594 in 2016.²⁰ China is now the second-most popular international destination for African students behind France,²¹ which has an African student body of over 95,000. By comparison, the U.S. and U.K. each host about

40,000 African students every year. Surveys conducted by Stellenbosch University's Center for Chinese Studies show that economics and science degrees are the most popular among African students, with further evidence that many countries around the world, especially in developing countries, see China as a place to study quality technical and professional skills and degrees.²²

There are several possible reasons why China became an educational attraction for African students. First, China has maintained sustainable and rapid economic development in recent decades, raising its international standing as a developed society with an advanced economy worthy of modeling. Also, as China rose to become the world's second largest economy by GDP, it established new relationships and strengthened existing economic ties with African countries, which in turn furthered cultural and people-to-people exchange. As a result, African interest in and connections with China have drastically risen. Secondly, the gradual increase of higher education quality in China has won recognition worldwide. Since 2002, there have been great breakthroughs in the mutual recognition of education qualifications in China and other countries. China has signed agreements on mutual recognition of educational qualifications with more than 32 countries, including Germany, Britain, and France.²³ Furthermore, the number of Chinese Universities in the Global top 500 has risen, with rankings moving higher and higher. Tsinghua University, for example, moved from beyond the top 200 in 2010 to number 32 today, becoming the best university in Asia, well beyond other Asian rivals in Japan, Korea, Hong Kong, and even Singapore.²⁴ Thirdly, the number and variety of scholarships provided by China has increased. Other than the scholarships provided by the Chinese central government, many local governments, such as Beijing, Shanghai, and Chongqing also established local government scholarships. Additionally, some universities have established their own scholarships, and even private

¹⁷ Paradise 3

¹⁸ <https://chinapower.csis.org/china-international-students/>.

¹⁹ Li and Funeka 37

²⁰ Li and Funeka 38

²¹ African international students in France are overwhelmingly from Francophone West Africa, while African international

students in China are much more geographically evenly spread.

²² Li and Funeka 41

²³ Wojciuk 6

²⁴ <https://www.usnews.com/education/best-global-universities/rankings>

companies have established technical scholarships.²⁵ Fourthly, the Chinese study environment for foreign students is attractive from an economic point of view. Even without any financial aid, the tuition of Chinese universities is well lower than other Asian or western competitors.²⁶ Lastly, the cost of studying and living in China is much less than it would be in higher income countries. All this contributes to China being seen as a cheaper alternative to a high-quality higher education.

Despite the increasing salience of the subject, there has been almost no research on how China attracts African international students, what African students find attractive about China, and how, if at all, African international students translate into soft power for China on the continent.

Methodology

The aim of this study is not to quantify the benefit to Chinese soft power as a result of its recruitment of African students; rather it is to explore, in the specific and critical context of African students, the mechanisms through which individuals contribute to furthering Chinese soft power or other interests in Africa. With this in mind, a qualitative method was chosen, given that an in-depth understanding of students' attitudes towards China and their postgraduation life trajectories is necessary to achieve the goals outlined. I originally planned for semi-structured interviews with 10+ African students studying at Tsinghua University. However, because of the COVID-19 pandemic, interviews were reduced to 4 in total, conducted over text. The interviewees offered responses in either ratings or open-ended responses. 2 of the 4 participants are current students, one is a high school student, and another is a recent graduate. All are from various institutions in Beijing and various home countries²⁷ and economic backgrounds. I attempted to represent a broad range of non-postgraduate African students in China, but the limitations of such a small sample size meant this requires further research on the matter.

Analysis

This section highlights findings related to the assumption that pleasant first-hand experiences of life abroad bring about admiration of the host country's political system. Data from students can generally be categorized in four ways: Motivations for studying in China; experiences of social alienation; positive academic experiences leading to understanding; and post-graduation trajectory. Responses with ratings were usually the most extreme (very positive or very negative), while almost all the open-ended responses led to discussion on one of these categories. This indicates that these are especially important areas for African students and their view of their time and education in China (which theoretically would yield attitude changes and soft power if a student had a positive experience).

Motivations for Study in China

Of the 4 participants, 2 received scholarships to study in China, and both articulated that the decision to study in China was related primarily to the availability of scholarship. As one interviewee said, "Initially most of my applications were to the UK, but those scholarships were harder to come by... So, I applied and received the Chinese Government Scholarship, President Scholarship, and Distinguished Foreign Student Scholarship of Excellent Study. I believe the process was fair and unbiased. It was based on merit and equal opportunity was granted to all. It's a great and exciting experience to apply for the scholarship and I would definitely encourage people to try and apply for the scholarships offered."²⁸ This seems to suggest that Chinese institutions and governments are seeing their desired outcomes of attracting international students financially. It is also seen not as politically motivated (as the student ranked China's national image rather low), but rather a genuine effort to recruit the best and brightest talent and change attitudes, judging from the positive experience. The two self-funded students opted for China because they each had a family member already in the country. The first had a relative working in China, and the other had a sibling

²⁵ Li and Fumeka 39

²⁶ <https://chinapower.csis.org/china-international-students/>

²⁷ Zimbabwe, Kenya, Uganda, South Africa

²⁸ Participant 1

already studying in a Chinese university – as such, China represented a natural study abroad option. Of the three students enrolled in degree programs, all of them were enrolled in technical institutions with programs in either STEM or Business. All respondents rated educational prestige and ranking of their university highly, suggesting that even for scholarship students, the quality of the education they expect is high and rising. This is in line with the recent rapid improvement in international education of Chinese universities.

This survey contained no language specific students, and most students rated Appeal of Chinese Culture low (as a deciding factor for coming to China). However, one self-funded student did say “I thought coming to China would be interesting,”²⁹ which would be related to her family connection to China mentioned above. A key part of education as soft power outlined by Nye is the fact that it changes minds and attitudes about the host country.³⁰ Seeing how most of the students interviewed did not have an overly positive image of China, there is room for attitudes to be changed. The sample size is too small to draw any solid conclusions on whether this was a recruitment approach; but since the scholarship process was not politicized (and it could be counterintuitive to write about indifference to China when applying to Chinese institutions), I believe this is a result of the improvement in Scholarships and in the reputation of Chinese educational institutions. Education, as a part of national image (especially to educated young people), helps China’s soft power, and indicates its education internationalization push is showing results.

Experiences of Social Alienation

Another key point in the theory of education as soft power is that the international student must enjoy and feel satisfied or impressed by the time they spent in the host country.³¹ Factors such as social isolation and inability to adapt into society will impact and hinder that process. However, most participants rated either social interaction with domestic Chinese students low or openness of overall society as low, suggesting certain

barriers with integration into both school and Chinese society as a whole. One student commented “many of them didn’t know how to speak English, so communication was difficult sometime” and that “socially, apart from the university community, outside the university, we had a kind of isolation, not many people wanted to talk to us.”³² The kind of social alienation observed not only hinders public diplomacy, but also intellectual growth and the development of intercultural friendships, all of which are important factors in soft power accumulation.³³

Positive Academic Experiences

Although the participants in this study expressed feelings of social alienation in their experience, most participants focused on largely positive academic experiences, which developed into a sense of understanding. One respondent mentioned how her teachers were always enthusiastic to help her and other international students, despite the difficulties in their English skills. That respondent also stated, “I think I learned the most from my Chinese peers, especially their attitude towards studying.”³⁴ Another respondent stated, “I think I had a hard time before I got myself immersed in the Chinese language and culture. But after we started the Chinese language course, I got to understand my peers more and really become friends with them.”³⁵ This is indicative of how a positive academic environment has led to social understanding and perhaps created attitude changes in certain ways. A positive experience with teachers and peers, as well as learning the language, might offset and mitigate the negatives of the social alienation mentioned above. Lastly, all participants were particularly satisfied with the education they received, with one saying, “my program is way beyond what I could have imagined an English business program in China could be like,”³⁶ which definitely signifies a change of attitude when the education they received benefits them greatly. It can also improve the national image of China indirectly to both the students and their circle back home.

²⁹ Wawira

³⁰ Nye 6

³¹ Nye 6

³² Participant 3

³³ Wojciuk 18

³⁴ Participant 3

³⁵ Wawira

³⁶ Wawira

Post-Graduation Employment Trajectory

Of the 3 respondents in degree programs, none see themselves remaining in China for employment. This could be due to the social alienation mentioned above or because they see better and more comfortable opportunities elsewhere. Two chose to return to their home countries, and both said they hoped to use the skills learned in China to continue working with Chinese companies or consumers. They hope that their Chinese cultural skill will give them an edge in the job seeking process. Though this does not directly signify accumulation of Chinese soft power, it does help Chinese companies and consumers as these students can increase ease of doing business in Africa or facilitate more bilateral trading. This contributes to engagement and economic links between China and Africa, which could translate into more Chinese soft power.³⁷

Conclusion

This paper explored the theory of “Education as soft power,” China’s use of internationalization of education with regards to Africa, and its effectiveness through a qualitative interview process. My findings show that China has made progress in many fields of soft power and education. The quality of the international education of Chinese universities is now world-class and is able to attract students on its own. Additionally, China’s scholarship push is working to increase overall positive opinions and has been successful in attracting talent away from other educational destinations. However, the experiences of students in China are mixed, and the theorized change of attitude is not absolute. Particularly, the social alienation of African students in China is an issue rarely discussed but is a huge barrier to social integration of African students and ultimately the accumulation of soft power. Although a positive experience in the academic sphere helps, Chinese institutions could do more to recognize and directly tackle the issue. Perhaps the most important outcome for Chinese soft power is that many graduates return to their home countries to leverage their Chinese education in the job market,

³⁷ There is a debate and studies working on whether more, and which type of economic engagement with China always leads to or harms soft power.

preferring to work with Chinese companies and consumers, thus increasing the ease of doing business for Chinese businesses and bilateral trade. There is a clear need for more research into the specific contextual factors in students’ home countries and how post-graduation trajectories and behaviors relate to soft power in other contexts. This paper also calls for more research dedicated to the social alienation of African students in China, including the cultural context, as well as plans made by institutions on how to best address and mitigate such issues to ensure a more positive social experience.

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THE ROLE OF WOMEN IN IRANIAN SOCIETY BEFORE AND AFTER 1979

by *Madeline Graf*

Abstract

This paper offers insight into the Iranian Revolution of 1979 with a specific focus on its impact on women. The first section examines the background of the revolution all the way back to the 1920s and how the civil unrest in Iran began. The second section discusses the role of women in the revolution, as well as the rights and responsibilities they had in society before and during 1979. The third section delves into the current state of life for women in Iran, contrasting with life before the revolution. The final section discusses what can be expected of Iran in the future and if a solution is within reach.



Introduction

Iran has a fascinating history of women's rights. The country has undergone major shifts in gender roles, and its recent history may lead many Westerners to forget that women were ever able to participate in Iranian (Persian) society. From the early 1900s until the 1970s, women's rights expanded at a rapid rate - women were allowed to pursue higher education and even divorce. After the 1979 Islamic Revolution, restrictions became much tighter in the nation, but especially on women, who had been experiencing their first real freedoms in centuries.

As of 2017, Iran ranked fourth in the world for least women in the workforce, coming in at 17.4% (paling in comparison to the United States, where 46.8% of the workforce is comprised by women). Unfortunately for women in Iran, their lack of representation in society has grown over the last four decades, and there does not appear to be an end in sight.

To fully understand the gains of women's rights in Iran, and the staggering pace at which they were lost, it is important to first understand what rights women had before Ayatollah Khomeini took power in 1979. It is also vital to understand why so many women pushed for Khomeini to take office, considering that in hindsight, this was antithetical to their own interests.

Background on the Iranian Revolution

Although the Iranian Revolution seemed sudden to many western countries, tension had been building in Iran for decades. The earliest trace of this was in 1921, when the United Kingdom helped Iran establish a monarchy by putting Reza Shah Pahlavi on the throne. In his attempts to westernize the nation, he banned veils and headscarves, and even ordered police to remove them on sight. This caused outrage and backlash from many women who had been raised religiously on the principles of Islam that the nation was founded on, as it forced them to choose between their personal religious beliefs and the laws of their nation. Due to the backlash, Pahlavi's reign was short-lived, as he was later pushed into exile by the United Kingdom and Russia, and his son Mohammad Reza Pahlavi Shah took over the nation. (This was a long and arduous process, as he

had to displace Prime Minister Mohammad Mosaddegh with the help of the CIA and MI6.) Pahlavi Shah took his position in the monarchy seriously, and dismissed the Iranian parliament, leading to his "White Revolution." This was "an aggressive modernization program that upended the wealth and influence of landowners and clerics, disrupted rural economies, led to rapid urbanization and Westernization, and prompted concerns over democracy and human rights." This rapid movement towards Western ideals led many Iranian citizens to become disconnected with their government. Pahlavi quashed all dissent, essentially creating a one-party autocracy that ensured his rule and backtracked on his previous concerns for democracy.

As a country rooted in Islam, it was alarming to many citizens that Pahlavi Shah had taken such drastic steps away from many of its fundamental values during the "White Revolution." He was viewed as having "blatant disrespect for the traditional values of the society, the values upon which much of which Iran's beliefs were based." Much of the nation was united in their disappointment in Pahlavi's regime, and it was this shared feeling that made room for the rise of Ruhollah Khomeini, now known as Ayatollah Khomeini ("Ayatollah" is a religious title). Khomeini was a former philosophy professor who had been exiled in 1946 for vocalizing his opposition to the Shah's attempts to move away from traditional Islamic values. However, with the rising unrest and distrust of Pahlavi Shah, Khomeini's views began to gain popularity once again, and people believed that he was correct in asserting that the Shah was moving too quickly towards a more "modern" nation. Those who had been politically oppressed by the Shah viewed Khomeini as a better alternative, as he encouraged them to vocalize their political discontent.

The Iranian Revolution began with this increase in support for Khomeini and kicked off when a newspaper spoke against him in January of 1978. Students rallied in support of Khomeini, and their action sparked the mobilization of working-class political groups in a series of mass protests. They were met with government force and violence, and on September 8th of 1978, the Shah instated martial law, driving even more of a wedge between himself and his citizens. The Shah eventually fled Iran, driven out by the protests and the increased

demand for a new regime, as well as his own declining health. Khomeini arrived in Iran on February 1st of 1979 and was quickly granted power by both the Iranian people and the armed forces.

Life for Women in Iran Before and During the Revolution

While the suppression of women in Iran has been ongoing for centuries, the modern suppression began, to many, when the old Shah (Reza Shah Pahlavi) outlawed the wearing of veils in public. This took away their right to choose whether to follow the Islamic tradition of covering, causing unrest especially among the more traditional and older generation. Before 1979 and the reign of Ayatollah Khomeini, women were granted more freedoms than they had ever previously held. They were allowed to wear western clothing, such as mini-skirts and skinny jeans, and hair salons were popular and open to both men and women, and it was not uncommon for men to see women's hair while at salons (going against the traditional practices of Islam). Moreover, women were allowed to hold active roles in civic society, as "women's rights organizations...succeeded in their suffrage efforts when the Shah granted them the right to vote and be elected to parliament on February 26, 1963." Two women were even appointed to the senate in 1963 by the Shah himself.

Higher education for women was also common in this era. Not every woman went to college, but the option was open for those who chose to attend. This was a rather modern idea and was met with some opposition from more traditional Iranians, who believed that it was not a woman's place to be educated or to be in the work force. "They tried to stop women from attending university, but there was such a backlash they had to allow them to return," said Baroness Haleh Afshar, a professor of women's studies at the University of York who grew up in Iran in the 1960s.

Despite these freedoms, however, women still faced discrimination in public. Much of the nation was raised with traditional Islamic values that discourage women from having active roles outside of the household. It was this culture that pushed the women of Iran to fight for the revolution, without realizing that Khomeini intended to further enforce these gender roles. Westernized women fought against the Shah because they felt he had not done

enough to expand women's rights during most of his rule. Traditional women also fought for Khomeini, despite having opposing views to many of his supporters. They joined the fight not to back Khomeini, but to oppose the Shah, who they viewed as too modern. It is fascinating to note that one party saw the Shah as too modern, while another saw him as not modern enough. Khomeini managed to unite them both.

During the revolution, Khomeini used these conflicting views to encourage women to fight against the regime of the Shah. He "encouraged women to take an active role in the revolution, leading them to expect expanded rights and equality with men. It was due in part to revolutionary women's groups that Khomeini gained prominence." Once Khomeini gained support from the women of Iran and took office, he did *not* work towards the new regime that many of them wanted. Less than a month after Khomeini took power, on March 7th, he created a law that required women to wear veils and cover in public, leading to mass protests on March 8th that were met with violent suppression from the government. "On the streets, [women] joined thousands of others, chanting, 'We didn't have a revolution to go backwards.'" Khomeini's misleading campaign enabled his rise to power, and although many Westernized women were upset, his more traditional supporters felt that he was simply fulfilling his promise to bring Iran back to its roots.

Life for Women in Iran After the Revolution

Since women had only barely begun gaining rights prior to the revolution, the stark move backwards was alarming and upsetting. This drastic change was made even worse by the fact that Khomeini had been encouraging women to protest in his favor, and then almost immediately took away their freedoms. Professional women were fired from the work force, and many of the family protection laws that had been instated were reversed. The legal marrying age for a woman was decreased to nine, and women were required by law to wear conservative clothing every time they left the house or were in the presence of a man.

Men and women in Iran are now segregated in the workplace, the classrooms, and even on public busses (women are forced to sit in the back). Women are also not allowed to travel or apply for a job without the permission of their husband or a

male family member. Today, there are ongoing protests against mandatory veils, as the rule is still enforced despite one's nationality or religion. "Not all women in Iran opt to wear the black chador, a cloak that covers the body from head to toe and only leaves the face exposed. Many prefer to wear loosely fitted headscarves and coats. 'The real question is how far back do you push your scarf? Women have their own small acts of resistance and often try as far as possible to push their scarves back.'" This small act of rebellion is all that many women can do, and even so, they must be careful not to be arrested. Opposition to this law is not commonplace, though, as there are pro-hijab rallies by women who believe that traditional religious rules should be enforced, considering that Iran is an Islamic Republic.

Looking Forward

Although it has been over forty years since the revolution in 1979, and Ayatollah Khomeini is no longer in power, there has been little-to-no progress for women's rights. This subject is especially complicated by the role of religion in Iranian society. Without separation between religion and state, criticism of values that are held by Iran has become increasingly complicated and dangerous - for both Iranian citizens and outsiders. "In 2018, more than 7,000 political activists and others critical of the Islamic Republic were arrested, according to an Amnesty International study."

Moreover, western ideals have lost traction in the country, largely because of the nations who participated in coups before the revolution, such as the United States and the United Kingdom. Although there are women in Iran who have tried to fight against the oppression of the nation, their lack of access to political and media outlets has slowed progress. It is difficult to see a future in which women can achieve even the base level of progress they had before 1979, at least not without another full-scale national revolution. Unlike before, however, it may be more difficult to unite the extremists in the nation, as Khomeini did.

Conclusion

The progression and regression of women's rights in Iran has been unique in that the freedoms they were granted were so short-lived.

Whether or not the nation will modernize is unknown, especially given that many citizens are in support of Iran returning to its base Islamic values. Religion and the state are nearly inseparable, making it a fundamental part of daily life for Iranian citizens; a break from one would mean a break from both.

Still, women who are not in favor of the new laws partake in small acts of rebellion every day in the hopes that they can one day be full-fledged members of society, allowed to work, marry, and dress in accordance with their own preferences. It is impossible to predict if and when this will happen, but as long as there are women fighting for their rights and liberties, there will be hope for positive change.

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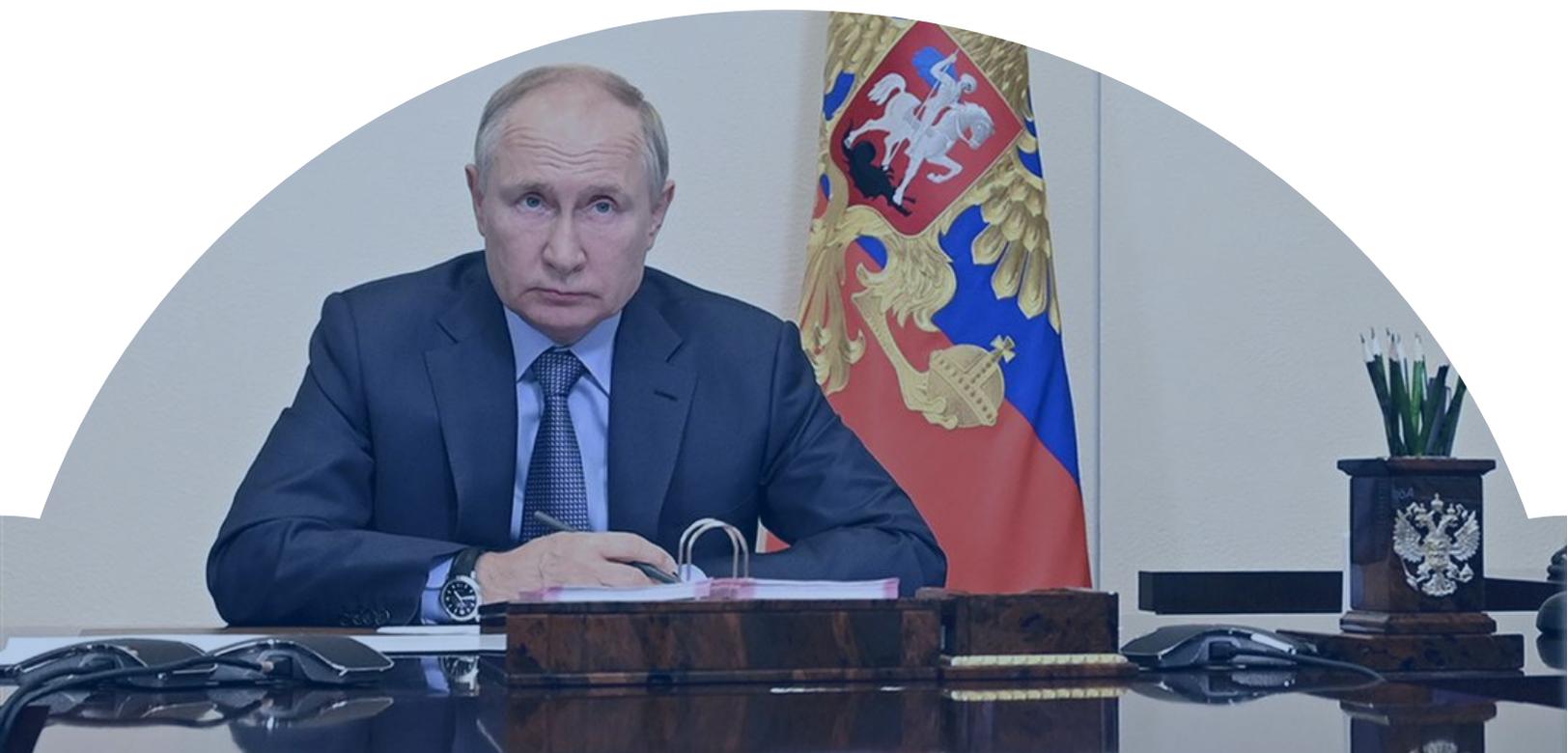
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AN ORAL HISTORY OF RUSSIA'S FOREIGN RELATIONS UNDER VLADIMIR PUTIN

by Timothy Sucher

Abstract

This paper will examine how Vladimir Putin and his government's foreign policy have evolved throughout the course of his presidency, with a particular emphasis on Russia's relationship with the West. It will also detail some background about what happened in the 1990s to transform Russian foreign policy. The paper will discuss the transition from Yeltsin to Putin and how Putin turned from Western ally to a dangerous foe. Through his actions and statements, Vladimir Putin has developed a controversial reputation around the world. Revered by some, loathed by others, he has achieved an almost god-like status among his supporters. This paper will discuss how his maneuvering of the global political landscape has brought Russia to its current state and demonstrate just how much influence the West has over Moscow's decision making process.



The Yeltsin-Putin Transition

On June 16, 2021, President Joseph Biden met with Russian President Vladimir Putin.¹ In doing so, Biden became the fifth U.S. president to meet with President Putin. Over two decades before their meeting in Geneva, President Bill Clinton and a 47-year old KGB-agent-turned-president Putin met in Japan to discuss the growing threat of North Korea, among other issues.² Little did anyone know that this fresh face in global politics would go on to become one of the most powerful and controversial men in the world. 20 years on, Putin still rules over Russia as an autocrat, not afraid to challenge or displease the United States. Throughout the following pages, this paper will discuss why, despite 20 years and five different U.S. presidents, Vladimir Putin's relationship with the West remains as tense as ever.

On December 31st, 1999, most Russians were miserable and angry. In Russian tradition, New Years is the biggest holiday of the year. 1999 was special – Russians celebrated the end of a century that included both the creation and the destruction of the Soviet Union. Founded on the back of one of the bloodiest revolutions in history (which began when Russia pulled itself out of an equally bloody World War), mass death in the Soviet Union was a common occurrence. Vengeful dictators, famines, a Great Purge, another World War (with 27 million Soviet deaths), wars in Korea and Afghanistan, and the daily nuclear threat of the Cold War drastically changed Russian culture. Even with the promises of democracy and prosperity after the collapse of the Soviet Union, most Russians had to fight for food on the store shelves; such was the economic situation of the 1990s. It is no surprise then, that the New Year of 1999 was a particularly special night for the Russian people. They were celebrating what

they hoped would be a new beginning. Little did they know that this would be the beginning of a 20-year rule for one of history's most powerful and divisive men. It was, in fact, that day – the 31st of December 1999 – that Vladimir Vladimirovich Putin officially became President of the Russian Federation.

In many places around the world, Putin is seen as a “despot, menace, and murderer.”³ Recent events such as the attempted poisoning and subsequent arrest of opposition leader Alexey Navalny have not helped that image, with previous critics Boris Nemstov⁴ and Anna Politkovskaya⁵ having already been allegedly killed by Putin's agents. With a trust rating of 33% as recently as July 2020, Putin is having difficulty keeping younger Russians on his side. Despite these struggles, many Russians – particularly those who experienced the Soviet heyday – view Putin as somewhat of a savior, a powerful and unyielding force. Russia's turbulent 20th century was one of pain for almost every family. As such, the newly formed Federation needed a leader that represented stability, strength, and commanded respect from the rest of the world. Boris Yeltsin, Putin's predecessor, failed to demonstrate almost any of these qualities, instead being a notorious alcoholic during his reign.⁶ Yeltsin had infamously gone from a 90% approval rating at the beginning of his presidency to 8% by the time he stepped down.⁷ Such was the gravity of the situation that Yeltsin, a known “tough guy” who was not known for admitting mistakes, shockingly apologized to the Russian people for his errors in his resignation speech. Chechnya had just broken out into war, corruption seeped through all levels of government, and the economy was in poor shape. The man who had introduced Russia to democracy had turned from savior to laughingstock. Much of the good he had done in the early 90s was tarnished

¹ Liptak, Kevin. “5 Takeaways from the summit between Biden and Putin.” CNN, June 17, 2021. <https://www.cnn.com/2021/06/16/politics/takeaways-from-biden-and-putin-summit/index.html>

² Salama, Vivian and Alan Cullison. “Vladimir Putin's encounter's with Joe Biden's predecessors.” WSJ, June 15, 2021. <https://www.wsj.com/articles/vladimir-putins-encounters-with-joe-bidens-predecessors-11623771355>

³ Shevtsova, Lilia. “Vladimir Putin.” *Foreign Policy*, no. 164, 2008, pp. 34–40. *JSTOR*, www.jstor.org/stable/25462247. Accessed 29 Jan. 2021.

⁴ Bork, Ellen. *FPI Bulletin: Boris Nemstov's Threat to Putin's Authoritarianism*. Foreign Policy Initiative, 2015. www.jstor.org/stable/resrep07123. Accessed 17 Aug. 2021.

⁵ Mantilla, Karla. “RUSSIA: Anna Politkovskaya, Award-Winning Kremlin Critic Assassinated.” *Off Our Backs*, vol. 36, no. 3, 2006, pp. 5–5. *JSTOR*, www.jstor.org/stable/20838637. Accessed 17 Aug. 2021.

⁶ Gidathubli, R. G. “Boris Yeltsin's Controversial Legacy.” *Economic and Political Weekly*, vol. 42, no. 20, 2007, pp. 1818–1820. *JSTOR*, www.jstor.org/stable/4419599. Accessed 27 Mar. 2021.

⁷ McFaul, Michael. “Yeltsin's Legacy.” *The Wilson Quarterly (1976-)*, vol. 24, no. 2, 2000, pp. 42–58. *JSTOR*, www.jstor.org/stable/40260037. Accessed 29 Jan. 2021.

by his inability to lead the country during his second term. Unpopular both at home and abroad, it was clear Russia needed a change in leadership.

His replacement would have a lot on their plate. Putin, who Yeltsin had endorsed, was one of the KGB officers Yeltsin had brought into his cabinet in 1996, initially tasked with managing presidential property.⁸ Within a year, he had been promoted to deputy chief of presidential staff. A year later, Putin found himself as head of the FSB (successor of the KGB, an organization Putin had worked in for 16 years).⁹ By 1999, Putin assumed the role of Russian prime minister. Upon his arrival to Moscow in 1996, Putin quickly began building strong connections with friends across Russian politics and business. Once in power, he made sure to split his fortunes and opportunities between these different sectors, thus preventing any one group from getting too powerful. To this day, Putin's KGB colleagues control some of Russia's largest corporations, often getting rid of competitors, as they did with Mikhail Khodorkovsky, the once-richest man in Russia, who now lives abroad (in exile) after spending a decade in jail¹⁰ for tax evasion following a very public dispute with Putin. Putin took advantage of the corrupt system that Yeltsin put in place, but unlike his predecessor, he used it to full effect. Every decision made by the Russian government goes through Putin, and he is undoubtedly the most powerful man in Russia, if not the world.

Background on Yeltsin

To establish a clear background on Putin's foreign policy, we must first understand the situation in Russia immediately after the collapse of the Soviet Union. With a very healthy military which possessed incredible nuclear capabilities, Russia could have been considered a global power. But with a desperate economy, unhappy citizens, and some estranged and newly independent neighbours,

the mighty nation did not look nearly as potent as its Soviet predecessor. The U.S. was now the world's undisputed superpower, and Russia itself did not have official allies until the mid-90s. The fall of the Soviet Union had been swift and unprecedented, leaving many policies and regulations up in the air. The new nation's first actions in the realm of foreign policy were in continuance with what Gorbachev had started: opening up to the West and reducing its massive armory. To do this, Russia followed the lead of Europe and the United States and assumed a "subordinate status." When European countries announced their recognition of Croatia and Slovenia, Russia promptly followed suit. Needing to borrow from the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, the Russian government understood that, due to their struggling economy, positive relations with the West were crucial to rebuilding the nation. Yeltsin largely stuck to these foreign policy objectives throughout his time in office and Putin began his presidency similarly.

Yet certain actions taken by the West in the 90s did not please Yeltsin and the Russians. NATO's involvement in Yugoslavia and its inclusion of Poland, Hungary, and Czechia as members did little to help an already strained relationship.¹¹ Gorbachev came to a prior agreement with the West, stating that unifying Germany would come in exchange for the end of the expansion of Western power eastwards. While the U.S. broke that agreement, they promised that Russia would have a say in any future European affairs and that NATO's military power was purely for defensive purposes.¹² The late 90s war in Yugoslavia disproved this, with Russia having no say in the proceedings. The Russian government, already disappointed by the inclusion of Poland, Hungary, and Czechia into NATO, was furious at the bombing of Serbia, a close ally. Therefore, it should come as no surprise that when Russian troops seized an airport in Kosovo's capital after the

⁸ "WHO IS MR. PUTIN?" *Mr. Putin: Operative in the Kremlin*, by Fiona Hill and Clifford G. Gaddy, Brookings Institution Press, 2013, pp. 1-15. *JSTOR*, www.jstor.org/stable/10.7864/j.ctt4cg8c5.4. Accessed 1 June 2021.

⁹ Shevtsova, Lilia. "Vladimir Putin." *Foreign Policy*, no. 164, 2008, pp. 34-40. *JSTOR*, www.jstor.org/stable/25462247. Accessed 17 Aug. 2021.

¹⁰ "Rise of the Energy Giants." *Putinomics: Power and Money in Resurgent Russia*, by CHRIS MILLER, University of North

Carolina Press, CHAPEL HILL, 2018, pp. 38-58. *JSTOR*, www.jstor.org/stable/10.5149/9781469640686_miller.7. Accessed 1 June 2021.

¹¹ Mandelbaum, Michael. "A Perfect Failure: NATO's War against Yugoslavia." *Foreign Affairs*, vol. 78, no. 5, 1999, pp. 2-8. *JSTOR*, www.jstor.org/stable/20049444. Accessed 26 May 2021.

¹² *Ibid.*

war, nationalistic sentiment rose drastically within Russia's borders.¹³ Russia's financial dependence on the West was clear; when their request of a Russian zone of occupation within NATO was refused, Russia settled for a presence within Western zones without much argument. Russia was weak and all of Europe could see it. The Russian government (and its people) increasingly desired a return to the power they had lost after the collapse of the Soviet Union.

Continuing Yeltsin's Foreign Policy (2000 - 2008)

At the very beginning of his presidency, Putin realized that Russia needed to work more effectively and efficiently with the West on certain issues, such as growing Islamic fundamentalism and Chinese expansion in Siberia.¹⁴ He restored full contact with NATO, announcing renewed collaboration and a strategic partnership. He frequently met with U.S. President George W. Bush and, at a G-8 Summit, even claimed that NATO would either need to include Russia or be dissolved.¹⁵ He instantly backed the U.S. after 9/11, becoming the first world leader to call Bush and offer his support and condolences.¹⁶ Russia and the U.S. seemed on their way to becoming political allies. After the attacks, they issued a joint-statement about their cooperation in the fight against terrorism. In the decade between the collapse of the USSR and the events of September 11th, the U.S. had been virtually unchallenged as the primary global superpower. This began to change after the invasion of Iraq and beginning of the war on terror.

The war on terror was particularly important for Putin, not just in terms of his relationship with the West, but also within his domestic affairs, as the Taliban rapidly grew and terrorism spread on Russia's borders. Putin granted

American aircrafts access to Russian airspace and allowed them to set up military bases in the terrorism-afflicted former Soviet republics.¹⁷ This allowed Putin to wage war on Chechnya under the guise of the broader war against terrorism, despite the West's disapproval. Putin traveled to Washington, and together with Bush, announced that the "legacy of the Cold War" was overcome.¹⁸ Together they announced a set of collaborative objectives and aimed to build a "united, free, and peaceful Euro-Atlantic community." They also signed a declaration outlining their friendship and common values. Simultaneously, at a summit hosted in Italy, Russia strengthened relations with NATO, with the hopes of later becoming a full member of the organization. The next year, a summit in St. Petersburg (and a reduction of Russian offensive arms) helped Russia further relations with both Europe and the U.S.¹⁹

Right before the 2004 Russian presidential election, some controversial actions from the United States and Russia halted the progressing U.S.-Russia relationship: Many Russians did not take kindly to the invasion of Iraq in 2004 and the U.S. decision to withdraw from the Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) treaty in 2001. The ABM treaty had been around since the Nixon and Brezhnev days, and checked the major global superpowers' nuclear abilities. Yet, the Bush administration withdrew from the treaty, without informing Russia of their decision to do so, causing mass uproar and souring the relationship. This also complicated any future attempts to negotiate arms treaties between the two countries with the greatest nuclear strength. Similarly, the invasion of Iraq led to many countries improving their military capacities upon realizing that international law might not be entirely trustworthy.²⁰ Many other factors also played significant roles in Putin's new approach in 2004

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ ZONOVA, TATIANA, and ROMAN REINHARDT. "Main Vectors of Russia's Foreign Policy (1991-2014)." *Rivista Di Studi Politici Internazionali*, vol. 81, no. 4 (324), 2014, pp. 501-516. JSTOR, www.jstor.org/stable/43580683. Accessed 31 Jan. 2021.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Herspring, Dale R. "Vladimir Putin: His Continuing Legacy." *Social Research*, vol. 76, no. 1, 2009, pp. 151-174. JSTOR, www.jstor.org/stable/40972142. Accessed 27 Mar. 2021.

¹⁷ ZONOVA, TATIANA, and ROMAN REINHARDT. "Main Vectors of Russia's Foreign Policy (1991-2014)." *Rivista Di Studi Politici Internazionali*, vol. 81, no. 4 (324), 2014, pp.

501-516. JSTOR, www.jstor.org/stable/43580683. Accessed 31 Jan. 2021.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ ZONOVA, TATIANA, and ROMAN REINHARDT. "Main Vectors of Russia's Foreign Policy (1991-2014)." *Rivista Di Studi Politici Internazionali*, vol. 81, no. 4 (324), 2014, pp. 501-516. JSTOR, www.jstor.org/stable/43580683. Accessed 31 Jan. 2021.

²⁰ Lukyanov, Fyodor. "RUSSIAN DILEMMAS IN A MULTIPOLAR WORLD." *Journal of International Affairs*, vol. 63, no. 2, 2010, pp. 19-32. JSTOR, www.jstor.org/stable/24384332. Accessed 25 May 2021.

(characterized by skepticism of the West), including Western asylum for Chechen leaders, protests after controversial presidential elections in Georgia and Ukraine, the imprisonment of Khodorkovsky (the former richest man in Russia who Putin repeatedly clashed with), and NATO's expansion eastward. The new U.S. missile defense sites in Poland and the Czech Republic angered Russians and Europeans alike, especially since they were set up immediately after the withdrawal from the ABM treaty. In addition to this, Putin drew criticism in the West for stating that the collapse of the Soviet Union was a "major geopolitical disaster."²¹

The Russian economy was doing very well around this time, mostly thanks to oil, trade, and taxes. Additionally, much of Russia's debt had been reduced (including \$17B paid westwards during "Problem 2003").²² This caused a surge of confidence in the Russian people, and Putin believed he did not need to rely as heavily on a positive relationship with the West.²³ Russia was rising from its knees, and those in power generally agreed. Russian patriotism was reaching levels not seen since the height of the Cold War.

Putin and the Munich Conference (2006 – 2014)

Up until 2007, Russian foreign policy focused on integrating the country into already established global institutions (Council of Europe, the Group of Seven, WTO, OECD, OSCE) and regaining its place as a world power and ally of the EU. The aim was to get the United States and the West to see Russia with the same prestige and respect the Soviet Union once had. Despite these efforts however, the U.S. never seemed to regard Russia's interests with as much importance as Putin believed was necessary. This culminated in a now infamous speech on security policy at the 2007 Munich Conference, wherein Putin unleashed on the West.

Relations with the West, although slowly worsening, seemed alright at the surface. Yet the speech was largely seen as the turning point between

Russia's buddy-buddy foreign policy with the West, and their "open rebellion" towards Western policies. Putin felt as though Russia was truly a global power and had the resources to back his claims. Putin openly and fiercely attacked the West for their policies towards Russia, including many of the aforementioned and controversial actions around the 2004 elections. He criticized the U.S. for imposing its legal system on other countries and added that they should not have attempted to enter the Central Asian oil and gas markets. Putin also lambasted U.S. foreign policy, energy charters, nuclear policy, and U.S. interference in the domestic politics of foreign countries. He believed that the U.S. did not see Russia as an equal, and that global organizations that once held so much power were no longer as strong. Russia, like many countries around the world at that point in time, was becoming more aggressive and competitive. Across the world, talk of another Cold War sounded.

Putin didn't entirely break off cooperation with the West, however. He suggested the NATO-Russia council work together to combat the threat of narco-terrorism in Afghanistan. Russia itself was becoming more "Westernized," both in cultural and economic terms. Russia also suggested further military cooperation with NATO. Russia provided \$100 million in the fight against the Taliban, providing training personnel and supplies to the Afghan forces. At this time, Russia also signed economic agreements on the transport of cargo in and out of the country. Yet once Putin's successor, Dmitri Medvedev, was appointed in 2008, Russia again became more aggressive towards the United States. Putin gave an interview to CNN accusing the U.S. of inciting conflict in Georgia in order to help John McCain in his bid for presidency. This led to further deterioration of relations with the U.S.

The war with Georgia was particularly important for Russian relations with the West. Georgia had experienced an especially harsh transition after the collapse of the USSR, part of which can be attributed to Russian relations with minority groups in Georgia. South Ossetia and Abkhazia were two Georgian regions that attempted

²¹ Lukyanov, Fyodor. "Putin's Foreign Policy: The Quest to Restore Russia's Rightful Place." *Foreign Affairs*, vol. 95, no. 3, 2016, pp. 30–37., www.jstor.org/stable/43946855. Accessed 29 May 2021.

²² Lukyanov, Fyodor. "Interactions between Russian Foreign and Domestic Politics." *Irish Studies in International Affairs*, vol.

19, 2008, pp. 17–24. JSTOR, www.jstor.org/stable/25469832. Accessed 12 Feb. 2021.

²³ Shevtsova, Lilia. "Vladimir Putin." *Foreign Policy*, no. 164, 2008, pp. 34–40. JSTOR, www.jstor.org/stable/25462247. Accessed 7 Feb. 2021.

to gain independence, with help from Russia, after the collapse of the Soviet Union. The ensuing conflicts ended with both territories being recognized as independent regions within Georgia.²⁴ South Ossetia in particular, has close ties to Russia and its region of North Ossetia. Russia funds 2/3 of the South Ossetian budget and most South Ossetians have Russian passports. Russia and the U.S. had clashed over Georgia once before, when the 2003 Rose Revolution in Georgia threatened to shift Georgia away from the Russian sphere of influence and into that of the West. Russia saw this as a U.S.-orchestrated attempt to undermine its influence over former Soviet states.²⁵

The two nations would clash over Georgia yet again, this time in 2008, when a Georgian UAV was shot down by Russians in Abkhazia. Anticipating a Georgian strike into Abkhazia, Russia sent troops into the region. Tensions rose and low-level violence broke out all over Abkhazia, South Ossetia, and Georgia. Cyber-attacks in Georgia followed (Russia is particularly known for cyber warfare), leading to all-out war when Georgia retaliated by attacking the South Ossetian capital.²⁶ Russia had been illegally placing troops all over Ossetia and Georgia for months before, and was prepared to strike, with what estimates later claimed were around 80,000 troops. Russia rapidly bombarded and blockaded Georgia, defeating the Georgian forces rather quickly. It took less than a day until Georgian troops retreated to Georgia and Russia controlled South Ossetia. Yet, the Russians did not stop there, continuing their war into Georgia with very swift efficiency, ending up less than fifty miles away from the capital.²⁷ The conflict itself displaced 25,000 Georgians and was only ended by a ceasefire negotiated by France.

Under Medvedev, Russian nationalism rose, thanks in large part to the Georgian conflict.²⁸ It was during his presidency when it became obvious

that Russia did not seek global influence as the USSR had before, but rather regional influence over their neighbors. Moscow began to understand that one power will never again dominate the world, and that all future powers would be built on trade and alliances. Both Russia and the U.S. saw each other as declining powers, and therefore acted on those assumptions.²⁹

Medvedev, Putin's close friend, is still seen to this day as a placeholder. Putin, who returned to his previous role of Prime Minister during this time, was believed to be running the country during Medvedev's presidency. Therefore, for the period between 2008-2012, this paper will focus on Medvedev and his actions, but it is important to keep in mind that almost all of these actions were still Putin's. Medvedev's first year in office was by no means easy. 2008 was a miserable year worldwide – in Russia, the first sign of the financial crisis was the mid-summer drop of oil prices.³⁰ Many Russian companies faltered under their debt, and Putin used the recession as a way to attack the United States. He stated that, as the leader of the free world, world markets, and global economies, the United States and Wall Street specifically had lost credibility. Medvedev also proposed a new European security treaty and, in 2009, stalled negotiations to join the WTO in order to focus on trade partnerships with Kazakhstan and Belarus. This was seen as an attempt to create a Russian sphere of financial influence separate from the previous established world orders. The United States did not see this as a major threat, instead focusing on China's growing dominance. Once again, however, Russia did not keep relations sour for long. In 2010, Medvedev suggested Russia be added to the North American-European decision making process to soften the legacy of the Cold War. He also stated that hostile relations between Russia and NATO were over, after a discussion about

²⁴ "The Georgia-Russia War." *Cyber Blockades*, by Alison Lawlor Russell, Georgetown University Press, Washington, DC, 2014, pp. 96-127. JSTOR, www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt9qdsfj.10. Accessed 9 June 2021.

²⁵ "The Georgia-Russia War." *Cyber Blockades*, by Alison Lawlor Russell, Georgetown University Press, Washington, DC, 2014, pp. 96-127. JSTOR, www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt9qdsfj.10. Accessed 9 June 2021.

²⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁸ Lukyanov, Fyodor. "RUSSIAN DILEMMAS IN A MULTIPOLAR WORLD." *Journal of International Affairs*,

vol. 63, no. 2, 2010, pp. 19-32. JSTOR, www.jstor.org/stable/24384332. Accessed 26 May 2021.

²⁹ Lukyanov, Fyodor. "RUSSIAN DILEMMAS IN A MULTIPOLAR WORLD." *Journal of International Affairs*, vol. 63, no. 2, 2010, pp. 19-32. JSTOR, www.jstor.org/stable/24384332. Accessed 26 May 2021.

³⁰ ZONOVA, TATIANA, and ROMAN REINHARDT. "Main Vectors of Russia's Foreign Policy (1991-2014)." *Rivista Di Studi Politici Internazionali*, vol. 81, no. 4 (324), 2014, pp. 501-516. JSTOR, www.jstor.org/stable/43580683. Accessed 17 Aug. 2021.

implementing a principle under which no Western country, including Russia, would strengthen security at the expense of other Western countries.

Newly elected U.S. President Barack Obama also gave Russians a new hope.³¹ Obama visited Russia very early in his presidency and understood Russia's distaste for its role as an inferior power. Both Obama and the DUMA (Russia's legislative body) indicated that they would like to improve U.S.-Russia relations. They began cooperating on trade, the war in Afghanistan, the Iranian and North Korean nuclear programs, and crises in the Middle East.³² Medvedev had a much better relationship with the West than his predecessor. He maintained good relations with Obama and improved the rhetoric between the two governments.

Some advances in foreign relations with Europe were also evident at this time. Russia became an EU trading partner; Europe accounted for over half of Russian foreign trade, and 2/3 of foreign investment into Russia came from Europe. Europe and Russia's economies slowly improved after the 2008 crisis, and they rebuilt together. Yet some European policies still hurt and frustrated the Russians. Gazprom, a Russian state-owned enterprise, was the largest supplier of gas in Europe, and policies against gas suppliers were not taken kindly by the Russian government. The Russians specifically resented oil and gas policies like the third energy package (which weakened energy suppliers' control over pipelines and distribution)³³ and the "reverse flow capacities" (which allowed European countries to get around Gazprom's expensive prices).³⁴ The tension was fueled, in part, by countries that recently became members of the EU, such as Poland, Lithuania, and

other Eastern European countries. Poland and Russia had a historically horrible relationship,³⁵ stemming back centuries.³⁶ Additionally, millions of Eastern Europeans lived all over the Western world and most held negative attitudes about Russia.

Putin was reelected as president again in 2012, and positive progress with the U.S. continued, despite Russian displeasure towards UN intervention in Libya the previous year.³⁷ The two countries signed a nuclear agreement and initially agreed on the situation in Syria, focusing on eliminating Syrian chemical weapons upon the ascension of Bassar Al-Assad.³⁸ To many, Russia seemed to have the potential to be both a political and economic center for years to come. While it was clear that Russia would never reach the economic presence of the United States, Russia's economic influence was rising. Economic relations with major EU countries were improving, yet relations with the EU itself worsened, as the two sides failed to reach another agreement. The Russians also were not fans of Western actions towards "violence" during the Arab Spring and revolutions in Georgia and Ukraine.

The Ukraine Crisis (2014 - 2016)

In 2014, the Western relationship with Russia changed dramatically. When Russia annexed Crimea, it sent shockwaves around the world. Crimea, a crucial Russian territory for years, was gifted to Ukraine by Russia in 1954, at a time when both were Soviet states.³⁹ This gift, officially commemorating the 300th anniversary of the Treaty of Pereyaslav (which first united Ukraine and the Russian empire), was seen as highly

³¹ Ibid.

³² Ibid.

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ "Poland's Fixation with Russia: Fear or Reason?" Fear and the Making of Foreign Policy: Europe and Beyond, by Raymond Taras, Edinburgh University Press, Edinburgh, 2015, pp. 114-150. JSTOR, www.jstor.org/stable/10.3366/j.ctt1g0b4cp.8. Accessed 5 Feb. 2021.

³⁶ Pełczyńska-Nałęcz, Katarzyna, and Artem V. Malgin. "RUSSIA VERSUS SOVEREIGN POLAND: POLITICAL RELATIONS BETWEEN POLAND AND RUSSIA SINCE 1990." White Spots—Black Spots: Difficult Matters in Polish-Russian Relations, 1918-2008, edited by ADAM DANIEL ROTFELD and ANATOLY V. TORKUNOV,

University of Pittsburgh Press, Pittsburgh, Pa, 2015, pp. 539-586. JSTOR, www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt166grd4.17. Accessed 5 Feb. 2021.georgia

³⁷ Van Veen, Erwin, et al. Tracing the Evolution of the Syrian Civil War (2011-2020). Clingendael Institute, 2021, pp. 15-22, Band-Aids, Not Bullets: EU Policies and Interventions in the Syrian and Iraqi Civil Wars, www.jstor.org/stable/resrep28665.7. Accessed 30 May 2021.

³⁸ Lukyanov, Fyodor. "Putin's Foreign Policy: The Quest to Restore Russia's Rightful Place." Foreign Affairs, vol. 95, no. 3, 2016, pp. 30-37., www.jstor.org/stable/43946855. Accessed 28 May 2021.

³⁹ Charron, Austin. "Whose Is Crimea? Contested Sovereignty and Regional Identity." Region, vol. 5, no. 2, 2016, pp. 225-256., www.jstor.org/stable/24896628. Accessed 8 June 2021.

controversial. To this day, the region has an ethnic Russian majority, was the birthplace of Russian Orthodoxy, and is home to Sevastopol, where folkloric Russian heroism occurred during both the Crimean War and World War II.⁴⁰ For many Russians, Crimea brings a sense of nostalgia for the Soviet Union, and the loss of Crimea was deemed just as cultural as it was territorial. The tension around Ukraine escalated when, in late 2013 and early 2014, Ukrainians protested president Viktor Yanukovich's decision to reject an association agreement with the EU, instead strengthening economic ties with Russia.⁴¹ Protests between government troops and Euromaidan protesters (as they later became known) intensified, often resulting in serious casualties and deaths, and Yanukovich was forced to abandon his post and flee for Russia. The new pro-Euromaidan government had to deal with a country whose allegiances were split between Europe and Russia, as well as increased foreign pressure for action.⁴²

Moscow, seeing the division within Ukraine as an opportunity to assert more influence on the region, began media campaigns labeling the Euromaidan protests as "fascist." Targeted at ethnic Russians in Ukraine, the majority of whom were in Crimea, the media campaigns did their job, alarming Crimeans who already lived in fear after Yanukovich's demise. In late February, Russian troops arrived in the Crimean capital, charged with the task of protecting Russians and Russian-speakers.⁴³ Despite the fact that the men wore unmarked uniforms and Russian authorities initially denied any involvement, it was quite obvious that these men were Russian military, and not a volunteer force. The men took over the Crimean Supreme Council Building, raising a Russian flag, and forcing deputies to dissolve the current government and install a member of the Russian Unity Party as Crimean Prime Minister. Within a week, the new government voted to secede from Ukraine and become a Russian sovereign territory.⁴⁴ By March 18, following an illegal referendum with

extremely skewed results (in which Crimeans could not vote to maintain the status quo), Crimea officially became a Russian territory, an action in violation of international law.

After the annexation of Crimea and the Russian invasion of Ukraine, Western countries refused to recognize Crimea as a Russian territory. Putin, ever so popular domestically, decided to focus more on his neighbouring countries than the West, and foreign relations soon soured. This harmed businesses in Russia, as many Western countries imposed sanctions. To this day, many see the ongoing Ukrainian conflict as the point of no return for Russia's relationship with the West.

Intervention in Syria (2016 - 2018)

While the Ukraine crisis caused an uproar in the West, another faceoff between Russia and the West was escalating in the Middle East. When civil war broke out in Syria in the early 2010's, Russia, together with Iran, backed the ruling forces, led by Bashar Al-Assad. Russia's intervention drastically changed the course of the war, especially through their blocking of UN resolutions that could have officially delegitimized Assad's regime.⁴⁵ With growing tension between Russia and the West, Syria became yet another political battleground between the major world powers. While the root of the war came down to Assad and the rebels, it also led to a broader international conflict pitting Russia and Iran against the United States. Elite Russian forces intervened in Syria in 2015, saving the Assad regime, which eventually led to the reconquest of Aleppo by the government. The war began to turn in Assad's favor and his troops began to reconquer areas that the rebels had once held. Fyodor Lukyanov, in a piece for *Foreign Affairs*, states a very crucial point: "when an acute international crisis breaks out, Russia and the United States are often the only actors able to resolve it."⁴⁶ He goes on to emphasize the efficiency of the cooperation between the two

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Charron, Austin. "Whose Is Crimea? Contested Sovereignty and Regional Identity." *Region*, vol. 5, no. 2, 2016, pp. 225-256., www.jstor.org/stable/24896628. Accessed 8 June 2021.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Van Veen, Erwin, et al. *Tracing the Evolution of the Syrian Civil War (2011-2020)*. Clingendael Institute, 2021, pp. 15-22,

Band-Aids, Not Bullets: EU Policies and Interventions in the Syrian and Iraqi Civil Wars, www.jstor.org/stable/resrep28665.7. Accessed 30 May 2021.

⁴⁶ Lukyanov, Fyodor. "Putin's Foreign Policy: The Quest to Restore Russia's Rightful Place." *Foreign Affairs*, vol. 95, no. 3, 2016, pp. 30-37., www.jstor.org/stable/43946855. Accessed 28 May 2021.

countries when working towards a common goal, as well as the lack of action from other organizations, institutions, and powers.

Overall, the relationship between Russia and the U.S. was and still is, tense. Sanctions from the annexation of Crimea were still in place as the Syrian dispute was being resolved, and Putin has been called out for corruption by numerous U.S. officials. With so much bad blood between the sides, it is no wonder that they oppose each other in major disputes around the world.

Russia and the West Today (2016 - Present)

Over 20 years have passed since Vladimir Putin came to power. Throughout his presidency, Putin has become an incredibly controversial figure, dividing opinions both within Russia and abroad. Historically, criticism of Putin within Russia has been kept relatively quiet, thanks in part to his early success and, more recently, to his aggressive silencing of dissent. Since the Ukraine crisis, vocal opposition (led by now imprisoned Alexei Navalny) has risen to levels unseen by Putin. Navalny has gained a massive following within Russia, so much so that multiple attempts on his life have been made, albeit unsuccessfully. After Russian agents poisoned Navalny, he left the country to be treated, violating his parole and ultimately landing him in prison. Simultaneously, certain actions on the global stage have further soured Russia's relationship with the West. In 2018, Sergei Skripal, a former Russian military officer and double agent for British intelligence, was poisoned while living in the United Kingdom.⁴⁷ Only two years prior, a British public enquiry found that in 2006, Putin most likely ordered the very similar murder of Alexander Litvinenko, a known dissenter living in London at the time of his poisoning.⁴⁸ The Skripal murder led to further sanctions on Russia from the UK and its allies. Sanctions for the Ukraine crisis remain active to this day, and the situation with the EU remains tense. Yet it is across the ocean where Russia has caused the biggest stir in recent years. According to both private security firms and U.S. government and intelligence agencies, Russian groups and

government-directed agencies hacked both the DNC (Democratic National Committee) and RNC (Republican National Committee), leaking emails and documents that hurt Democratic candidate Hillary Clinton's chances of winning the presidency in 2016.⁴⁹ It was believed that Clinton would have been a lot more aggressive on Russia than former President Trump, who most Russians still view favorably to this day. Trump won the presidency, and the Russian interference in the election caused great division and mistrust among Americans, causing many to question the sanctity of the democratic voting process. In all 20 years of Putin's rule, this was the most blatant "attack" on the United States by Russia, and it shaped (and continues to shape) U.S. politics and global politics at large.

Conclusion

Looking back on 20 years of Vladimir Putin's Russia, there is a clear difference in Russian mentality between the years before and after the Munich conference. It was there and then that the shift between the Russia of the early 2000's and Russia today became truly evident. Gone was the attempted integration into world organizations and the larger global community. Globally, Russia had not been afforded the same respect as the world's biggest powers, and they did not see it as viable to continue along the same path. Putin decided it was time to separate Russia from the West and work on maintaining and growing influence over the former Soviet sphere. In doing so, they drifted further away from the West, culminating in the invasion of Crimea as the ultimate assertion of dominance over their sphere of influence. For many, the Munich conference was a declaration of intentions which reached a point of no return with the conflict in Ukraine. Whichever way one chooses to see it, the stark contrast in attitudes between today and 20 years ago is obvious. 20 years ago, Putin sat with foreign leaders and discussed mutual enemies and strategies to defeat them. Today, many of the same meetings revolve around Russian cyberattacks on the West, human rights violations within Russia, and Russia's actions in Ukraine. Yet, the recent summit between Biden and Putin has brought about

⁴⁷ Shoham, Dany. *Russia's Toxic Legacy*. Begin-Sadat Center for Strategic Studies, 2018, www.jstor.org/stable/resrep16934. Accessed 11 June 2021.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

⁴⁹ GALANTE, LAURA, and SHAUN EE. *Defining Russian Election Interference: An Analysis of Select 2014 to 2018 Cyber Enabled Incidents*. Atlantic Council, 2018, www.jstor.org/stable/resrep20718. Accessed 11 June 2021.

some positive talking points. While it is clear that relations between the two countries are undeniably tense, both leaders seemed to agree when discussing strategic stability, cybersecurity, the return of their respective ambassadors to their posts, and most importantly, the need for future meetings and diplomacy.³⁰ It was a first step in what could be a new beginning. Yet it is important to be realistic: China and Russia are closer than they ever have been, both the U.S. and Russia accuse each other of numerous cyber-attacks over the last decade, and the situation in Ukraine remains incredibly volatile. At the summit, Biden and Putin also discussed Syria, Libya, Iran, and Afghanistan. With the latter's recent fall to the Taliban, it will be interesting to see how both Russia and the United States manage their interests in the region. It is almost impossible to imagine Vladimir Putin as a true Western ally. Yet, it is possible that for the first time since Crimea, we are seeing building blocks being put in place for further easing of relations. No matter what happens in our world throughout the next decade, we can be sure that Vladimir Putin will continue to have a major role.

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POLITICAL INSTABILITY AND DEFORESTATION: THE COCOA CRISIS IN COTE D'IVOIRE

by Justin Choung

Abstract

Cote d'Ivoire, the world's most prominent cocoa producer, is facing a paradoxical environmental and economic crisis due to rampant cocoa-driven deforestation. While there are several causes attributed to this issue, the most prominent is widespread political turmoil throughout the past few decades (particularly since the start of the 21st century). A long period of conflict that included civil wars from 2002-2007 and 2010-2011 hampered the Ivorian government's ability to protect its forests from encroaching farmers and armed militant groups; the government did not control large areas of the country during this period, particularly in the north and west. Furthermore, government entities such as Sodefor and the OIPR (institutions tasked with guarding Cote d'Ivoire's protected areas and forest reserves) have been susceptible to alarmingly high levels of corruption and incompetence. Numerous papers, studies, and anecdotal accounts directly link these issues of political turmoil to widespread cocoa-driven deforestation in Cote d'Ivoire. The result is a conundrum that the Ivorian government faces today — how can Cote d'Ivoire save its forests from cocoa-driven deforestation while protecting its cocoa economy? Ivorian farmers are already facing a land shortage, one of the main causes of cocoa-driven deforestation. The goal for Cote d'Ivoire is to produce the same amount of cocoa with less land to stop deforestation. This issue is further complicated by widespread poverty among Ivorian farmers. Any action Cote d'Ivoire takes must protect not only its forests but also the economic interests of the 6 million people in the country that rely on its cocoa economy for jobs.



Introduction

Political instability has plagued Cote d'Ivoire in recent decades, with civil wars from 2002-2007 and 2010-2011. These conflicts, in conjunction with widespread corruption and incompetence among law enforcement and civil servants, have brought about a joint environmental and economic crisis facing Cote d'Ivoire's cocoa industry. This paper will examine the effects of both armed conflict and corruption on the enablement of illegal cocoa farming in protected areas.

The civil wars and other conflicts in Cote d'Ivoire shifted the focus of governmental agencies away from protecting forests, thus allowing for mass waves of locals, refugees, and migrants that sought safety and economic opportunity to infiltrate these protected areas, where they could cut down trees and establish cocoa farms. The deforestation crisis caused by illegal cocoa farming was further induced by widespread corruption and incompetence among environmental and law enforcement agencies, which have been known to accept bribes and otherwise fail to adequately protect forests from infiltration. As a result, deforestation rates in Cote d'Ivoire have been alarmingly high, especially from illegal farms in protected areas.

This issue is especially significant due to the importance of cocoa in Cote d'Ivoire. Cocoa is by far the most important commodity that Cote d'Ivoire produces, as the crop makes up 40% of the country's exports (Barima "Cocoa Production"). Roughly 6 million people in Cote d'Ivoire rely on the nation's cocoa industry for jobs, from farming and cultivation to processing, refining, and trading. Any threat to the long-term viability of the cocoa industry is thus a threat to the economic wellbeing of Cote d'Ivoire and its citizens. N'Zi Kanga Remi, a governor in Cote d'Ivoire, describes cocoa as vital to the livelihood of Ivoirians, saying, "It doesn't make sense to ask an Ivoirian what cocoa means to him! It means everything! It's his first source of income! My education was funded by cocoa! Our houses are built with cocoa! The foundations of our roads, our schools, our hospitals is cocoa! Our government runs on cocoa! All our policy focuses on sustaining cocoa!" (Adams).

Civil War and Migration into Protected Forests

Before its first civil war in 2002, Cote d'Ivoire was largely seen as a model of political stability and success in West Africa, with some observers even calling its economic growth a "miracle" (Woods). This view was further exemplified by waves of immigration in the late 20th century from nearby countries such as Burkina Faso and Mali that were strife with conflict. This miracle was short-lived, however, as rising political and religious tensions combined with xenophobia led to the outbreak of a civil war in 2002. After years of conflict, a democratic election in 2010 led to another civil war after the loser, Laurent Gbagbo, refused to concede. This period of conflict from 2002 to 2011 destabilized the lives of Ivoirians and migrants and rendered the government incapable of overseeing its protected lands. Mass numbers of Ivoirians and migrants began moving into national parks and other protected areas, where trees were cut down to make room for Cote d'Ivoire's most popular crop, cocoa (Woods). The rise in deforestation and its connection to illegal cocoa farming is clear, as Cote d'Ivoire has seen record highs in cocoa production at the expense of alarming deforestation rates.

With civil wars to focus on, protecting Cote d'Ivoire's forests was hardly a high priority for the government, and many officials in charge of protecting national parks or forest reserves fled or were overwhelmed by thousands of migrants, many of whom saw these restricted lands as an opportunity for safety (Kouako). The northern and western parts of the country were controlled by rebel forces, the central part occupied by UN peacekeepers and French soldiers (who were passive against illegal cocoa farming), and even the government-controlled southern part of Cote d'Ivoire failed to receive sufficient protection for its protected forests due to the war (Barima "Cocoa crops"). The second civil war in 2010 created similar chaos, as government institutions were weakened, and migrants again found refuge in protected areas. Militants and warlords who had taken over national parks and forest reserves even became some of Cote d'Ivoire's biggest cocoa producers (Pomarico).

There is perhaps no clearer example of the effects of the civil wars on the encroachment of illegal cocoa farms onto protected forests than Mont

Peko, a 34,000-hectare national park. Cote d'Ivoire's civil wars led to the complete dismantling of monitoring systems for Mont Peko, allowing for locals, migrants, and militant groups to settle in the national park (Sidibé). The notorious warlord Amade Oueremi even seized almost all of Mont Peko by force until he was apprehended in 2013. Over 25,550 cocoa farmers found refuge in Mont Peko, where trees were cut down to make room for their farms, and Oueremi became one of Cote d'Ivoire's largest (illegal) cocoa producers (Pomarico). 80% of Mont Peko's land was cleared to make way for cocoa plantations, and the annual output of these plantations at their height reached over 10,000 tons, valued at \$28 million in export value (Aboa and Bavier, N'guessan). The case of Mont Peko represents a troubling pattern during Cote d'Ivoire's decades-long period of conflict, where protected forests were blatantly turned into huge cocoa producers with little resistance from government officials or law enforcement.

Another alarming example of the effects of conflict on cocoa-driven deforestation in Cote d'Ivoire can be found in the protected forest of Haut-Sassandra (also called CFHS). CFHS, a 95,935-hectare forest reserve in the center-west region of Cote d'Ivoire, was originally known as one of Cote d'Ivoire's best-protected forests before the start of its civil war in 2002. When war broke out, the northern part of CFHS fell under the control of rebel groups, while the rest of CFHS was governed by UN and French forces. The lack of Ivorian control over CFHS allowed for local Ivorians and migrants to infiltrate the forest and employ a variety of deforestation techniques to make room for their cocoa farms. 95% of the disruptions in CFHS are of anthropic origin, with the most common disruption being cocoa plantations. The next most common disruptions, fallen trees, slash and burn on trees, and mixed crop cultivation are also all activities commonly associated with cocoa farming. Together, these four disruptions associated with cocoa farming make up 79.19% of the disruptions found in CFHS, illustrating how CFHS's rising deforestation rates are connected to cocoa farming. The resulting deforestation in CFHS is disturbing; before Cote d'Ivoire's conflicts, over 93% of CFHS was covered by forests, but by the end of the conflicts, only 28.46% of the area was covered by forests. This corresponds to a decrease from about 89,411 hectares in 2002 to

27,303 hectares by the end of these conflicts (Barima "Cocoa crops").

The overall impacts of these conflicts on deforestation in Cote d'Ivoire are alarming; a 2015 study surveyed 23 protected areas and found that 74% of the forestry in these areas was converted to cocoa plantations. Furthermore, seven of those 23 forest reserves were found to be converted almost completely into cocoa farms, and any single protected area was found to have lost at least 10% of its forestry. Interviews with cocoa farmers in these protected areas revealed that most of them moved into these areas within the prior twelve years, a period that overlaps directly with Cote d'Ivoire's civil wars from 2002 to 2011 (Bitty "Cocoa"). The infiltration of Cote d'Ivoire's protected areas became so prevalent that entire communities and towns were built; Marahoue National Park and Mont Peko National Park both had communities of about 30,000 people, with even public schools, health centers, and cell phone towers ("An 'Open Secret'").

The rampant deforestation in Cote d'Ivoire has broad implications that go far beyond its cocoa industry. Trees capture carbon dioxide, which means deforestation proliferates the release of greenhouse gases that could have devastating long term consequences for the world's climate. The loss of Cote d'Ivoire's forests also endangers its biodiversity; the nation that was once known for its wildlife has now lost almost all its elephants and chimpanzees to near-extinction. Deforestation can even harm cocoa farmers in the long run, since the loss of trees leads to soil erosion and the loss of valuable nutrients that support a variety of plants and crops (Pimm). Cote d'Ivoire's cocoa-driven deforestation threatens not only the country's economic and environmental wellbeing, but also the world at large.

Corruption and Incompetence in Protecting Cote d'Ivoire's Forests

The two main authorities tasked with guarding Cote d'Ivoire's protected areas are Sodefor and the OIPR — Sofedor's authority is over protected forests, while the OIPR oversees Cote d'Ivoire's national parks. Numerous investigations by media outlets, NGOs, and activists have found that both Sodefor and the OIPR have been susceptible to alarming levels of corruption and

incompetence. The emergence of numerous communities in Cote d'Ivoire's protected areas without government interference cannot solely be attributed to the distraction caused by civil war, especially given the continuing existence of such communities years after the end of the second civil war in 2011. Many of the cocoa farmers residing in protected areas have been able to grow not only their farms but also their communities due to bribes and kickbacks paid to local authorities. Given the illegality of bribery and corruption, it is difficult to ascertain the severity of this issue among Sodefod and OIPR in numbers or statistics. However, the anecdotal evidence, supplied by numerous investigations from a variety of sources, illustrates an alarming issue in Cote d'Ivoire. The scope of this corruption can also be somewhat determined by estimates of illegal bribes in Mont Peko National Park; UN experts have estimated that soldiers and park officials have earned one billion francs (\$1.74 million) annually from taxes on cocoa farmers in Mont Peko (Bavier).

In 2017, The Guardian published a report on cocoa-driven deforestation in Cote d'Ivoire. Among the revelations found in the investigation was evidence of blatant bribery and racketeering involving the OIPR. Reporters visited Zanbarmako, one of an estimated 50 illegal villages in Marahoue National Park (and one of the biggest, with a population of 13,000 people). The OIPR, tasked with preventing deforestation, poaching, and the establishment of villages in Cote d'Ivoire's national parks, has a lookout post at the entrance of Zanbarmako. The Guardian noted that despite their lookout post, OIPR rangers "seem not to have spotted the bricks and cement for the church and mosque arrive, nor the trucks loaded with cocoa beans or timber leave." The OIPR's "protection" of Marahoue National Park from the Zanbarmako village was found to consist of a weekly routine of arresting a few farmers and holding them for 100,000-franc ransoms each (\$164). Local villagers alleged that one bribe of 13,000 euros (\$15,260) was paid to the local OIPR chief (Maclean).

In recent years, the government has carried out a crackdown on illegal cocoa farming communities, with Sodefod and the OIPR evicting entire villages from various protected areas. Since 2015, these authorities have sporadically evicted villages from forest reserves and national parks, with some evictions involving tens of thousands of cocoa

farmers. However, significant issues remain with the way Ivorian authorities have "protected" their forests. Numerous allegations of abuse during these evictions have been reported, with common patterns involving Sodefod and OIPR agents violently beating cocoa farmers ("Cote d'Ivoire: Arbitrary").

There have also been suggestions that these evictions are linked to corruption in Sodefod and the OIPR. A Human Rights Watch report in 2016 suggested that Sodefod and the OIPR are given bribes from cocoa farmers in protected areas to prevent future evictions. Human Rights Watch cites several community leaders from protected forests such as Scio and Goin-Debe that say providing Sodefod agents with cash, chickens, and other gifts whenever they visit is essential to preventing evictions. This practice is known in these areas as "paying dues." Furthermore, the report cited numerous farmers that alleged they were singled out for eviction because they did not pay (illegal) taxes to Sodefod ("Cote d'Ivoire: Arbitrary").

The effectiveness of these evictions has also been questioned. There does not appear to be much long-term planning or coordination among the evictions, as those that have taken place so far have been largely sporadic ("Cote d'Ivoire: Arbitrary"). Furthermore, some observers have argued that many of these evicted cocoa farmers will simply return to their farms due to a lack of economic opportunity, post-eviction assistance, and relocation efforts (Pearce). These fears are not without basis; in 2013, the Ivorian government tried to evict cocoa farmers from Mont Peko for the first time, but many of these cocoa farmers simply came back (Aboa). An investigation by the NGO Mighty Earth found that despite Cote d'Ivoire's supposedly new strict stance on illegal cocoa farming, some cocoa farmers from Mont Peko just paid higher bribes to return (Higonnet). There are significant concerns that these eviction practices by forest authorities are not only inhumane, but also ineffective.

Conclusion

While there are numerous reasons behind the encroachment of cocoa farms in Cote d'Ivoire's protected areas, much of the blame is logically related to the country's failure to protect its forests. Regarding Cote d'Ivoire's failure to enforce the

protection of its national parks and forest reserves, the main causes can clearly be attributed to political instability in the forms of conflict, corruption, and incompetence. The impacts of conflict on cocoa driven deforestation can be seen in major protected areas such as Mont Peko National Park and the CFHS forest reserve, where the civil wars from 2002 to 2011 coincided with government officials leaving their posts, increased rates of deforestation, and the birth of cocoa farms that were started during the conflicts.

Corruption and incompetence among Sodefor, the OIPR, and other governmental entities have also allowed cocoa farmers to infiltrate protected areas and cultivate huge centers of cocoa production; the magnitude of this issue can be seen in the emergence of complete 30,000 people towns in protected areas such as Marahoue National Park and Mont Peko National Park. With cell phone towers, hospitals, religious centers, and the movement of cocoa in these protected areas, it is clear such conditions would not be possible without significant levels of corruption and incompetence in Sodefor and the OIPR (The UN estimates that \$1.74 million in illegal taxes come from just Mont Peko) (Bavier). The overall results of political instability from conflict, corruption, and incompetence on cocoa-driven deforestation in Cote d'Ivoire are disturbing: Cote d'Ivoire has lost 80% of its protected forests to cocoa farming (Bitty "Accelerating," Gonedelé). This cocoa-driven deforestation can be found in 220 of the country's 244 protected areas, and some of the country's most prominent national parks and forest reserves such as Mont Peko National Park, Marahoue National Park, and CFHS have almost completely lost their forestry.

The impacts of political stability on cocoa-driven deforestation have forced Cote d'Ivoire into a complex situation involving the priorities of its environment, its economy, and its most vulnerable inhabitants. Illegal cocoa farming is a major part of Cote d'Ivoire's economy; an estimated 40% of Cote d'Ivoire's cocoa output comes from protected areas, indicating that Cote d'Ivoire's status as the world's biggest cocoa producer relies largely on illegal cocoa farming. Additionally, most Ivorian cocoa farmers are in severe poverty, with an estimated daily wage of \$0.54 (Higonnet). The situation is even worse for cocoa farmers in protected areas, who receive almost no consideration under the law regarding

their property and economic activities. All of these issues mean Cote d'Ivoire must eliminate cocoa-driven deforestation in its protected areas while at the same time protecting both its economy and its most vulnerable.

With almost half of Cote d'Ivoire's cocoa output coming from protected areas, the country will almost certainly have to sacrifice a considerable part of its economy to protect its forests, at least in the short term. The reason for infiltrating protected areas in the first place was because farmers were running out of land to produce cocoa; by restricting cocoa farmers from using protected lands, Cote d'Ivoire would be worsening a land shortage that impacts its most important industry (Gebre). The Ivorian government has suggested that it won't necessarily have to sacrifice cocoa yields for its forests by employing methods such as agroforestry and improved farming practices. However, there are doubts that such strategies will work. Many cocoa farmers might lack the means or knowledge to utilize more advanced farming techniques. Furthermore, Cote d'Ivoire's agroforestry plan involves giving control over many of the country's protected forests to chocolate companies, a decision that has drawn criticism for supposedly opening the door to more privatized deforestation (Yeung).

With the livelihoods of Cote d'Ivoire's cocoa farmers already in peril due to wages well below the poverty line, the government must also reconcile the need to keep farmers out of protected forests with the need to protect their quality of life. Recent evictions of farmers from national parks and forest reserves have received criticism from humanitarian groups for their brutality and lack of accompanied assistance for the displaced farmers. The evictions from Mont Peko alone led to 54,000 people being displaced, thus placing pressure on nearby villages to support them (Aboa and Cocks). Furthermore, the evictions were followed by destruction of property, including the burning of whole homes, villages, possessions, and cocoa farms ("Cote d'Ivoire: Arbitrary"). The cocoa farmers occupying protected forests are already among the nation's most vulnerable populations, as they must endure minimal wages and constant extortion from Sodefor and OIPR agents, all while having little to no legal recourse. Without governmental support to help find relocate farmers and their families, Cote d'Ivoire will be facilitating a humanitarian crisis to solve an environmental one.

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THE COSTS AND BENEFITS OF GREEN ENERGY IN CAMBODIA

by Jessica Wang

Abstract

This paper will assess the benefits and costs to companies located in Cambodia considering a switch to green energy. First, we will explain the motivation for switching to green energy, including global expectations and impacts on the climate. Afterwards, the potential benefits and costs of switching from fossil fuels like oil to green energy, particularly wind and solar energy, will be explored. Finally, we will consider whether changing to green energy would be beneficial to a company in Cambodia given the advantages and disadvantages discussed.



Introduction

Cambodia, a relatively poor Asian nation, is considered by the United Nations to be a developing country. Prior to 2020 and the coronavirus pandemic, Cambodia’s economy had been growing significantly, with an average growth rate of 8% from 1998 to 2018, all while reducing poverty (“Cambodia Overview” 1). As a result of this economic growth, the country’s demand for electricity and power has also increased drastically. From 2011 to 2015, Cambodia’s electricity demand was reported to have risen each year by 18% (“Cambodia Energy Sector Assessment, Strategy, and Road Map” 28). Accordingly, Cambodia’s energy consumption has grown steadily throughout the past two decades, a majority of which comes from oil and biomass, as seen in Figure 1 (“Cambodia National Energy Statistics 2016” 34). Taking into account that very little of Cambodia’s energy consumption is from green energy, Cambodia’s environmental impact has understandably increased as its economy has grown.

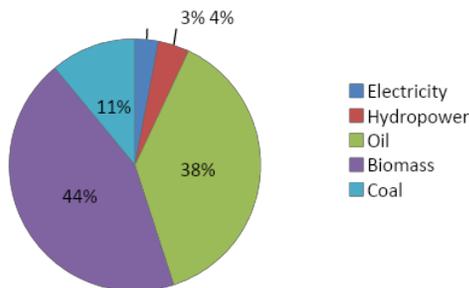


Figure 1. Energy mix of Cambodia’s primary energy supply in 2015. Energy data taken from “Cambodia National Energy Statistics 2016.”

From 2000 to 2016, Cambodia’s production of CO₂ emissions grew from two million tons to 9.9 million tons (“Energy Consumption in Cambodia” 2). Furthermore, scientists have found that if Cambodia decides to complete all planned projects, about 80% of the nation’s electricity will result from fossil fuels (Teak 2). As a result, moving forward with this energy mix could be harmful to the environment and also threaten Cambodia’s ability to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) set during the United Nations Climate Agreement of 2016 (2). The Cambodian

government has made some steps towards environmental improvement, but using green energy is still more difficult in Cambodia than in many other nations. WHY? Therefore, companies located in Cambodia must determine whether switching to renewable energy is reasonable and plausible under current government policies.

Importance of Green Energy

Green energy is a subset of renewable energy sources with a superior environment impact, as shown in Figure 2.

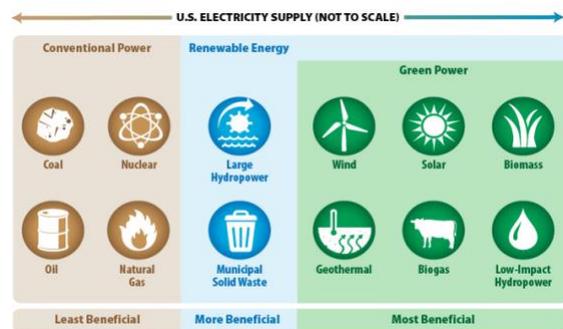


Figure 2. Categories of Energy Supply. Replicated from “What is Green Power?”

Cambodia shows great potential in hydropower, as its current hydropower use is only 13% of its estimated potential; large hydropower, however, is not considered green energy (Brent 3). This is because too much hydropower threatens the ecosystems and marine populations dependent on rivers and other bodies of water that dams are built on. While still better than fossil fuels, green power is necessary because it has the lowest possible impact on the environment. To convert to green energy, Cambodia cannot simply switch to its easiest fossil fuel alternative and must instead look into more expensive options like solar and wind power.

Even corporations focused purely on profit should take their ability to adopt green energy into consideration. As knowledge of climate change and its impacts have spread, sustainability has become an increasingly significant factor that consumers consider when choosing a product or service. Companies with a younger customer base should be especially cognizant of these trends and prioritize a move towards green energy. If companies fail to act,

they risk losing their consumers to more sustainable competitors, as young people value sustainability highly.

Benefits of Green Energy

There are a few major benefits of utilizing green energy, most notably its environmental advantages, alignment with consumer values, and long-term profitability. The environmental benefits of renewable energy are already well-documented—burning oil and other fossil fuels generates gases such as carbon dioxide, which contributes to global warming by trapping heat in the Earth’s atmosphere. This increase in temperature greatly threatens the lives of many organisms on Earth. The higher global temperature has raised water levels by melting ice caps, which has negatively impacted ecosystems in colder environments and will eventually jeopardize the lives of people and communities near the shores. Using these renewable sources does not add to climate change and could save millions of lives.

Another major reason to shift to green energy is gaining or keeping consumers who value environmental protection, which is becoming increasingly important to many customers. Worldwide, almost 80% of consumers surveyed say they value sustainability, and more than 70% of these consumers are willing to pay an average premium of 35% more for sustainable brands (Bekmagambetova 1). This is especially crucial for Cambodia, considering one of their largest economic drivers is the garment industry (“Cambodia Overview” 1). The fashion industry is one of the most notoriously wasteful industries, and consumers have been placing more pressure on companies to move away from “fast fashion” and instead focus on reducing their negative environmental impact. Utilizing green energy would ultimately be beneficial to corporations who wish to capture the growing segment of consumers that values sustainability.

Beyond environmental and commercial benefits, using green energy also costs less in the long-term. Figure 3 displays estimates from Lazard, which state that if the lifespan of a given project is taken into consideration, alternative energy sources like wind and solar are in fact cheaper than more conventional energy sources (“Levelized Cost of Energy 2017” 1). As a whole, alternative energy ranges from the same price as conventional energy

to being significantly cheaper. This is partially because, for some suppliers of green energy, there is no need to buy coal or any other fuel as the sources are free. Additionally, there is minimal maintenance required for renewable energy compared to conventional energy (“Barriers to Renewable Energy Technologies” 1). Therefore, in the long run, companies are not hurt by switching to green energy, and some may even be able to cut costs by using green energy over more harmful fossil fuels.

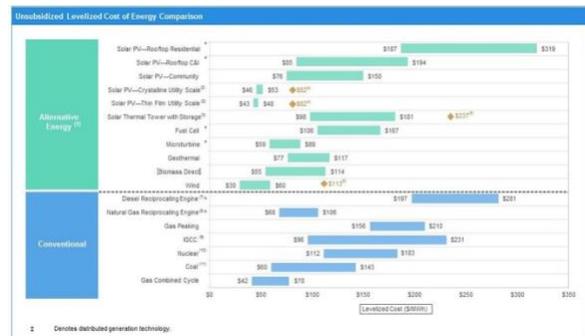


Figure 3. Unsubsidized Levelized Cost of Energy Comparison. Replicated from “Levelized Cost of 2017.”

Costs of Green Energy

While switching to green energy comes with many benefits, there are costs that should be discussed as well. We will cover the higher upfront capital costs and geographic limitations, but many other problems exist, including governmental uncertainty, difficulty finding qualified personnel, local infrastructure, and more. Although in the long run, green energies, especially wind and solar, are often cheaper than fossil fuels, the initial costs of the capital needed to generate energy from these sources are quite high and the technology requires regular maintenance. For instance, in 2017, installing solar energy technology ranged from a little over \$2,000 to \$3,700 per kW on average depending on the scale of the project (“Barriers to Renewable Energy Technologies” 2). Meanwhile, a natural gas plant costs about \$1,000 per kW and wind turbines range from about \$1,200 to \$1,700 per kW (“Barriers to Renewable Energy Technologies” 2). Along with these higher costs, the Cambodian government has not offered sufficient incentives for companies to make the switch to green energy: there are no government subsidies or

tax credits for corporations to initiate the switch, which greatly reduces the likelihood that a company will actually change its energy sources (“Cambodia Law on Electricity”). Most experts find that government-provided monetary incentives are a crucial prerequisite to promote the adoption of green energy. In 2011, GlobeScan surveyed 551 sustainability professionals and found that 80% believed government subsidies for clean energy were necessary to achieve low-carbon energy (Koch 233). These government incentives help reduce the risk to companies taking on the costs of initially starting green energy projects. As a result of Cambodia’s lack of incentives, there is no real motivation for companies that cannot comfortably afford the initial capital needed to exchange green energy for fossil fuels. For some corporations, it is simply more plausible to stick with oil and coal, rather than making a large initial financial investment with no governmental support.

Along with monetary difficulties, green energy is also often accompanied with geographic complications and planning difficulties. Unlike fossil fuels that are mined and then used, the point of green energy is to be self-sustaining with “free” fuel. This requires a certain amount of planning—for example, solar panels should be built in areas that receive a significant amount of sunlight, and wind turbines must be placed where the wind will generate a certain minimum speed. As such, switching to greener energy is not as simple as pressing a button. A lot of consideration and planning will have to take place before enough electricity is generated through renewable energy that corporations and the Cambodian people can rely on it.

Conclusion

After establishing the major benefits and costs of switching to green energy, we can determine that in Cambodia’s situation, it is still more advantageous to switch to green energy. One of the biggest problems of sustainable energy is finding the right place to start building the necessary infrastructure to harness natural resources. However, Cambodia actually has immense potential for renewable energy. This is particularly evident with solar energy, as Cambodia receives six to nine hours of sunlight daily, which is a significant amount of potential energy (Koch 252).

Additionally, it is possible to generate wind energy in the southern and coastal areas of Cambodia, which dramatically diminishes one of the problems associated with switching to green energy by providing multiregional access to sustainable energy (252).

As for concerns about great initial costs and lack of government subsidies, companies cannot really afford to waste time hoping for the government to financially incentivize a switch to green energy. Right now, it is clear that Cambodia’s government is prioritizing electrifying the rural areas of Cambodia, and sustainability has taken a backseat to this goal. Especially with consumer pressures and the inevitable adoption of green energy, it would be ideal for companies to do their best to utilize as much sustainable energy as possible, as early as possible. Cambodia’s private sector, and most notably its garment industry, would be wise to initiate the switch to green energy to stay on the good side of consumers and prioritize sustainability. Without government subsidies, these companies would be wise to take out private loans (keep if you agree with this, Jessica) The garment industry is being particularly scrutinized on its use of wasteful practices, and as it contributes so significantly to Cambodia’s economy, it would be wise of these companies to prioritize sustainability to keep its consumers.

While there are limited short-term benefits to continued use of fossil fuels like coal, it is evident that in the long-term, companies will have to switch to green energy, whether for its cheaper overall costs, or consumer pressures, or environmental benefits. Therefore, corporations in Cambodia should make an effort to shift towards green energy as soon as possible.

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AN ANALYSIS OF YOUTH POLITICAL PARTICIPATION AND REPRESENTATION ACROSS DEVELOPMENT LEVELS

by Saumil Singhal

Abstract

The rise of social unrest across the globe has become a pandemic of its own. Given that young people actively lead these movements, it is essential to understand what causes social unrest. This paper attempts to discuss the impact of a country's development on youth participation in politics. To achieve this analysis, the U.S. and India serve as case studies. After analyzing the U.S. and India, this paper finds that levels of development do not display any signs of correlation with increased youth participation or representation in politics. However, social media use showed a preliminary correlation with increased youth participation.



Introduction

In an increasingly polarized world, individual political decisions have the potential to stir social unrest. The world witnessed one of the greatest examples of social unrest in 2020 after the tragic killing of George Floyd, an unarmed African American man. While the uprising following Floyd's death was concerned primarily with racism and police brutality, similar outbreaks have been caused by a wide spectrum of topics including abortion and climate change. Often, it is the youth, namely millennials and Gen Z, who lead these movements. Considering that youth is a qualitative term used to describe the period when an individual transitions from the dependence of childhood to the independence of adulthood, it becomes essential to define an age group for statistical conformity. This paper will carry forward with the United Nation's classification of the youth as "those persons between the ages of 15 and 24 years."¹

Indeed, the United Nations estimates that young people make up to 16% of the global population and are expected to grow by a further 7% by 2030.² Given this growing composition, the youth is clearly becoming an essential segment of the population. Considering that a portion of the youth (those over 18) is eligible to vote, it also becomes an important political block. Yet, studies conducted by the United Nations have found out that 2 out of 3 countries do not consider the youth population while making political decisions.³ Furthermore, 1 out of 3 countries require individuals to be at least 25 to participate in government.⁴ This can be interpreted as political institutions underrepresenting the youth.

Due to this underrepresentation, the youth often find their concerns and interests unaddressed and feel adversely impacted by political decision making. However, this underrepresentation may be a result of the low political participation by the youth. The same studies conducted by the United Nations have found out that voter turnout amongst the youth has consecutively been the lowest of all age groups. Consequently, this identifies two challenges:

1. The political and economic underrepresentation of the youth
2. The low political participation by the youth

The low political participation by the youth can be observed in Chile (2019). Political participation in Chile is so poor that studies conducted by the University of Chile have shown over 55% of young adults do not register to vote upon turning 18.⁵ This becomes a major problem when there is a significant disagreement between the government and the youth. Indeed, an example of this came about in 2019, when the Chilean government introduced a 4% hike in metro fares.⁶ Although such a decision seems ordinary, it resulted in major backlash as the youth and other students wrecked subway stations and millions stormed the streets of Santiago to protest the hike and the high costs of living.⁷ After a year of conflict, the Chilean government decided to reverse the hike and even went so far as declaring their intentions to form a new constitution.

As political decisions have multidimensional impacts, it is important to understand the factors that influence politicians. Viewing Chile as an example of the way the youth influence political decisions, some questions arise: What factors can help resolve the two challenges listed above? Does a country's developmental status affect youth participation and representation? Importantly, to what degree does a country's developmental status impact youth involvement in politics and its influence on political decision making? Insights into these questions can be useful in reducing social unrest around the world.

Since a country's developmental stage is qualitative, this paper will observe how two different levels of development in two different countries have impacted youth involvement in politics and its influence on political decisions. The selected countries are the United States (U.S.) and India.

¹ "Definition of Youth." *Definition of Youth*. Web.

² "Youth." *United Nations*. United Nations. Web.

³ "#YouthStats: Public and Civic Participation." *UN: Office of the Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth*. Web.

⁴ *Ibid*.

⁵ "Youth Voter Participation." Web.

⁶ "Chile Students' Mass Fare-dodging Expands into City-wide Protest." *The Guardian*. Guardian News and Media, 18 Oct. 2019. Web.

⁷ *Ibid*.

A Look at the U.S.

In the U.S., the youth make up about 34% of the eligible voting population. In strong contrast, only 6% of state legislators are under the age of 35.⁸ Consequently, the American youth often find their concerns, such as waiving student debt or legalizing marijuana, underrepresented.

It is perhaps because of this underrepresentation that *Teen Vogue* found that youth participation in politics increased – going up from 16% in the 2016 elections to 17% in 2020.⁹ Though the change is minimal in percentage, it is strong enough to influence political decision making. In fact, the *New York Magazine* found that a high percentage of youth participation in the 2020 Elections worked against former President Trump.¹⁰

Since underrepresentation of the youth is prevalent in the U.S. even while youth participation is increasing, it can be interpreted that a high level of development in a country does not necessarily lead to high levels of youth participation in politics. Therefore, it forces one to consider if moderate levels of development like those in India can influence youth involvement in politics.

A Look at India

Since the early 2000s, India has witnessed strong development and managed to shift to a newly industrialized country. Despite this increase in development, youth representation in India has gone down from about 35% in the 1950s to about 15% in 2020.¹¹ (It is important to note that these statistics define youth representation as the number of individuals under 40 in state legislature positions.) Furthermore, about half of the 15% of individuals representing the youth have secured their positions due to political connections or nepotism.¹² This means that the representation of youth in India is far below 15% and actual representation could likely be around 7%, if not in the lower single digits. Since this suggests that representation of the youth in Indian politics is around the same as in the U.S., it

can be interpreted that a country's level of development does not impact youth representation in politics.

Though youth representation is decreasing in India, youth participation is increasing. New voters in India have expanded the voter list by 5% since 2014.¹³ This contrasts with the mere 1% increase in youth participation in the U.S. Apart from the increasing participation in India, youth interest in politics is also increasing. This can be seen in the figure below, where most Indian youths have favorable opinions about youth involvement in politics.



Since youth underrepresentation is prevalent in India, and youth participation and interest are increasing, it would be contradictory to say that a moderate level of development in a country positively impacts youth participation. This is because a more developed country would have higher levels of education, leading to better political understanding and involvement. But then, one must ask, what has increased youth political participation and interest in India if it is not the nation's development?

Upon further research, there appears to be a correlation between the rising use of social media for political propaganda and an increase in youth participation. The reason for this may be that most youth use social media daily – not only connect with peers, but also consume various types of information, including news and politics. When this information takes the form of political propaganda, the youth unconsciously take an interest in politics. Indeed, the volume of political propaganda posted on social media in India increased by a staggering 490% during the 2019 Indian Elections, as

⁸ "Report: Generation without Representation: Young People Severely Underrepresented among Legislators." *Generation Progress*. 12 Mar. 2019. Web.

⁹ Stauffer, Rainesford. "Young Voters Are Just Getting Started." *Teen Vogue*. 04 Nov. 2020. Web.

¹⁰ Axios. "New Poll Confirms That High Youth Turnout Would Doom Trump." *Intelligencer*. 22 Oct. 2020. Web.

¹¹ "Representation of Youth in Electoral Politics: An Analysis of the Indian Election System." *Journal of Politics & Governance*, Vol. 8, No. 2, February 2020. Feb. 2020. Web.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Saumya Tiwari, IndiaSpend.com. "Data Check: 45 Million New, Young Voters Could Play a Key Role in 2019 Elections." *Scroll.in*. Scroll.in, 20 Feb. 2019. Web.

compared to the 2015 Indian Elections.¹⁴ As a result, the 2019 Elections witnessed a record voter participation wherein about 30% of the constituencies were found to be highly impacted by social media platforms like Facebook.¹⁵

Although there are a number of confounding variables impacting the outcome of any government elections, the above statistics make it fair to suggest that, rather than a country's level of development, it is specifically the exchange of political information on social media platforms that influences youth participation in politics. To confirm this correlation, further studies are required.

Conclusion

While the case studies of the U.S. and India have helped form a preliminary understanding of political information on social media impacting youth participation, the second question about the impact of levels of development remains unanswered. This is because despite the U.S. having a major difference in its level of development as compared to India, youth representation in the U.S. is around 6% and youth representation in India is near that or perhaps even lower. It is important to keep in mind that even with a major difference in the level of development of a country, there is only a minor difference in the representation of youth in politics, as seen in the case of the U.S. Further analysis of case studies can help confirm this correlation.

Although youth involvement can be influenced by social media, there is still a need to influence youth representation. It is fair to question whether a young individual has the experience or the ability to make vital political decisions. Therefore, further research into this topic can find solutions to better represent youth concerns and interests, rather than focusing on the raw number of government positions occupied by the youth.

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¹⁴ About the Author Christopher Finnigan Posted In: Featured, Christopher Finnigan, and Posted In: Featured. "Long Read: INDIA Online: How Social Media Will Impact

the 2019 Indian General Election." *South Asia@LSE*. 08 May 2019. Web.

¹⁵ Ibid.

AN ANALYSIS OF THE MULTI-LEVEL EFFECTS OF THE CORONAVIRUS

by Ria Patel

Abstract

In light of the Coronavirus pandemic, this paper will address its economic consequences, both globally and on specific market sectors. The pandemic created a great deal of uncertainty across the world, spawning a recession unlike any other: output and revenue dropped as unemployment climbed; businesses were forced to swiftly devise methods to remain open under a national lockdown; particular sectors, namely the restaurant industry, abruptly spiraled downwards and continue to face a grim future. Importantly, different regions of the United States were affected disproportionately, with cities like New York shaken up entirely from shuttered businesses and alarming job losses. Closely studying the economic patterns brought about by the virus is vital not only in planning a recovery, but also in predicting how industries and markets will function in the long-term.



Editor's Note: This paper was written in January 2021 and originally scheduled to be released in March 2021; as such, all metrics refer to 2020 data unless otherwise specified.

The Long and Winding Road to Recovery

No one expected that a small outbreak from Wuhan, China would have such far-reaching implications on all aspects of modern life, from public health to economics. The global price tag of the virus is estimated to add up to \$2.7 trillion.¹ With an economic impact much worse than the 2008 financial crisis, COVID-19 shook up almost all sectors rapidly.

The hospitality sector is known to have suffered the most: widespread lockdowns prevented people from leaving their homes for leisurely purposes, confronting restaurants with an ultimatum: adapt or die. Due to decreased foot traffic, small businesses were forced to adapt to new methods, or risk shutting down completely. Consumer trends evolved nearly overnight, with a sharp increase in online ordering and takeout. Even post-pandemic, the restaurant industry will likely be reshaped permanently; these trends could become the new norm.

New York City showcases the ongoing struggle of restaurants and other small businesses: what were once bustling streets of tourists crowding around for bites to eat are now scattered with outdoor seating arrangements for the dining spots that managed to pull through.

Although the future is uncertain, this pandemic will leave more than just a scratch on global economics and business in the long run. We will have to take initiatives on global, national, and citywide fronts to gradually reconstruct and strengthen ourselves economically. These initiatives could include more stimulus checks, grants for small businesses, and better incentives for workers.

Covid's Impact on the Global Economy

Globalization has offered a multitude of economic benefits; businesses have been able to expand overseas, outsource their services, and take advantage of lower costs of resources. Ultimately, businesses have been able to boost profits by offering cheaper products, allowing consumers to save more in times of economic uncertainty. Nations have been able to grow their economies due to increased capital flows and free trade. However, the quick spread and broad impact of the coronavirus has unearthed a drawback of globalization: we have become highly economically interdependent.

After the initial outbreak in China was classified as a pandemic, there was a large dip in foreign investments. Global foreign direct investment (FDI) shrank by 5-15% due to the pandemic, according to the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development.² Because the global supply chain slowed down, businesses had to scramble to find ways to stay afloat.³ This brought attention to the US's reliance on China, and it served as a wake-up call for industries (such as manufacturing) to diversify their risk. In the future, it is likely that industries will make conscious efforts to become more self-sufficient to reduce the impacts of globalization. It has been suggested that governments should reconsider which resources and products should be imported and which should be produced domestically.⁴

New importing and exporting strategies are just the beginning of the extensive consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic. Global markets reacted poorly to the breakout; in the US, the S&P 500 experienced its worst week since 2008, and treasury yields hit an all-time low.³ Unemployment rates climbed, especially as heightened concern for the virus and social distancing measures prevented

¹ Rae, Madeline. "The Challenge of Measuring the Economic Impact of Coronavirus." *SAGE Business Cases*. London: SAGE Publications, Inc., 2021. 6 Feb 2021.

² "Impact of COVID-19 on the Global Manufacturing Industry, 2020." *PR Newswire*, 16 Apr. 2020, www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/impact-of-covid-19-on-the-global-manufacturing-industry-2020-301042150.html.

³ Musmar, Frank. *The Effect of Coronavirus on the Global Economy*. Edited by Efraim Karsh, Begin-Sadat Center for Strategic Studies, 2020, pp. 89-91, *The COVID-19*

Crisis: Impact and Implications, www.jstor.org/stable/resrep26356.20. Accessed 6 Feb. 2021.

⁴ Gerstenfeld, Manfred. *Economic Preparations for the Post-Coronavirus Era*. Edited by Efraim Karsh, Begin-Sadat Center for Strategic Studies, 2020, pp. 94-98, *The COVID-19 Crisis: Impact and Implications*, www.jstor.org/stable/resrep26356.22. Accessed 6 Feb. 2021.

restaurant dining and international travel, leading to massive layoffs in both industries. Just between February and April of 2020, 8.1 million jobs were lost in the US alone. Unemployment in the month of April was higher than it was during any month of the Great Depression.⁵ The initial downturn began with news of a pandemic that led to a global market crash, followed by national economies suffering from a disrupted supply chain. Businesses struggled to operate because they manufactured (or outsourced to companies) overseas, and a lockdown in the US resulted in a direct additional impact on businesses, particularly in the hospitality industry. This ultimately boiled down to millions of Americans left jobless – the unemployment rate in May 2020 was estimated to have reached a whopping 16%.⁶ These statistics only represent the initial shock of the pandemic; economies continued to take damage in many countries throughout the continuing months. The unemployment rate also does not account for those who lost hopes for a job and stopped searching for one, so the figure could actually be much higher.

We are all left wondering what lies ahead of us economically. After cases drop substantially, some call for an immediate reversal of the economic shutdown to ensure a quick recovery. In reality, we cannot guarantee that the economy will climb back up as fast as it fell. At the time of writing, the US unemployment rate stands at 6.7%, demonstrating progress.⁷

The recovery process will be unlike any from the past. Previous recessions have been triggered by economic imbalances, such as the housing bubble, and followed by longer recovery periods to correct deeper issues.⁸ The COVID recession started with markets plummeting in fear of the virus and continued with indefinite social distancing mandates. In February of 2020, the

economy was actually in decent shape, so experts anticipate a speedy recovery after the economic freeze.⁸ They projected the economy to “unfreeze” during the summer to reduce the spread of the virus, but as soon as restrictions were being lifted, cases surged. Such sensitivity creates economic uncertainty in predicting a recovery timeline as any attempts to jumpstart the economy are likely to result in another spike of cases.

The pandemic has proven how large-scale economic events can have a profound effect on an individual level. In other words, there is still a bigger picture: we have not yet considered the deep-rooted hardships of small businesses across the nation, which have arguably faced the brunt of the financial impact.

Covid's Impact on Small Businesses

Micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSME) account for over 90% of all firms worldwide, provide for 70% of all employment, and make up more than half of the global economy.⁹ It is no surprise that the recent hardships of small businesses have been reflected in the economy by rising unemployment and high rates of closure. From February to April, the number of active business owners fell by 3.3 million, or 22%, and these losses continued into May and June.¹⁰

In response, the federal government passed the CARES Act, consisting of a \$2.2 trillion stimulus package to help those financially impacted by the pandemic. The relief programs for small businesses under the package included low-interest loans, forgivable loans, and grants. On top of additional stimulus from the Small Business Association (SBA) and aid from the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP), the federal programs were able to contribute to the rebound of small businesses, helping raise

⁵ Strain, Michael R. *Covid-19's Impact on Small Business: Deep, Sudden, and Lingering*. American Enterprise Institute, 2020, www.jstor.org/stable/resrep24602. Accessed 6 Feb. 2021.

⁶ Kochhar, Rakesh. “Unemployment Rose Higher in Three Months of COVID-19 than It Did in Two Years of the Great Recession.” *Pew Research Center*, Pew Research Center, 26 Aug. 2020, www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2020/06/11/unemployment-rose-higher-in-three-months-of-covid-19-than-it-did-in-two-years-of-the-great-recession/.

⁷ Amadeo, Kimberly. “What Is the Current US Unemployment Rate?” *The Balance*, 13 Feb. 2021, www.thebalance.com/current-us-unemployment-rate-statistics-and-news-3305733.

⁸ Strain, Michael R. *Covid-19's Impact on Small Business: Deep, Sudden, and Lingering*. American Enterprise Institute, 2020, www.jstor.org/stable/resrep24602. Accessed 6 Feb. 2021.

⁹ Dasewicz, Agnes, et al. *Financing Small Business Is Critical for a Strong Post-Covid Recovery*. Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS), 2020, www.jstor.org/stable/resrep26410. Accessed 6 Feb. 2021.

¹⁰ Fairlie, Robert. “The impact of COVID-19 on small business owners: Evidence from the first 3 months after widespread social-distancing restrictions.” *Journal of economics & management strategy*, 10.1111/jems.12400. 27 Aug. 2020.

employment by 2.5 million in May.¹¹ However, considering that many businesses were still unable to reopen and others continued to operate at a loss, the initial shock's aftermath was not repairable right away. Small businesses will not be able to return to normal as long as they are restricted under lockdown measures, regardless of stimulus.

The service sector fared far worse than the manufacturing sector because of permanent revenue loss. Manufacturing companies experienced decreased demand for goods and disrupted supply chains, but this could be made up for in the future. They could continue to operate normally, albeit with social distancing restrictions. Consumers may purchase more of what they were unable to purchase before, and partial backlogs of orders could be resolved. On the other hand, the service sector was forced to almost entirely cease operations and will be largely unable to recover from such losses. For instance, as restaurants open up, families are less likely to eat out more to make up for the times they did not during the pandemic. In other words, all pent-up demand is not created equal.

With the goal of retaining productive capacity in mind, small businesses will need continued fiscal support in the months to come. The Congressional Budget Office predicts an 8.6% unemployment rate by the fourth quarter of 2021 with the current pace of support offered to small businesses.¹² Just as the lockdown itself will not reverse overnight, getting small businesses back on track will not happen instantly. Restrictions will gradually loosen up as conditions improve, and even then, it is not guaranteed that consumers will immediately return to their old spending habits. Consumer preferences for dining and entertainment could permanently be altered. To illustrate, people will prefer online streaming services to in-theater experiences. That being said, not all industries will be able to return to their pre-pandemic states. We should expect some to shrink

and others to expand as the economy returns to a new normal.

Financing small businesses is crucial for a strong post-virus economic recovery. The small business sector is the backbone of the US workforce; the government must continue to lend support as restrictions ease and consumer demand gradually rises. President Biden has acknowledged this responsibility, proposing a \$440 billion program to fund small businesses and communities and signing a \$1.9T relief package in May of 2021. Without helping small businesses, we simply cannot expect our economy to reach its pre-COVID state on its own during the near future.

Covid's Impact on Restaurants

Data indicates that the initial economic downfall affected the majority of major industries, with the exception of agriculture.¹³ During May and June, many industries (like real estate and manufacturing) were able to partially bounce back. However, the service and hospitality industries continued to suffer; the overall number of restaurant owners dropped by 22% in April, despite some being able to turn to alternative methods to stay open.¹³ The Bureau of Economic Analysis calculated that overall restaurant sales have fallen by 70%.¹² These numbers, demonstrating the impact of the lockdown, pose a large threat. The US restaurant industry is valued at nearly \$900 billion, translating to 4% of GDP. At the peak of the pandemic, 8 million restaurant workers were unemployed.¹⁴ The repairment of this sector is essential to recovery because of the significant role it plays in the broader national output, as well as individuals and households facing unemployment.¹⁴

As indoor dining became prohibited in many areas, restaurants had to quickly come up with new ways to continue business. Many turned to online ordering and delivery services; others implemented curbside pickup and outdoor dining. It was a sink or swim situation; those who could not

¹¹ Snell, Kelsey. "What's Inside The Senate's \$2 Trillion Coronavirus Aid Package." *NPR*, NPR, 26 Mar. 2020, www.npr.org/2020/03/26/821457551/whats-inside-the-senate-s-2-trillion-coronavirus-aid-package.

¹² Strain, Michael R. *Covid-19's Impact on Small Business: Deep, Sudden, and Lingering*. American Enterprise Institute, 2020, www.jstor.org/stable/resrep24602. Accessed 6 Feb. 2021.

¹³ Fairlie, Robert. "The impact of COVID-19 on small business owners: Evidence from the first 3 months after widespread social-distancing restrictions." *Journal of economics & management strategy*, 10.1111/jems.12400. 27 Aug. 2020.

¹⁴ "COVID-19's Impact on the Restaurant Industry." *Goodway Group*, 11 Sept. 2020, goodwaygroup.com/blog/how-covid-19-is-impacting-the-restaurant-industry.

find ways to adapt were left in the dust. The National Restaurant Association predicts that tens of thousands of restaurants will be permanently closed because of the pandemic. Based on a survey of restaurants that are currently closed, 55% of them do not have enough customers to justify reopening.¹⁵ Other popular reasons include not having adequate staff or safe social distancing measures for indoor or outdoor dining. Many restaurants continue to operate off-premises; the majority of them use the justification that it is too soon to allow on-premises dining. Restaurants are still wary of reopening, as they encounter risks from both public health and financial standpoints. Even as they do reopen, they may struggle with startup costs and low sales after being closed for a prolonged period.

In addition to restaurants lacking the means to operate, consumer trends have undergone a massive transformation, posing as another obstacle to reopening. Prior to the pandemic, consumers would typically spend about 50% of their monthly food budget on dining out.¹⁶ This percentage has likely decreased since then, as people are making fewer visits to restaurants (foot traffic to casual restaurants has dropped by 67%).¹⁷ Consequently, there has been greater interest in meal kit services and home cooking, which poses an emerging substitution threat to restaurants.

Even with the reduced consumption of traditional dining, digital ordering has rapidly increased: revenue from online ordering in 2020 stood at around \$45 billion, surpassing the earlier \$41 billion estimate for 2021.¹⁸ The growth of delivery apps has pulled forward 3 years of consumer spending. Independent restaurants have been moving towards this technology to maximize revenue; over-the-phone ordering is relatively easy for restaurants to implement, and it happens to be the most popular method (63% of orders are made via phone call).¹⁷ Customers have also taken advantage of curbside pickup options, but research shows that this is generally the case just for nearby

restaurants; this suggests people prefer traveling shorter distances to get food.

Financial and health uncertainty is currently holding back the economy from growing, so we cannot expect the restaurant industry to return to normalcy until public health is secured and all restrictions are lifted. Nonetheless, advances are being made. Out of the 2.5 million jobs that were added in May, 1.5 million were in the restaurant industry.¹⁹ Another bright side is that, in the past, independent restaurants have proven to be resilient in aggregate. Restaurants have continuously faced intense competition and shrinking margins from food chains' predatory pricing, so the failure of independent restaurants is nothing new. In the case of the lockdown, the preservation of sunk costs (including specialized equipment and expensive building systems) can result in cost-efficiency if a new operator were to step in.¹⁸

Even when indoor dining becomes fully possible post-lockdown, a key question lingers: will people still want to eat out as much as they did before? Coronavirus-induced consumer trends could possibly become the new normal, so we anticipate major structural changes to the restaurant industry as a whole. Indoor dining may continue to decline in the long run, and full-service restaurants may opt for larger takeout areas and smaller dining rooms. Furthermore, the hiring process for restaurant employees is likely to change with a lower emphasis on waiters and a higher emphasis on delivery drivers and takeout cooks.²⁰ As fewer employees may be needed, restaurants may invest more in automation, including robots and smart technologies for more efficient and contactless takeout systems. Businesses could then drastically cut their costs in restaurant operation if they are simply offering takeout and/or delivery. As we can see, COVID-19 has caused not only immediate economic consequences, but it has also changed consumer preferences in ways that may outlive the

¹⁵ Klein, Danny. "Restaurant Industry Has Already Lost \$120 Billion." *QSR Magazine*, www.qsrmagazine.com/fast-food/restaurant-industry-has-already-lost-120-billion.

¹⁶ "COVID-19's Impact on the Restaurant Industry." *Goodway Group*, 11 Sept. 2020, goodwaygroup.com/blog/how-covid-19-is-impacting-the-restaurant-industry.

¹⁷ "The Impact of COVID-19 on Eating, Restaurants and Fast Food Chains." *MiQ*, 24 Aug. 2020, staging.wearmiq.com/blog/the-impact-of-covid-19-on-eating-restaurants-and-fast-food-chains/.

¹⁸ "COVID-19 Era Serves Up Big Changes for U.S. Restaurants." *Morgan Stanley*, 17 July 2020, www.morganstanley.com/ideas/coronavirus-restaurant-trends.

¹⁹ Klein, Danny. "Restaurant Industry Has Already Lost \$120 Billion." *QSR Magazine*, www.qsrmagazine.com/fast-food/restaurant-industry-has-already-lost-120-billion.

²⁰ Haas, Stacey, et al. "How Restaurants Can Thrive in the next Normal." *McKinsey & Company*, McKinsey & Company, 26 May 2020, www.mckinsey.com/industries/retail/our-insights/how-restaurants-can-thrive-in-the-next-normal#.

pandemic and reinvent the restaurant sector entirely.

A Case Study: New York City

Research shows that restaurant declines have been inconsistent across the country, with consumer traffic to limited-service restaurants seeing the largest percentage drop in densely populated states such as New York.²⁰ Much of this can be explained through densely populated states having different timelines for restaurant openings because they impose more restrictions to prevent spread.

New York City as a whole has taken a substantial economic blow in effort to keep cases low. Until February 2020, New York City's restaurant industry was booming. The number of citywide restaurants had been increasing for the past few years, reflecting immense growth in business and adding a great deal of jobs along the way. But the city soon became the epicenter of the virus, leaving its restaurant industry devastated. Between February and June, the city lost nearly 800,000 jobs (again, potentially an undercount). Several examined sectors (such as healthcare, food retail, and tech) experienced employment declines under 10%. The city's restaurant sector, in contrast, took a hefty hit, losing an estimated 68% of jobs; employment plunged from 315,000 to 91,000 by April.²¹ It is projected that over 50% of New York City restaurants will be permanently closed within six to twelve months. If this is true, the closures will cost the city between 100,000 to 160,000 additional jobs.²¹

To combat job losses, the city expanded outdoor dining onto the streets, capped fees for takeout apps, and extended small business loans. After outdoor dining returned, total industry employment crept up to 174,000 by August.²¹ Indoor dining opened back up in September, with limited capacity and required temperature checks. Restaurants were also allowed to add a 10% COVID charge on a customer's bill if they chose to eat on-premises. This system was short lived – indoor

dining permits were reversed in a matter of weeks as cases surged again.

The actions that the city has taken to support restaurants have been effective in boosting employment and incentivizing reopening, even with the major challenge of balancing economic and health interests. As indicated, New York City still has relatively tighter restrictions than other areas of the country, but many expect gradual deregulation once the virus is under control. In all of New York State, restaurants and bars only contributed 1.43% of COVID cases from September through October.²² If cases are controlled strictly now, they may diminish quicker, and the prospect of reopening restaurants at higher capacity may be more likely in the coming months.

Conclusion

The aftermath of the pandemic ultimately revealed the interdependence of national markets and the fragility of the economy in times of crisis. Although the situation itself has been detrimental to the global economy, it can be agreed that it has taught the world a variety of lessons applicable to the future: whether it is in terms of handling the fallback of specific sectors, combating alarming unemployment rates, or regulating our economic reliance on other countries. If we can continue to remain optimistic, follow social distancing rules, support local businesses, and provide federal aid where necessary, we will hopefully accelerate the speed of recovery.

²⁰ "DiNapoli: Restaurant Industry Critical to New York City's Economy." *Office of the New York State Comptroller*, 1 Oct. 2020, www.osc.state.ny.us/press/releases/2020/10/dinapoli-restaurant-industry-critical-new-york-citys-economy.

²¹ Hackford, Rob. "New York State: Restaurants, Bars Accounted for 1.43% of COVID-19 Cases over Last 3 Months." *WGRZ*,

12 Dec. 2020, www.wgrz.com/article/news/health/coronavirus/new-york-state-restaurants-bars-accounted-for-143-of-covid-19-cases-over-last-3-months/71-02e600f3-ae63-4f87-90e8-f80b6f6bd304.

THE CONSEQUENCES OF MELTING ARCTIC ICE AND THE FUTURE ARCTIC ECONOMY

by John Li

Abstract

This paper examines the economic implications of melting Arctic ice. Firstly, it outlines the impact of melting Arctic ice as a result of climate change, and what this means for the Arctic economy. Secondly, the paper discusses the region's economic opportunities and highlights specific sectors of relevance. Then the focus turns to key players in the region, looking at their available resources and future national strategy. Finally, the paper considers potential risk factors in future Arctic economic development as state actors increase their economic presence in the region.



Introduction

The Changing Economy of the Arctic. In recent years, key scientists and world leaders have increasingly emphasized the dangers of climate change on vulnerable regions such as the Arctic. Melting ice caps and rising sea levels are among the potentially catastrophic and irreversible effects of climate change. Given the importance of the Arctic pole on Earth's environment, climate effects there will impact other regions around the globe. Should Arctic Sea ice completely melt, major influential cities may flood, including New York, London, and Shanghai. Whole countries, such as the Maldives and Bangladesh, would be underwater, threatening the lives of billions of people.

The Arctic has historically lacked economic relevance. (Only four million people live in the Arctic Circle.)¹ Ships rarely travel to the North Pole; those that do make the journey tend to be icebreakers, scientific ships, and military vessels. Recognizable cities in the region, such as Murmansk and Tromsø, are of little economic importance overall. The region's brutal climate and relative isolation contribute to underdevelopment and low population numbers.

Considering the size of the Arctic, its economic output is vastly disproportionate. For example, Canada's Nunavut territory contains 21 percent of the country's land area but only contributes to 0.13% of economic output.² This is a common pattern across the Arctic. Although many Americans perceive Alaska as having notable fishing and oil industries, its economy only makes up 0.20% of the United States' total output while making up 16 percent of the country's land.³ Shockingly, Greenland is larger than Saudi Arabia, but has a smaller economy than the tiny island nation of Aruba.

While climate change brings about a new emphasis on environmental challenges in the Arctic

(and the Earth as a whole), it also provides new economic opportunities. In general, a warming climate in the Arctic means the region is more accessible for economic development and exploitation. Significant declines in year-round ice means extracting its vast natural resources becomes more viable. A natural barrier for ships will no longer exist, providing new trade routes in an increasingly globalized world. Current and future competition for such territory and resources will have wide-ranging economic implications.

Oil & Gas. Estimates indicate that the Arctic region holds 22 percent of the total undiscovered oil and gas resources, specifically 13 percent of the world's undiscovered oil resources (~90 billion barrels) and 30 percent of the world's undiscovered natural gas resources (~1,669 trillion cubic feet). Gas deposits make up 75% of the oil & gas resources available. Oil output may top out at three million barrels per day, while gas output could rise to five million barrels per day.⁴

Arctic drilling maintains a key advantage over other regions in one critical aspect: the Arctic is governed by politically stable countries: These include the United States, Russia, Canada, and Norway. Other countries likely to be linked to Arctic oil drilling in some capacity – China, the United Kingdom, and various European Union member states – all tend to have stable governments. Compared to crisis-ridden areas like the Middle East, the Arctic provides a lower risk environment for resource extraction.

Even though there has been strong interest in Arctic drilling in the previous decade, recent developments in the macroeconomy have deterred investors. The COVID-19 pandemic dramatically cut demand, and prices have remained low. WTI and Brent Crude – two major oil indexes – both hover around \$50 per barrel at the time of writing (Jan. 2021), so there is currently no motivation for

¹ "Arctic People." *National Snow and Ice Data Center*, National Snow and Ice Data Center, 4 May 2020, nsidc.org/cryosphere/arctic-meteorology/arctic-people.html#:~:text=In%20total%2C%20only%20about%204,much%20as%20twenty%20thousand%20years.

² Government of Canada, Statistics Canada. "Gross Domestic Product, Expenditure-Based, Provincial and Territorial, Annual." *Government of Canada, Statistics Canada*, Government of Canada, Statistics Canada, 9 Nov. 2020, www150.statcan.gc.ca/t1/tbl1/en/cv.action?pid=3610022201.

³ Siebeneck, Todd, et al. "Gross Domestic Product by State, 3rd Quarter 2020." *Bureau of Economic Analysis*, U.S. Department of Commerce, 23 Dec. 2020, www.bea.gov/sites/default/files/2020-12/qgdpstate1220_0.pdf.

⁴ Long, et al. "Preliminary Geospatial Analysis of Arctic Ocean Hydrocarbon Resources." *U.S. Department of Energy*, U.S. Department of Energy, Oct. 2008, pdfs.semanticscholar.org/fd70/096562cc0fe4951ff0abdbec556b2cf6e6ad.pdf.

oil companies to aggressively expand operations in the Arctic Circle (the average closing price of a barrel in 2021 was \$63).

However, noteworthy explorations for Arctic oil may set blueprints for future drilling despite their short-term failures. Shell spent over \$10 billion on oil exploration and drilling in the Chukchi Sea before it abandoned its program in late 2015. High breakeven points due to the cost of drilling in such harsh conditions make it unfeasible. By some estimates, oil companies need prices to rise into the triple digits for such exploration programs to be commercially viable.⁵ However, as the decline in existing oil supplies continues to accelerate, the untapped Arctic region will become increasingly appealing. Given inevitable changes in the environment, it is not a matter of if but when.

Shipping & Trade. The decline in Arctic Sea ice will allow for new trade routes to open as it provides alternatives to the established “shortcuts” of the Panama and Suez Canals. As 80 percent of the world’s industrial production occurs north of the 30th parallel, Arctic shipping routes provide advantages in decreased shipping costs, time, fuel consumption, and emissions.⁶ An ice-free Arctic means they could head through the Bering Strait and directly toward Europe. Instead of a 13,000-mile route, they would travel a little over half the distance, at 7,000 miles.

Additionally, the Arctic routes would be a much safer option for businesses. For example, Japan’s port of Nagoya – where Toyota exports most of its cars – typically has ships sailing to the European ports of Rotterdam and Hamburg. They travel through extensive, costly, and potentially dangerous routes. In Asia alone, they must travel through the South China Sea, the Strait of Malacca into the Indian Ocean, and through the Strait of Hormuz into the Red Sea, just to get to the Suez Canal. Each one of them is a complicated geopolitical flashpoint. Crises could seriously threaten the economies of several key players and regions.

Although difficult to accurately gauge, most scientists and models conclude that by mid-century the world will see an ice-free summer in the Arctic. Further developments in icebreaking technologies and shipbuilding techniques could allow for commercial ships to sail through during the winter months. In short, we could see the Arctic become navigable for shipping and trade for up to 10 months of a year.⁷ There are currently a few limited paths open, but they are underutilized due to ice having not melted enough for commercial ships. As such routes become more navigable, they will become the preferred route due to massive reductions in cost and time. In 2005, Russia and several Scandinavian nations agreed to open the Northern Sea Route along the Arctic Circle. It is 40 percent shorter compared to the traditional Suez route used between the North American east coast and Europe to East Asia.

With little infrastructure built up and no accurate way to predict ice flows, it is currently too risky for ships to travel through existing Arctic routes. However, as ice continues to melt, there will be an accelerated switch toward Arctic paths. For countries dependent on exports such as China and Vietnam, they must gain access to the Arctic waterways. Failing to do so puts their economies at the risk of being uncompetitive on the global market. Therefore, as the world’s preeminent shipping short-cut becomes worthwhile, it will transform existing shipping and international trade networks.

Tourism. Although the Arctic’s vast emptiness and dangerous conditions make it an unappealing place to live, such characteristics drive its growth in tourism. One such example is Finland’s Lapland region – while making up 27 percent of the country’s land area, it only makes up 1/40th of its economy.⁸ However, in the past couple of years it has seen double-digit growth in tourism, fueled by travelers coming from the United States (41.3% growth), China (20.5%), France (11.8%), and the Netherlands (11.5%). From 2018 to 2019, the tourism services industry – which includes travel

⁵ Mathiesen, Karl. “Can Shell Afford Arctic Oil?” | Karl Mathiesen.” *The Guardian*, Guardian News and Media, 12 Aug. 2015, www.theguardian.com/environment/2015/aug/12/can-shell-afford-to-drill-for-oil-in-the-arctic.

⁶ Ostreng, Willy. “The Future of Shipping & Trade in Arctic Waters.” *World Policy Institute*, World Policy Institute, 8

Apr. 2015, web.archive.org/web/20170320144354/www.worldpolicy.org/blog/2015/04/08/future-shipping-trade-arctic-waters.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ “Finland.” *The Arctic Institute*, The Arctic Institute, 19 June 2020, www.thearcticinstitute.org/countries/finland/.

agencies, tourism operations, and other tourism-related services – saw 20 percent growth while the complimentary accommodations industry saw 15 percent growth.⁹ Recognizing the importance of tourism in driving economic growth, the region’s administration put the industry as a priority when devising its economic development goals.

An additional branch of tourism benefits from melting Arctic ice is cruises. The melting sea ice allows cruise ships to transit through routes such as the Northwest Passage, giving the industry another region to push into. In 2016, the cruise ship *Crystal Serenity* sailed through the Northwest Passage route with 1,000 passengers. Unlike the specially designed ships that normally sail through the region, the *Crystal Serenity* was an “ordinary” cruise ship.

As the Arctic’s melting continues to accelerate, new opportunities will arise for such regions to fulfill the desires of those seeking remoteness and isolation in their travel destinations. For local businesses looking to capitalize on expanding tourism, there will be new opportunities to partner with major travel agencies like Thomas Cook and TUI. For cruise lines, decreasing ice levels will allow them to tap the last unsaturated region of the world for its customers.

National Prospects

United States. The offshore areas under the United States’ exclusive economic zone (EEZ) contain a substantial amount of oil and gas reserves. With an estimated 23 billion barrels of oil reserves and 108 trillion cubic feet in natural gas reserves on the Outer Continental Shelf in the Beaufort and Chukchi Seas alone, major Arctic drillers such as BP, Shell, ExxonMobil, and Chevron would profit tremendously. The United States has the largest supply of oil and the second largest supply of natural gas. Data from the Department of Energy and US Geological Survey (USGS) indicate that American reserves amount to 20 percent of the Arctic’s total oil and gas reserves.¹⁰

Additionally, it is thought that sizable oil and gas reserves remain in the Alaska North Slope region, home to Prudhoe Bay Oil Field. A 2017 USGS assessment estimated that the North Slope region has around 8.8 billion barrels of oil reserves and 39 trillion cubic feet in natural gas reserves. Considering that oil reserves in the Alaskan region are much larger than the developed Permian Basin and East Texas Oil Reserve, it is likely that the Alaskan oil reserves becomes a natural transition area for the oil & gas industry. Advancements in hydraulic fracturing and other drilling technologies may allow deeper shale formations to be utilized in extraction operations.

When Arctic shipping routes become sustainable, the Bering Strait will be a key chokepoint for megaships transporting goods from Asian factories to their respective Western markets. Alaskan cities are in a natural position to serve as a stopping point for commercial ships. Like Anchorage’s expansion in the late 20th century due to its role as a refueling stop for international flights to and from North America to East Asia, various ports and coastal towns in the state may see increased economic growth because of their new relevance in global trade. Additionally, a rising US military presence in the region will lead to further infrastructure development and economic stimulus for the state. The Trump Administration initiated the Polar Security Cutter Program to replace America’s single 45-year-old icebreaker, *USCGC Polar Star*. Under the Coast Guard, this 6-ship class would deploy to the Arctic to enforce US maritime law and protect national interests. Given its strategic position, Alaska is a logical place for Arctic bases to be constructed.

Among the 50 states, Alaska stands to benefit the most from an economic investment surge into the Arctic region. Given that 85 percent of the state budget is funded by oil revenues, accelerated development in the state because of expanded drilling operations could lead to economic boost for the state.¹¹ Interestingly, new influxes of cash would allow the state to further expand its Alaska Permanent Fund, viewed by

⁹ “Infographic: 10 Facts about Tourism in Lapland 2020.” *House of Lapland*, House of Lapland, 21 Feb. 2020, www.lapland.fi/business/facts-figures/infographic-10-facts-about-tourism-in-lapland-2020/.

¹⁰ Long, et al. “Preliminary Geospatial Analysis of Arctic Ocean Hydrocarbon Resources.” *U.S. Department of*

Energy, U.S. Department of Energy, Oct. 2008, pdfs.semanticscholar.org/fd70/096562cc0fe4951ff0abdbec556b2cf6e6ad.pdf.

¹¹ “Economy.” *State of Alaska*, State of Alaska, alaska.gov/kids/learn/economy.htm.

many as one of the earliest forms of Universal Basic Income (UBI). As implementation of automation revs up, it would put the state ahead of the curve in combating a resulting job crisis for workers in industries like oil & gas.

Russia. Of twenty major provinces and basins in Russia, ten have proven reserves. Enormous areas marked include the East Barents, South Kara, Laptev, East Siberian, and Chukchi Basins. Compared to the United States, the Russian government has moved quickly to develop areas for drilling. Although Gazprom and Rosneft have 16 and 29 exploration licenses respectively, Russia's Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment and Ministry of Energy is looking to expand operations by allowing strategic investments from foreign companies.¹²

However, geopolitical hurdles and risk factors have put off many private companies. In 2011, state-owned Rosneft and ExxonMobil signed a \$600 million joint venture to develop Russia's oil reserves in the Black and Kara seas. However, the continued situation in Ukraine and corresponding American sanctions on the Russian economy led to Exxon's withdrawal of the deal in early 2018. There was some speculation that BP – which is a stakeholder in Rosneft – would take on the venture, but nothing has yet to materialize.¹³

Although Russia will face hefty financial hurdles in exploiting its vast Arctic reserves, it is unlikely it would prevent the country from pushing forward with its plans – recent industry news suggests that Gazprom has been directed to focus on the Kara Sea deposits while Rosneft will focus on the Barents Sea and areas around Okhotsk (Ernst & Young). Lukoil, Russia's largest private oil company, has suggested the creation of a “National Company.” This conglomerate would be made up of private firms seeking to gain oil contracts from the Russian government. In short, Russia's extensive resources in the Arctic are an

extraordinary asset to have; melting Arctic ice will enable them to further exploit its natural resources as it attempts to reposition itself as a world economic power.

Canada. Despite Canada's considerable Arctic resources, particularly in the form of gas and minerals, there is little that can be extracted due to strict environmental policies. In late 2016, President Obama and Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau issued a joint statement against Arctic drilling, citing environmental concerns. It included a five-year ban on drilling, which includes a complete ban in all Canadian territorial waters.¹⁴ This statement was to be reviewed every five years as the ban ends; the incoming Biden Administration is likely to support an extension of the ban as it seeks the United States to a carbon-neutral economy by 2050.

Canada's role in the Arctic as a result will likely revolve around enforcing maritime law and protecting national interests, particularly Northwest Passage. Although many parts of the route still contain huge amounts of ice, it is quickly becoming more viable for travel; for example, in 2013 the MS Nordic Orion passed through a virtually ice-free Northwest Passage during a trip from Finland to Vancouver. Compared to traditional routes, the ship saved \$80,000 in fuel costs alone. This allowed the ship to carry 25 percent more cargo.¹⁵

Canada will need to boost its investment and focus on its valuable trade routes; due to a current lack of routes, the country's Coast Guard and maritime units have little to no assets in the region. Without using its military, crisis or disaster situations would be impossible to reach. Any ship that takes severe damage or sinks would be hopeless. Even if only half the ships who currently use the Panama Canal decide to utilize the faster and cheaper Northwest Passage, Canada is looking at 6,500 to 7,000 ships a year. Out of safety and security concerns, Canada has an obligation to

¹² “Arctic Oil and Gas.” *Ernst & Young*, Ernst & Young, 2013, www.ourenergypolicy.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/09/Arctic_oil_and_gas.pdf.

¹³ Bershidsky, Leonid. “Tillerson Refused to Do Another Russia Deal.” *Bloomberg.com*, Bloomberg, 13 Mar. 2018, www.bloomberg.com/opinion/articles/2018-03-13/tillerson-refused-to-do-another-deal-with-russia.

¹⁴ “United States-Canada Joint Arctic Leaders' Statement.” *National Archives and Records Administration*, National Archives and Records Administration, 20 Dec. 2016,

obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/the-press-office/2016/12/20/united-states-canada-joint-arctic-leaders-statement.

¹⁵ McGarrity, John, and Henning Gloystein. “Big Freighter Traverses Northwest Passage for 1st Time.” *Reuters*, Thomson Reuters, 27 Sept. 2013, www.reuters.com/article/us-shipping-coal-arctic/big-freighter-traverses-northwest-passage-for-1st-time-idUSBRE98Q0K720130927.

commit large amounts of money and assets to monitor its Arctic regions. Given the sheer value of its Northwest Passage and other Arctic Routes, Canada could charge a sizable transit fee to cover national costs of managing and monitoring the region, similar to how Panama and Egypt create toll fees near the million-dollar mark for container ships using their canals.

Norway. Much like the United States and Russia, Norway's oil & gas industry is quite large and critical to their economy; in 2019, crude oil and natural gas accounted for nearly half – 47 percent – of all the country's exports. It is Europe's largest oil producer, with daily production reaching 4 million barrels.¹⁶ With its North Sea oil supplies dwindling, the country needs to look elsewhere, specifically the Barents Sea. The waterway is estimated to hold 30 percent of the country's undiscovered oil reserves and 43 percent of the country's undiscovered natural gas reserves.¹⁷

Norway's Arctic strategy would revolve in developing its oil reserves in the Barents Sea and securing the region in the wake of heightened tensions with Russia. Recently, the country passed its final legal hurdle last December when its Supreme Court upheld government plans for expanded Arctic exploration to the disappointment of Greenpeace and other environmental groups.

As a smaller country economically, militarily, and politically, as compared to the aforementioned nations, much of its security concerns will revolve around making sure Russia does not encroach on its territory, particularly its oil reserves in the Barents Sea. Such security policy will involve heavy cooperation with NATO, particularly the United States and United Kingdom. Russian aggression in Crimea and military exercises in the Arctic region have led to rotational deployments of U.S. Marines and exercises with the Royal Marines in recent years. Notably, it is the first time a foreign military force has been based on Norwegian soil since WWII, emphasizing the newfound importance of the region. In March 2020, Norway hosted 7,500 American troops in the NATO military exercise *Cold Response 20*. In summary,

the country has shown a clear intent to exploit its Arctic resources and is serious about protecting this valuable territory.

Risk Factors

Climate. The punishing climate in the Arctic sees temperatures drop below zero for long periods, along with long seasons of near-total darkness in the winter months. During that time, it will be difficult to conduct significant and detailed repairs due to the risks of conducting operations at night. Such weather extremes can be particularly damaging to equipment and dangerous for humans; as with Antarctica, potential ice damage and conditions make resupplying exceedingly risky (if not downright impossible) during some months.

Environmental Challenges. Even with recent experience in oil spills – for example, Deepwater Horizon – planners will face unique challenges in preventative measures and recovery efforts due to the relative isolation and logistical challenges of the region. Pre-positioning equipment to deal with environmental emergencies will create its own costs, along with logistical and oversight hurdles. Given the risks of any Arctic operation in any industry, the dangers of accidents are even more pronounced.

Lack of Infrastructure. Outside of some existing military infrastructure in the Arctic Circle, there is very little built up in the region. Extended supply lines may create very expensive and risky logistical challenges that may make investment and development undesired. Large numbers of icebreakers and Arctic-operable ships must be built. Pipelines, rigs, and other drilling infrastructure will have to be built as countries look to exploit their oil and gas reserves; such projects will cost in the billions. Given the unique challenges of the Arctic, the wishes of aggressive exploration may be misled due to a lack of viable starting points.

Long Project Lead Times. As with most infrastructure and improvement plans, Arctic exploration and development will be an extremely

¹⁶ "Exports of Norwegian Oil and Gas." *Norwegianpetroleum.no*, Norwegian Government, 7 Oct. 2020, www.norskpetroleum.no/en/production-and-exports/exports-of-oil-and-gas/.

¹⁷ Ebinger, Charles, et al. "Offshore Oil and Gas Governance in the Arctic." *Brookings Institute*, Brookings Institute, Mar. 2014, www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/Offshore-Oil-and-Gas-Governance-text-revised.pdf.

drawn-out process. The investment cycle could stretch into the decades. With long timelines, there is an increasing risk of delays and cost overruns. Given the current economic environment, companies and governments may not be able to take on new capital-intensive projects. With debt issues from pandemic recovery likely to only worsen, a potential Arctic project that faces financial challenges may quickly lose funding and support from leadership.

Regulations. Legislation on a country-by-country basis will complicate Arctic development. Canada bans drilling in its territorial waters, and efforts in the United States to allow drilling in its Arctic National Wildlife Reserve were met with vocal opposition and led to controversy. Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) such as Greenpeace and individual activists such as Greta Thunberg are upping legal efforts to block new exploration of sensitive areas like the Arctic. Overall, there is accelerating public outcry for governments to enact stricter environmental policies and protections.

Conclusion

The Arctic will gain an important role in world economics and future affairs; countries across the globe will prioritize the region in the coming decades as an opportunity for economic growth. Inevitable environmental repercussions from climate change suggest a significant chunk of global trade will move through the Arctic. Melting Arctic ice means much of its vast natural resource supply will become more available to public and private actors looking to exploit such reserves. Countries with notable interests in the region include the United States, Russia, Canada, and Norway – all of which see oil, gas, and vital trade routes as assets for the future.

However, future Arctic exploration will be full of challenges. Even as it warms, the region's harsh and unpredictable climate will complicate any project, as will a lack of infrastructure, long project lead times, and growing environmental regulations. In a post-COVID-19 economic environment, countries will need to think cautiously before embarking on risky programs whose plans could easily cross into the hundreds of billions. In short, the Arctic's alarming

environmental decline from climate change will ironically present a wealth of new opportunities for governments and businesses alike. Those who wish to exploit those opportunities must carefully consider the risks and benefits of future economic and national policy in an increasingly important region.

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THE IMPACT OF BRITISH IMPERIALISM ON INDIA'S ECONOMY

by Ishan Deshpande

Abstract

This paper examines the impact of British imperialism on India's economy by analyzing several documents from that time as well as other scholarly articles. It will examine how the British essentially captured and held India's economy hostage while purging the land of its natural resources. It will also identify the technological and infrastructural advancements that the British brought to India and how that impacted trade and the overall economy. The purpose of this paper is not to disparage the British for invading India; instead, the paper seeks to examine the impact of British rule in India through an unbiased lens.



Introduction

The British Empire was a worldwide system of protectorates, colonies, and other territories that was brought under the rule of the British monarchy over the span of three hundred years.¹ At its peak, the British Empire ruled 412 million people over 13.5 million square miles.² The British Empire had a massive impact on global trade, politics, and technological progression through their vast spheres of influence. The British wanted to conquer India due to its large population (a cheap labor force), massive amounts of natural resources, and fertile lands. Much of the Indian population came to aid the British on several occasions, both economically and militarily. According to Dr. Timothy Naftali, an NYU Professor and historian, Indian troops composed nearly 50% of the British Army (over 2.5 million troops) and was recognized as the largest volunteer army of all time.

The British officially began their rule over India in 1858³ after a century-long struggle by the East India Company. After securing their rule, they quickly implemented several taxes to ensure that India would remain dependent on the Crown's assistance. Britain also established railways, canals, irrigation works, and boosted the shipping/mining industries. They also gave India access to the global trade system, which in turn improved India's standing on the world stage, and allowed them to accrue connections which were invaluable after gaining their independence. British rule over India is not as black and white as some would like to believe. The Crown improved critical infrastructure in India, which helped Indians in the long run. The British also suppressed Indian culture and phased out local crafts, hurting artisans and forcing Indian farmers to grow cash crops instead of food crops, which eventually led to many deadly famines. This paper will examine the complex nature of British rule in India. It will explore the importance of railroads, the consequences of prioritizing cash crops, and how these decisions ultimately impacted

the economy. To end, the paper will explore how India has evolved since achieving independence and examine the health of India's economy as of 2021.

The Importance of Railroads

The British Empire did wonders for India's infrastructure by building railroads and connecting rural lands to more urban lands. They also put India at the forefront of global trade by introducing Indian handicrafts to foreign markets. The railroad built in India by the British eventually became the third-largest railroad in the world. This infrastructural investment finally allowed India to leap forward in trade; additionally, it helped India take steps towards developing a modern economy and connecting distant areas. The British also established several major roads, bridges, and canals throughout India, making travel and trade much easier than before. Thanks to the infrastructural improvements, merchants were able to transport goods across India much more efficiently than before. By constructing dams, the British also addressed one of India's most prominent issues: water scarcity. Beyond infrastructure, the British took an initiative to overhaul the Indian education system and promote the English language, which suppressed some of India's rich culture, but greatly increased literacy rates among the population.

The British built the railroad in India for quicker and easier access to trade. Unfortunately, during periods of drought and famine, the railroads exacerbated bad economic and environmental circumstances by forcing the British to choose between personal profits and the wellbeing of the Indian people. Before the railway, Indian transportation was composed of two avenues: land and water. (Land transportation was often unreliable due to the roads' abysmal state, especially during monsoon season, which typically lasts almost four months.) The goals of the railway were to reduce transport costs and to grant English merchants easier access to raw cotton from India.

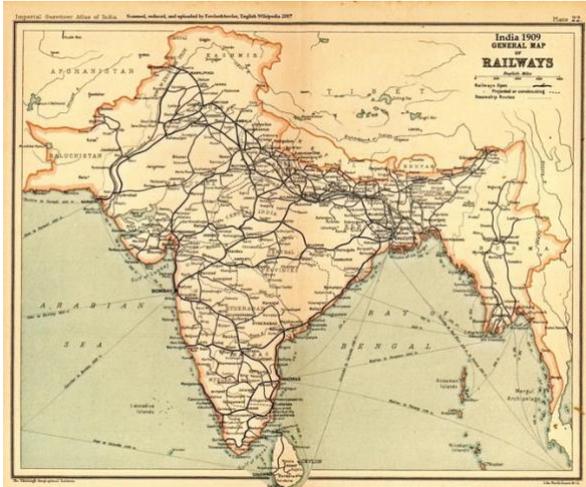
¹ "British Empire." *Encyclopædia Britannica*, Encyclopædia Britannica, Inc., www.britannica.com/place/British-Empire.

² Rein Taagepera (September 1997). "Expansion and Contraction Patterns of Large Polities: Context for Russia". *International Studies Quarterly*. **41** (3). [doi:10.1111/0020-8833.00053](https://doi.org/10.1111/0020-8833.00053). JSTOR 2600793.

Archived from the original on 19 November 2018. Retrieved 28 December 2018.

³ Kaul, Dr Chandrika. "History - British History in Depth: From Empire to Independence: The British Raj in India 1858-1947." *BBC*, BBC, 3 Mar. 2011, www.bbc.co.uk/history/british/modern/independence1947_01.shtml.

Furthermore, the railroads provided unprecedented opportunities to millions of Indians and enabled many of them to acquire new skills and secure jobs. It helped the development of the trade union movement and laid the groundwork of the growing Indian middle class, all while bringing sophisticated, new technology to the sub-continent.⁴ The railway also opened the Indian market to British imported goods like cotton textiles, which provided the British with additional revenue.⁵



The map above shows the extensive railroad system established by the British. The darker, more defined lines show the major routes the railroad took. Evidently, the railroad allowed disconnected parts of India to engage in trade and further their opportunities. In the span of fifty years, the British were able to connect all the major trade hubs in India, which greatly increased the efficiency and profitability of trade.

The Consequences of British Involvement

The Destruction of Handicrafts. Although the railroad provided India with many economic benefits, it caused several cultural problems. The railroad allowed British manufacturers to peddle British goods efficiently around India, effectively erasing the need for classical Indian goods and destroying the Indian handicrafts industry.

Additionally, several regulations had been imposed on the Indians by the Crown—the Indian economic system was controlled by the British government. Indian farmers had been pressured to provide raw materials for the British industries and the local Indians were forced to only purchase British goods. Britain solicited indigo (a dye), jute, coffee, cotton, and tea from Indian farmers, paying them very little relative to the quantity of the materials in return. The British relied heavily on Indian raw materials because the Crimean War of 1850 restricted the supply of jute from Russia to Scotland. As a result, Bengali jute was in great demand. The American Civil War also restricted the supply of cotton to Britain. In order to keep the British textile mills running, Indian cotton became very valuable. Essentially, the British masterminded a scheme where they would receive materials from India for cheap, and resell the products made from those materials back to the Indian population for exorbitant prices. Otherwise put, Britain's economic violation of India was twofold; not only did they rob India's natural resources, they had the audacity to upcharge the populace and essentially force them into buying overpriced goods. The effects of Britain's economic manipulation are still being borne by working class Indians to this day, who already struggle to survive. It is not a stretch to say that Britain single-handedly set India's economic progress back by several decades; they looted and pillaged India's natural resources, while scamming the citizens of the meager amount of money in their possession.



⁴ Wolmar, Christian. "How Britain's Colonial Railways Transformed India." *Center for Strategic and International Studies*, 13 June 2017, reconnectingasia.csis.org/analysis/entries/how-britains-colonial-railways-transformed-india/.

⁵ http://www.environmentandsociety.org/Exhibitions/Another...www.environmentandsociety.org/sites/default/files/dwos_ter_another_silent_spring.pdf.

Handicrafts, like the one previously shown, typically carried a stigma in India, as they were viewed to be “old-fashioned” due to the lack of western features in the clothing. Even now, most affluent Indians prefer to wear Western clothing in lieu of traditional attire.

Stores that sell traditional clothing were quickly replaced by British backed, contemporary stores (refer to the picture on the right), which boasted flashy clothing that was popularized by Western media and slowly integrated into desi⁶ pop culture.



Famines. Famines were a frequent occurrence in South Asia until 1900 and were often devastating in impact. A consequence of the British forcing Indian farmers to grow cash crops like indigo and jute over edible crops like wheat was a significant drop in overall food supply. As a result, famines ravaged the nation and killed over 55 million people. For example, the Great Bengal Famine, which is said to have occurred from 1876 to 1878, led to the death of six to ten million people. Indifferent to how their actions would affect India, the British rulers continued to limit the production of edible crops in favor of other, more profitable crops. Obviously, the deaths of tens of millions did not help the Indian economy; the reduced size of the labor force prevented the food farms from producing at a suitable pace, which further fueled the famines. Experts suggest that the impact of the famines could have been lessened with different economic policies; According to Professor Venkatesh Athreya of Nehru University, “The Bengal famine could well

have been prevented with an annual tax of as little as 4 pounds per capita from the British population.”⁷ This fact suggests how little the British cared about India and its population. Even though the famine was easily avoidable, the British chose to remain stagnant; in other words, British indifference killed millions upon millions of Indians.

Famines were a persistent issue for India. Luckily, over the course of a few decades, Indians were able to develop advanced irrigation technologies which made famines far less likely. While the commercialization of Indian agriculture benefited a few farmers who were able to take advantage of Britain's thirst for cash crops like cotton, jute, oilseeds, sugar cane, and tobacco, the vast majority of people only faced the pitfalls of the system, without reaping any of its benefits. These famines, born out of human greed and lust for wealth, claimed millions of lives and left lasting psychological and economic impacts on those who endured them.

The Effect of Industrialization. India's strong economy relied on the exports of cotton textiles manufactured there. In fact, in 1750, India was the world's leading textile manufacturer. India's textile industry thrived because it had access to extremely cheap labor that resulted in high-quality cloth at a low price.⁸ In the face of colonization, India was devastated by European industrialization and the commercial changes it inspired. India's impressive textile output had originally relied on hand-loom technology, but that became obsolete once looming could be done by machines in Britain 4,500 miles away. British industrialists were also careful not to let the new technology get into the hands of their competitors in India. As a result, the Indian economy collapsed; millions of laborers lost their jobs and had to work in cash-crop agriculture (raw cotton, indigo, and jute) to survive. So instead of exporting cloth (a manufactured good) India became an exporter of cotton (a raw material). This meant a lot of the profit for processing the cotton into cloth now went to Britain instead of India. Because of this British interference, Indians were not able to truly reap the benefits of the Industrial Revolution.

⁶ A person of Indian, Pakistani, or Bangladeshi birth or descent.

⁷<https://www.thehindu.com/news/cities/chennai/Bengal-famine-could-have-been-avoided/article14028478.ece>

⁸<https://socialdemocracy21stcentury.blogspot.com/2010/06/early-british-industrial-revolution-and.html>

India Today

India's Economy. Since achieving independence in 1947, India has made strides to compensate for the rents extracted by the British during the time of imperialism. Thankfully, India was able to recover from those setbacks and, in 2019, reported a national G.D.P. of \$2.9T, making it the fifth largest economy in the world behind the United States, China, Japan and Germany. However, according to the *New York Times*, the Indian economy contracted by over 23.9% in 2020 due to the pandemic. Experts note that this is because of Prime Minister Modi's overzealous attempt at a lockdown, during which he shut down public transportation, issued a mandatory stay-at-home order, and closed most businesses. Data released by the Indian government shows that, expectedly, the tourism and transportation sectors dropped by over 45% and the manufacturing sector shrunk by over 39%. India is currently experiencing a disconnect between the Federal and State governments; "many of the 28 states swing between opening up their economies and suddenly locking them down again, throwing businesses into confusion and keeping many people away from markets and shopping malls."⁹ Furthermore, Prime Minister Modi continues to take blame for the lackluster economy; according to Arvind Subramanian and Josh Felman, graduate students at Harvard University, As world trade stagnated, export growth slowed dramatically, while investment suffered from a domestic Balance Sheet crisis... The first wave, known as the Twin Balance Sheet Crisis, hit banks and infrastructure companies when infrastructure projects initiated during India's mid-2000s investment boom began to fail. Nonetheless, despite temporary negative demonetization and GST shocks, the economy continued to expand, driven first by income gains from a significant drop in international oil prices, then by government spending and a non-bank financial company (NBFC)-led credit boom. This credit boom fueled unsustainable real estate inventory growth, resulting in a bubble that burst in 2020.¹⁰ Subramanian and Fellman are saying that India's recent astronomical growth was merely a

bubble whose demise was expedited by COVID-19 and the economic pitfalls that followed. Modi's government has been trying to remedy the situation- in 2018, Modi introduced several large tax cuts to corporate entities to promote investment; however, due to raised interest rates, the tax cut did not have as lasting of an impact as expected. *Forbes* notes that the only way to save India's economy is to "make banks less afraid to spend," something that is much easier said than done. Furthermore, Modi, in an effort to prevent the spread of *black money*, money obtained through illicit means, eliminated the 500 and 1000 rupee bills, which accounted for 86% of illicit transactions. This change, which was enacted overnight, left millions of ordinary people lacking the currency for basic transactions, like buying food, fuel and other necessities. While this change will eventually help the government provide for its people by reducing untaxable income, the short term impacts

Conversely, Dr. Rumki Majmudar, an author for *The Deloitte Global Economist Network*, believes that India's economy will experience a full recovery in the upcoming decade, noting, "we expect double-digit growth in FY2022 in the light of our best-case scenario. Lower infection and fatality rates, and the possibility of widespread vaccine deployment are expected to improve consumer and business confidence. Pent-up demand for more elastic discretionary goods, especially among the top 10 income percentiles of the population that could not spend because of mobility restrictions, may spur private investment that has been contracting for five consecutive quarters now."¹¹ India's economy may have a bright future, but that does not mean that it will not face any more challenges. High inflation, job losses, poor wage growth, and low asset values may impact the Indian consumer's purchasing power, especially among the low and middle income classes. While a rebound is imminent, the output levels are likely to remain below the pre-pandemic GDP levels for the next 24 months, likely only achieving 75% of the yearly forecast in 2021.

⁹ <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/08/31/world/asia/india-economy-gdp.html>

¹⁰ <https://www.hks.harvard.edu/sites/default/files/centers/cid/files/publications/faculty-working-papers/2019-12-cid-wp-369-indian-growth-diagnosis-remedies-final.pdf>

¹¹ <https://www2.deloitte.com/us/en/insights/economy/asia-pacific/india-economic-outlook.html/#endnote-sup-7>

Conclusion

In conclusion, one can reason that British imperialism resulted in a net-negative outcome for India. However, since gaining its independence in 1947, India has made strides to revive its economy and undo the damage caused by the British. India's economy was hit hard due to the COVID-19 pandemic; however, experts believe that the economy will make a complete recovery in the following years. To ensure the economy recovers, Modi must begin several large government projects that would employ many Indian citizens. Furthermore, he must improve India's current health infrastructure and inject government resources into struggling industries (*India Today*). According to industry expert, Raghuram Rajan, India needs to revive the risk taking culture that it had in the past; it has begun to grow complacent and the pandemic was the wakeup call that the country needed. In other words, the government needs to restart the business loans initiative, which would provide low interest loans to business owners, making it easier for anyone to start or expand their company. The Indian government is in the process of initiating 217 (\$15.09 billion) public projects which are aiming to allow easier transit between the Indian countryside and major cities. One particular project is located in Overall, the British viewed India as a land of unlimited resources, thus they took advantage of the country and the people. It is safe to say that the British did more harm than good in India and that their tenure in India dealt several blows to the previously prosperous economy. India has recovered from these setbacks and is positioned to regain its seat among the global superpowers in the next few decades if they manage their economy properly.

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AN INVESTIGATION INTO THE INEFFICIENCIES OF STATE GUN LAWS

by *Patrick O'Brien*

Abstract

The purpose of this paper is to examine state and federal gun laws with a focus on the differences between the gun laws of California and Arizona to analyze the problems that arise with regulatory inconsistencies. This paper is divided into five sections:

1. The first section summarizes and analyzes the federal gun laws of the United States of America, paying close attention to any holes in gun regulations.
2. The second section delves into the gun laws of California and Arizona. This section compares the laws and addresses how/if these laws fill any federal law holes.
3. The third section of the paper compares gun violence data from Arizona and California and comments on their efficacy.
4. The fourth section of the paper offers some potential policy solutions to problems these inefficiencies cause and to the role that inefficiencies play in the gun violence epidemic.
5. The fifth section is an appendix containing all relevant penal codes and points of reference.



Federal Gun Laws

There are nine major federal gun legislations in The United States of America. The first gun regulation in the history of the United States came with the establishment of the Bill of Rights and the second amendment to the Constitution. The second amendment reads, "A well-regulated Militia, being necessary to the security of a free State, the right of the people to keep and bear Arms, shall not be infringed."¹ The new United States of America had a collective fear of centralized government and included this amendment to allow citizens to protect themselves from a tyrannical government. The amendment does not give specifics on what types of arms may be kept and is open to interpretation. This has led to decades of debates on what types of arms are guaranteed by this amendment. Although it is unclear about firearm specifics, this amendment is the basis of all gun laws in America.

National Firearms Act (NFA). Around 150 years passed before the enactment of the next significant piece of gun legislation. In response to a rise in gun violence culminating in the St. Valentine's Day massacre, during which seven people were murdered, President Franklin Delano Roosevelt signed the National Firearms Act (NFA) into law on June 26, 1934. The NFA was part of Roosevelt's New Crime Deal and was designed to reduce gang violence. This act placed a high \$200 tax "on the manufacturing, selling, and transporting of firearms listed in the law, among them short-barrel shotguns and rifles, machine guns, firearm mufflers and silencers."² The tax was designed to reduce the rate of transfer of firearms. However, this act had a constitutional flaw that required citizens to register firearms with the federal government. This information could then be shared with state governments for prosecutions. The Supreme Court ruled this to be a violation of the fifth amendment and rendered the act essentially powerless.³ Although this law was deemed unconstitutional, it laid the groundwork for stricter federal gun laws. The NFA was the first law to require gun registration and the first federal law to include the taxation of firearms. The law was designed to establish a federal oversight of the nation-wide gun trade and limited states interpretation.

Federal Firearms Act (FFA). In 1938, FDR signed another gun control law into effect called the Federal Firearms Act. It "...required gun manufacturers, importers, and dealers to obtain a federal firearms license. It also defined a group of people, including convicted felons, who could not purchase guns, and mandated that gun sellers keep customer records."⁴ This act was designed to keep guns out of the hands of dangerous criminals, as well as create records on the circulation of guns.

The first section of the FFA required gun dealers to have a license from the federal government. This required states to work under the federal government with strict and clear regulations that were uniform from state to state. The first part of the law was unambiguous, allowing no interpretation by the states and imposed a uniform requirement among the states to obtain a firearm dealer's license. However, the second part of this law defined convicted felons as prohibited possessors. This meant anyone convicted of a felony could not legally own a firearm by federal law. Convicted felon was, however, poorly defined, creating issues as some offenses are considered felonies in some states while the same crime may not be a felony in another. This left this interpretation of the law up to the states and created inconsistencies in federal and state enforcement.

United States vs. Miller. In 1939, the Supreme Court heard *United States v. Miller*. The question in the Miller case was whether the appellant's possession of a sawed-off shotgun was a violation of the NFA. The court ruled there was insufficient evidence that a sawed-off shotgun "has some reasonable relationship to the preservation or efficiency of a well-regulated militia," and thus could not "say that the Second Amendment guarantees the right to keep and bear such an instrument."⁵ This ruling was designed to keep the public safe from a deadly weapon that had the capability to rip a person in half, tear doors off hinges, and be used in criminal activities. The federal government set a precedent with this case that certain types of guns are unacceptable for public ownership. Furthermore, this ruling applied equally to all states and left no room for disparate interpretations by the states.

Gun Control Act of 1968. In 1968, gun violence reached center stage again with the assassinations of

President John F. Kennedy, Senator Robert F. Kennedy, and Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. In response, President Lyndon B. Johnson pushed congress to pass the Gun Control Act of 1968. This act repealed the FFA, rewrote portions of the NFA and laid a new groundwork for gun control regulation.² The bill banned the importation of explosives and guns with no sporting purpose. It updated the definition of “machine gun,” closing legal loopholes allowing Americans to own fully automatic weapons. The act also imposed age restrictions of 21 to own a handgun and required all guns to have a serial number.³

Firearm Owners Protection Act (FOPA). In 1986, congress passed the Firearm Owners Protection Act. The law was designed to protect gun owners from the federal government. The FOPA was created in response to what was seen as overly zealous inspections by the Bureau of Alcohol Tobacco and Firearms (ATF). Gun owners felt they were being treated unfairly with frequent inspections and harsh consequences for failing to meet standards. This act prohibited a national registry of dealer records, limited ATF inspections to one time per year, changed the definition of “engaging in the business of selling firearms,” and created the gun show loophole, which created an extra lack of regulation in the sales of firearms. The Act also loosened restrictions of ammunition sales. This Act banned any new ownership or sale of fully automated weapons made after May 19, 1986 and redefined what qualified as a silencer. The FOPA also limited gun modifications prohibiting conversions of weapons to types previously banned.⁴ The law’s new restrictions did not apply to semi-automatic weapons. Each state created their own laws to deal with this type of weapon.

Brady Handgun Violence Prevention Act. In 1993, Congress passed the Brady Handgun Violence Prevention Act, which was designed to reduce criminal purchases of firearms through criminal background checks prior to a sale. This act was named after White house press secretary James Brady, who was injured and disabled following an attempt to assassinate President Reagan.¹⁰

The Brady Act is not awfully specific. It does not specify how background checks need to be conducted. State interpreted this requirement in a variety of ways. In some states, background checks

are handled by the federal government while others are conducted by the state itself.

Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act. In 1994, President Clinton signed the Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act, and with it, a subsection titled the Public Safety and Recreational Firearms Use Protection Act. This act permanently banned assault style weapons. These weapons have enormous potential for public harm and were banned to prevent mass shootings and widespread gun violence. It was repealed in 2004.¹¹

Tiahrt Amendment. In 2003, The Tiahrt Amendment forbade the ATF from releasing data to the public regarding where criminals purchased firearms used in their illicit activities. In effect, this law only allowed law enforcement and prosecutors to access this information and shielded gun sellers from lawsuits and bad publicity. The amendment only applies when legal sales are made, and gun sellers have no knowledge that the buyer was going to commit a crime.¹²

This law applies equally to all states protecting gun manufacturers from liability and prosecution. The law established a minimum standard once again allowing states to apply and interpret the law differently.

The Protection of Lawful Commerce in Arms Act. In 2005, President George W. Bush passed the Protection of Lawful Commerce in Arms Act.¹³ Essentially, the law shielded gun manufacturers from prosecution for selling guns to people who use them to commit crimes. The law was intended to protect gun manufacturers from lawsuits by victims of gun violence when the manufacturers are not involved in the crime itself.

Summary. Over time, federal gun laws in the United States established a solid framework for gun regulation. They ban more dangerous types of firearms and protect firearm owners from discriminatory and frivolous lawsuits. They protect the 2nd Amendment but also attempt to keep the public safe from gun violence. Although they set a solid groundwork, they leave considerable jurisdiction up to individual states to set their own standards.

State Gun Law Comparison

As demonstrated, the federal gun laws of the United States provide a solid foundation for gun legislation, but they are lacking in many key areas.

Gun Ownership Laws. In both California and Arizona, felons are prohibited from owning a firearm. However, what constitutes a “prohibiting felony” is different in each state. In Arizona, “prohibited possessors” include: anyone who is a danger to self or others, anyone disabled pursuant to a court order, felons or anyone delinquent to a felony, anyone currently in prison, anyone on probation for domestic violence, anyone on parole, or an undocumented migrants or non-immigrant migrants (with an exception for migrants with Arizona hunting licenses; migrants competing in target shooting events; certain diplomats and foreign officials who receive waivers from the US Attorney General)¹⁴. Even with these restrictions, there are many potentially dangerous people that are not covered in these laws. Arizona values personal freedom and makes it easy to own a gun even if you have a checkered past: If a person is considered a “prohibited possessor,” they may be eligible to get their gun rights restored by the state of Arizona, allowing them to own a gun once again.

California took a very different approach to gun ownership legislation. To close legal loopholes, California has a broader definition of felons who may not own a gun. In California, any person convicted of a felony; addicted to narcotics; on probation and ordered not to own a firearm; or has an outstanding warrant may not own a firearm. Additionally, any person who was adjudged a ward of juvenile court, has a restraining order against them, found to be a danger to themselves or others, not fit to stand trial by reason of insanity, declared a mentally ill sex offender, under conservatorship for chronic alcoholism, makes a threat to a psychotherapist, domestic abuser, or has committed gun crimes of many degrees also may not own a firearm. These classes of felons or restricted persons are permanently banned from owning a firearm unless given special exemption by the state. California also has sections of law that suspend gun ownership to people who commit certain types of misdemeanors and fall into other restricted categories. These suspensions can be for either 5 or 10 years and have specific suspensions for each

offense. Any person who commits the following offenses is suspended from gun ownership for 10 years: threatening public officers, school employees, and school officials (Pen. Code, § 71.), threatening public officers, judges, staff, or their families with intent to carry out the threat (Pen. Code, § 76.), witness intimidation (Pen. Code, § 136.1.), possessing a deadly weapon with intent to intimidate a witness (Pen. Code, § 136.5.), attempting to remove a firearm from a peace officer (Pen. Code, § 148(d).), false weapon theft report (Pen. Code, § 148.5(f).), possession of a weapon in a court or public building (Pen. Code, § 171b.), possession of a loaded firearm in a California government building (Pen. Code, § 171c.) (Pen. Code, 171d.), supplying weapons to street gang members (Pen. Code, § 186.28.), assault (Pen. Code, §§ 240, 241.), battery (Pen. Code, §§ 242, 243.), sexual battery (Pen. Code, § 243.4.), assault with a taser (Pen. Code, § 244.5.), assault with a deadly weapon other than a firearm (Pen. Code, § 245.), assault with a deadly weapon on a school employee (Pen. Code, § 245.5.), negligent firearm discharge (Pen. Code, § 246.3.), shooting at an unoccupied vehicle or house (Pen. Code, § 247.), domestic abuse (Pen. Code, § 273.5.), violation of domestic protective order (Pen. Code, § 273.6.), inflicting serious bodily injury because of brandishing (Pen. Code, § 417.6.), threats to commit a crime (Pen. Code, § 422.), interference with exercise of civil rights, (Pen. Code, § 422.6.), possessing a firearm within public school grounds, (Pen. Code, § 626.9.) stalking (Pen. Code, § 646.9.), carrying a firearm concealed while protesting (Pen. Code, §§ 830.95, 17510), possessing a deadly weapon with intent to commit assault (Pen. Code, § 17500.), criminal possession of a firearm (Pen. Code, § 25300.), armed criminal action (Pen. Code, § 25800.), possession of ammunition designed to penetrate metal, unauthorized transport or possession of a machine gun, drive of a drive by shooting, firearm dealer to any persons under legal age, purchase or possession of a weapon by a person in treatment for a mental disorder, possession of a firearm by a mentally disordered sex offender, bringing a firearm into juvenile hall or youth authority institution, theft of a firearm, criminal storage of a firearm, or a violation regarding transfer of a firearm.¹⁵

These laws are designed to fill in the gaps in federal laws. They are designed to keep the community safe and keep firearms out of the hands

of criminals or anyone else who is deemed to be a threat to the community. With some of the most restrictive firearm laws in the country, criminals attempting to get a firearm in California may find it. This, in turn, may keep the community safer from threats and acts of gun violence; however, it is difficult to quantify in exact data how many crimes are prevented with these laws. Criminals will always find ways to obtain weapons and get around restrictive laws. However, California's extremely detailed and descriptive sets of prohibitions and suspension of gun ownership contributes to their very low rate of gun deaths each year.

There are further differences in the gun ownership laws between California and Arizona. According to state law in Arizona, the minimum age to own a firearm is 18. However, there are exceptions to this law that allow children ages 14-17 to possess a gun if they are using the gun "in lawful recreational events, such as hunting, shooting events, or marksmanship practice...[Or] transporting a firearm in a vehicle for the purposes of lawful hunting... [Or] using a firearm as pertaining to an agricultural capacity. This may include the production of crops, livestock, and Poultry."¹⁶ However, in California, the legal age to own a gun is 21 for all types of guns with few exceptions.

Overall, the classes of people who can own a gun in the state of California are very different from those who can own a gun in Arizona. Arizona has approximately five categories of people who cannot possess or own a gun, making no mention of those guilty of misdemeanors. Conversely, California law has over 50 categories of felons or other potential dangers to the community that are restricted from owning and possessing firearms including those guilty of some misdemeanors.

The discrepancies between the laws of these neighboring states creates many issues. A person who cannot legally own a gun in California would have virtually no restrictions in Arizona from purchasing a gun. As a result, the illegal smuggling of guns from Arizona to California is common. A person prohibited from owning a gun in California may easily purchase a gun in Arizona and bring it across state lines. The difference in each states' legal age to own a firearm may further encourage young people to (perhaps) unknowingly commit a crime of illegal transport of a firearm across the border.

Laws on Guns, Magazines, and Ammunition.

There are few federal laws regarding classes of guns that are illegal for public ownership. Federal laws mainly apply to fully automatic guns, sawed off shotguns, and explosives. This leaves enormous room for legislation to the states. As a result, Arizona and California have created very different laws.

California has very strict laws on which type of guns are illegal to possess. California has state laws that ban short barreled or "sawed off" shotguns and rifles, undetectable firearms, firearms that are not immediately recognizable as firearms, unconventional pistols, cane guns, wallet guns, zip guns, camouflaging firearm containers, bullets containing explosive agents, and multi-burst trigger activators.¹⁷ These laws are designed to keep the public safe from firearms that are deemed not protected by the second amendment. These classes of firearms are considered a serious threat to public safety and were thus outlawed. Furthermore, California bans assault class rifles. This rifle ban is very comprehensive and bans any semiautomatic centerfire rifle that has the capacity to accept a detachable magazine. If the rifle contains any of the following attachments or capabilities it is also included in the ban: a pistol grip beneath the action of the weapon, a thumbhole stock, a folding stock, a telescope stock, a grenade launcher attachment, a flash suppressor, or a forward pistol grip. California also has specific requirements for what may be built into the weapon. It is illegal in California to have a rifle with a fixed magazine with a capacity of more than 10 rounds. It is also illegal to own a centerfire rifle that has length of less than 30 inches. California also has specific requirements for what pistols are legal under state law. Semi-Automatic pistols that have a detachable magazine and any of the following attachments are illegal under state law: a threaded barrel with a flash suppressor or forward handgrip, a second handgrip, a shroud for the barrel, or the capacity to accept a detachable magazine outside of the pistol grip. The same ban on high-capacity magazines of over 10 rounds applies to pistols as well. Finally, California has specific requirements for what may be built into or attached to a shotgun. Semi-automatic shotguns may not have a folding or telescoping stock and a pistol grip beneath the action of the weapon. It may not have the ability to accept detachable magazines and it may not have a revolving cylinder.¹⁸

The banning of unconventional weapons is designed to protect the community from firearms that are easily concealable as everyday objects. These classes of firearms are especially dangerous as the average person would not be able to protect themselves from these weapons as they would not know they were there. Furthermore, the ban on assault rifles is intended to keep the community safe from powerful high rate of fire weapons that could cause serious damage to body and property. Assault rifles have a higher potential for criminal activities as they can fire off more rounds and produce more deadly results than the average bolt action rifle. Assault rifles are designed for military use and under state law have no place in the hands of a citizen. The chance of mishap or improper use is much higher, and these weapons are much harder to control. Finally, the laws for semi-automatic pistols and shotguns are put in place as an attempt to reduce violent crime. Semi-automatic pistols with attachments are designed as a combat weapon rather than for home protection or sporting purposes. Semi-automatic sawed-off shotguns are a serious threat to the community as they have large firepower and are more easily concealed than a standard use shotgun.

In Arizona there are very few regulations on which types of firearms may not be owned. However, state law does prohibit the possession of certain types of firearms and other deadly weapons by any citizen. Arizona state law does not permit citizens to own any bombs, grenades, rockets, incendiary or poisonous gasses, or any items intended for use in making one of those items unless it has been classified as a relic under federal law. State law prevents citizens from owning devices such as silencer unless it has been classified as a relic under state law or is federally registered. It is illegal to own a machine gun and fully automatic weapons unless the weapon has been classified as a relic or registered federally. State law does not permit rifles with barrel lengths less than sixteen inches, shotguns with barrel lengths less than 18 inches or any modified firearm made from a shotgun or rifle that has length less than 26 inches unless it has been classified as a relic or registered federally. It is illegal to own flashbangs, flammable liquid in breakable containers meant to explode, any combination of chemicals designed to create a gas that causes explosions, mechanical failures, or detonations of the chemical compounds.¹⁹ Most gun types are legal

in Arizona and there are no restrictions on magazine sizes. This follows with Arizona's value on personal freedom and gun rights. These laws protect gun owners from the government accepting the potential risk of increased gun violence and shootings. Furthermore, there are exceptions to laws prohibiting certain types of guns that allow the prohibited gun to be owned.

The differences between what guns are legal in Arizona and California creates issues for both gun owners and state officials. Any person moving to California that owns an "assault style weapon" may not legally bring this weapon to California. Guns are expensive and beloved by many gun owners. Having a law that essentially forces a gun owner to sell or throw out their weapon is inefficient as it results in a loss of money and property for gun owners moving to California. As a result, a person owning an "assault style" weapon may conceal their ownership and bring the illegal weapon into California. This weapon is then almost untraceable and could lead to problems if it is stolen or misused. Furthermore, discrepancies between the laws of Arizona and California promote the illegal underground gun trade of smuggled weapons across the border. Citizens of California who wish to have this type of firearm may purchase an illegal firearm or simply drive to Arizona and bring the illegal weapon across the border undetected.

Gun Sales, Background Checks, and Registry. The federal laws regarding gun sales are filled with ambiguities. This creates a wide disparity in the ways the various states regulate and monitor gun sales.

In California, the process for purchasing guns is complicated and subject to many rules and restrictions. When purchasing a long gun, a California resident with a valid proof of residency must go to a gun dealer who has a valid Certificate of Eligibility from the state. At the gun dealer, the prospective buyer must supply their personal information for the gun dealer to fill out the Dealer Record of Sale. After this form is filled out, it is submitted to the California Department of Justice (DOJ) for a state-mandated background check.²⁰

While confirming eligibility, there is a state mandated 10-day waiting period before the sale can be made. If the sale is approved, the buyer will have a 30-day period to pick up the firearm before the state voids the sale. However, before receiving the

firearm, the buyer must obtain a Firearm Safety Certificate (FSC). This is obtained by earning a 75 percent or higher on a written examination on firearm laws and safety requirements. The tests can only be administered by DOJ approved instructors at select locations.²¹

In addition to obtaining the FSC, a prospective buyer must complete a Safe Handling Demonstration (SHD). This is often done at the firearm store. It must be submitted during the 10- or 30-day waiting periods. After the completion of these tasks, the sale is complete. After the buyer picks up the firearm, the sale is reported to the state and entered into the registry. When purchasing a handgun, there are slightly different rules: The process for buying the gun remains the same, as do the requirements, but California imposes a limit to one handgun purchase per 30 days.²²

If a resident does not wish to purchase a firearm from a licensed dealer, a private party sale may occur. These sales have similar requirements such as the FSC, SHD, and 10 day waiting period; however, private sales cannot take place without the presence of a licensed dealer. During these sales, there is a \$25 fee collected by the state and any number of firearms may be sold at once.²³

The intensive process for purchasing a firearm in California is designed to keep weapons out of the hands of dangerous individuals. California is an opt-in state for background checks which means all checks are handled at the state level. This allows more state control over who can own a firearm and a further layer of security over criminals possessing a firearm.

On the other hand, the process for purchasing a gun in Arizona is relatively simple. A buyer enters a gun store (or any place where guns are sold) and picks out the gun he or she likes. The buyer is required to present a valid government ID, fill out a government form, and pay for the purchase. Arizona has no state laws that dictate a background check. However, before a gun sale can be made, a gun dealer will fax or call the Arizona Firearms Clearance Center for clearance, and fax or call the National Instant Criminal Background Check System (NICS). If the buyer has a record that allows a purchase of a firearm, the sale is made. That's it. The buyer leaves the store and has completed a purchase.²⁴

After the purchase, "The State of Arizona does not require citizens to register their firearms

with the State. It also prohibits local jurisdictions (i.e. Counties, Cities or Towns) from requiring licensing or registration of firearms or ammunition." Arizona is an opt-out state for background checks. This means that the federal government is responsible for Arizona's background checks. These checks take a few minutes and searches federal databases to see if there are any issues that could disqualify a person from purchasing a gun. Federal standards limiting firearm ownership are far less strict than many states, such as California and do not require a complete background check. Federal laws leave much out in terms of who may not own a firearm. The Arizona system was designed in agreement with Arizona's values on personal freedom. Not having state background checks aligns with the values of the citizens and their emphasis on personal freedom in the second amendment.

Arizona also has a state law that says it is illegal to have a gun registry.²⁵ This means that the state of Arizona has no idea what happens to their guns after a sale. They only have records of sales. Making subsequent sales impossible to track. This makes private sales easy and the illegal transfer of guns a serious problem. Furthermore, if a gun is used for illegal purposes, the state must subpoena a gun dealer's records to see who purchased the gun. These records may not be well kept and could lead to problems with law enforcement. Overall, this system protects personal liberties, but that comes at the expense of public safety.

The differences in California and Arizona gun laws promote inefficiencies and legal issues as they treat people differently based on geographic location. Citizens of California must submit multiple copies of identification and pass numerous tests to purchase a firearm. The state registry and background check system hold different standards than the system utilized by Arizona. These key differences may cause California buyers to instead purchase guns out of state and drive them across the border. Furthermore, since there is no registry in Arizona the state government of Arizona has little to no control over where their firearms are taken and has no record of who owns these guns. These clash of state standards may lead to promotion of the underground firearm market as Californians may not want to comply with a law they may view as difficult.

Transportation/Carrying. Federal laws regarding where guns may be transported and the methods of carry leave significant gray areas subject to interpretation by the states.

In California, gun carrying is greatly restricted. California law states, "A U.S. citizen or legal resident over age 18 may generally carry a handgun anywhere within his or her place of residence, place of business, or on private property owned or lawfully possessed by the citizen or legal resident. A permit or license is not required for a person to carry within these locations." However, California law prohibits the carrying or discharge of any firearm loaded or unloaded in any public place or street. Law also prohibits gun carrying in any state or local public building or meeting. Guns are prohibited in the California State Parks system, the State Capitol grounds, any legislative office including the office of the governor, any hearing room where the state senate or Assembly is conducting a hearing, on the grounds of the governor's mansion, polling places on election day, and anywhere where there is notification of prohibition of firearms."²⁶

Even in areas where a gun may be carried, there are specific restrictions to the manner of carry to avoid prosecution. In California, concealed carry is legal, however a permit is required. According to state law, a sheriff or county police chief may issue a concealed carry permit only if receiving proof that the applicant is of "good moral character" and that "good cause exists for issuance."²⁷ These definitions are not explained in the law code, and it is up to each individual sheriff or police chief's interpretation. It is also considerably more difficult to obtain a concealed carry permit in larger cities than rural areas.

The issue of open carry in California is difficult and contradictory. It is generally prohibited to openly carry a firearm, loaded or unloaded. However, there is a small exception written into the law for counties of less than 200,000 people. The criteria for an open carry permit are like those of a concealed carry permit and are issued by the county sheriff. However, these open carry permits are only honored in the county they are issued.²⁸

Transportation of firearms in California is very strict. A firearm may not be concealed in the vehicle per state law. A handgun must be carried fully unloaded and locked in an enclosed container. This container may not be the glove box. The trunk

of the car is considered the best place to transport a handgun. For long guns, there is no requirement for the gun to be in a fully enclosed container, however they must be fully unloaded when transported. If a person enters a "gun free school zone," with a firearm, it must be in a locked box.²⁹

In Arizona, guns may be carried openly or concealed in most areas of the state. The only requirement for open carry is that the person carrying the firearm must be at least age 18 and be legally allowed access to a firearm. The law for concealed carry is similar, stating that anyone may concealed carry a firearm anywhere that concealed carry is not illegal or prohibited without any licensing. Arizona also recognizes open carry licenses from all 50 states. Although open carry and concealed carry are both legal, there are restrictions on where guns may be carried. For example, guns may not be carried into businesses serving alcohol. This law has exemptions for police officers as well as individuals with special permits. Guns may not be carried to polling places on election days with exceptions for peace officers. Guns may not be carried on to school grounds, although there are exceptions to this law and exemptions for peace officers. Guns may not be carried into nuclear plants or hydroelectric generating stations with an exemption for peace officers. Guns may not be carried to military bases, Indian reservations, or game preserves without special permission from the respective group in charge of the lands. Guns also may not be carried into national parks. Guns cannot be carried into correctional facilities, federal buildings, airports, or any space where local law prohibits firearms. Although generally illegal, Arizona has specific laws that state when a gun may be carried onto school grounds. These exceptions are generally for special cases such as adults attending firearms classes or training that is being held on a school ground or if the gun is left unloaded and locked in the car.³⁰

Transportation of firearms may be concealed in the vehicle without restriction so long as the resident is over the age of 21. For firearm owners ages 18-20 a gun must be in a "case, a holster or scabbard, a storage compartment, trunk, pack, luggage, or glove compartment."³¹

In conformity with Arizona's emphasis on personal freedom, state legislation allows firearms to be taken almost anywhere in the state. Even in places where firearms are illegal to carry, special

permitting and exceptions to the law make it so a firearm can be taken virtually *anywhere* in the state. These firearms can be carried fully loaded, as well. This free culture of guns may come with a price of personal safety. Carrying guns openly or concealed may be a crime deterrent. However, having guns within easy reach could easily become a safety issue. The ubiquitous presence of loaded firearms in virtually all locations exponentially increases the chance of a mishap or disagreement leading to injury or death.

Gun Statistics Across States

The scope and nature of a state's gun laws directly impact gun ownership and violent crime statistics. There is a wide discrepancy in the percentage of the population in each state that owns guns. Around 28.3% of Californians own guns while in Arizona 46.3% of the population own guns.³² The effects of each state's laws are clear in their gun violence statistics. Arizona is the ninth deadliest state for gun violence with 14.6 gun deaths for every 100,000 people. This data shows a 40% higher rate of gun deaths than the national average. Arizona also has the 13th highest rate of criminal gun exports. This statistic illustrates how many guns are illegally trafficked across state lines to buyers in other states. Arizona is 75% above the national average. Furthermore, Arizona had 271 homicides in 2010. Arizona has the eighth highest rate of homicides in which a man kills a woman and the 13th highest female homicide rate in the country. The Brady Campaign to Prevent Gun Violence ranked Arizona dead last in their rankings. Meanwhile, the Law Center to Prevent Gun Violence gave Arizona an "F," ranking their gun laws 49th out of 50 states.³³ These rankings and statistics highlight the weakness of Arizona gun laws. Conversely, California has the seventh lowest rate of gun deaths in the country with 7.21 per 100,000. California also has the 15th lowest gun homicide rate in the country. The Giffords Law Center gave California an A on their yearly score code. They rated California's gun laws as the best in the country.³⁴

The Effects of Differing Gun Ownership Laws. California has a larger and more comprehensive list of people who either have their firearm rights removed or suspended. Although a direct correlation from the data is difficult to show,

California laws along with their enforcement system called the Armed Prohibited Persons System, California has reduced the number of homicides by 24 percent. Furthermore, since the enactment of domestic violence laws that suspend gun ownership 1,038 individuals have had their gun rights suspended significantly lowering the potential for abusers to commit firearm related violence.³⁵

On the other hand, in Arizona women are significantly more at risk to be shot in a domestic abuse situation. As previously mentioned, Arizona has the 8th highest rate of men killing women with guns and the 13th highest female homicide rate in the country. Women in Arizona are at significantly higher risk of being killed in a domestic violence dispute. Furthermore, without the extra classes of people mentioned in California law a significant number of violent offenders can easily obtain a gun. Research compiled through a federally funded report shows that of 40,185 people applying to purchase a gun in Arizona, only 928 were denied based on their criminal record. The laws of Arizona allow for most people to own a gun and denials are rare.³⁶

Finally, the differences between the classes of people that may own firearms in each state results in the smuggling of guns from Arizona to California. As previously mentioned, Arizona has the 13th highest illegal export rate of guns in the country. Part of this industry is fueled by the differences in state laws between Arizona and California. A resident of California can skirt the state laws and drive to Arizona to purchase a firearm where the law is much laxer. This undeniably contributes to gun crimes by felons although it is difficult to quantify how many guns are obtained out of state due to Arizona's lack of a registry for firearms.

The Effects of Differing Laws on What Firearms May Be Owned. California banned assault style rifles due to their potential for mass shootings and their destructive capabilities. The statistical reasoning behind this ban is clear. Shootings involving the use of an assault style rifle averaged 5.2 deaths and 7.6 injuries in data collected from mass shootings. A shooting not involving an assault rifle averaged 2.9 deaths and 3.2 injuries.³⁸ Without legal access to an assault rifle it becomes more difficult for a shooter to kill large groups of people. Additionally, the number of mass shootings using assault style weapons increased y after a federal

assault rifle ban was lifted. Again, it is difficult to directly correlate the data. However, logic dictates this increase is related to the end of the assault rifle ban. With this ban still in place in California, the public is safer from assault rifle violence.

Arizona has no such ban on assault rifles. Arizona's law against collection of firearms data makes meaningful data difficult to come by. However, it is clear Arizona has a significantly higher rate of gun deaths than California. Using the example of California, it is safe to say fewer guns equal fewer gun deaths,

California banned high-capacity magazines. Data on how the effect of banning on high-capacity magazines is once again hard to obtain. However, experts state that without high-capacity magazines a shooter is less lethal. Reloading after 10 rounds takes time and a 30-round magazine allows for a significant increase in rate of fire. It is also more difficult to carry multiple magazines and without access to higher capacity magazines a shooter may be stopped earlier.

The Effects of Differing Gun Sales, Background Checks, and Registry Laws. The effects of the differing laws on gun sales, background checks, and registries between California and Arizona is slightly more complicated. To start, Arizona has no registry laws when purchasing a firearm. This means the state government has no idea what happens to a gun after it leaves a store. A gun can be sold numerous times with no state supervision and can disappear entirely from the government eye. Furthermore, Arizona has no laws that require any type of background check on a private sale. This means that a felon may easily purchase a gun in a private sale. While data on how felons purchase guns is often not available due to federal legal restriction, the effects of these gun transfers is seen through Arizona's high rate of gun deaths.

Secondly, with no sale or possession records, the illegal gun trade prospers in Arizona. As previously mentioned, Arizona has a high rate of illegal guns running across state lines. Once a gun is sold, a gun can easily be transported out of state to any person who wishes to purchase a gun. The state government can do very little about this trafficking and has very little control over where these guns end up.

Conversely, in California all gun sales and trades are heavily documented by the state. This

makes the illegal movement of guns significantly less likely. It is difficult to document exact data on exactly how these gun laws reduce crime, however California has a significantly lower rate of gun violence than Arizona showing that these laws do have a positive effect on reducing gun violence.

The Effects of Differing Transportation and Carrying Laws. In Arizona, it is legal to conceal a weapon on your person or to carry it openly without any special permitting. The gun can be easily accessed when carried as such. However, with that special carrying comes special risks. The gun may easily fall out of a holster or discharge accidentally causing injury or death. Furthermore, the gun is in easy access when any situation gets intense or when an individual is experiencing a mental health crisis. Arizona had 809 firearm suicides in 2019 making it the 14th highest suicide rate by firearm in the country.³⁷ Having a gun within easy reach may encourage this high rate of suicides or accidental deaths due to the easy and quick ability to use the firearm. In California, guns are not allowed to be carried openly or concealed without special permitting. With this, a gun is significantly less accessible and may prevent firearm violence, accidents, and suicides. Towards this end, California had the 7th lowest rate of firearm suicides in the country in 2019.³⁸

The impacts of the differences in transportation laws are difficult to measure. California is significantly more restrictive than Arizona. When a gun can be taken essentially anywhere, a culture of guns is created. It is argued by some that the ready and easy access to firearms in public places prevents crime and mass shootings. The data shows otherwise. As mentioned above, Arizona has a high rate of firearm deaths including suicides. When a gun is taken to every place a person goes, quite literally they are walking around with a loaded gun. This can easily encourage spur of the moment bad decision making and can cause violent crime to increase. The opposite is true in California. For moving a gun in a vehicle, Arizona allows loaded guns to be kept basically anywhere in a vehicle. California has specific lock box requirements. The presence of a loaded gun in a vehicle exponentially increases the risk of problems with police and may create tense situations involving road rage. Furthermore, the gun may accidentally discharge causing death or injury.

The differences in the scope of state gun laws and how they are applied create many real and potential issues. Lax laws in one jurisdiction create safety issues in neighboring jurisdictions. Widely disparate laws also create a very real incentive for the illegal transportation and sale of guns. Legal differences also create equal protection issues. Activities banned in one state are subject to harsh penalties in another. Citizens may unintentionally find themselves in serious legal jeopardy due to confusing and often contradictory laws in neighboring jurisdictions. Solutions need to be found.

Solutions

Potential solutions to the issues previously addressed are often controversial, fraught with emotion and far from easy for those on opposite sides of the issues to find common ground upon. However, it is not impossible. This section explores new potential solutions and solutions currently in discussion.

Federal Law. The most obvious solution to fixing problems caused by disparate state regulations is for all regulations to be imposed by the federal government. If the federal government handled all issues regarding gun legislation, the country would be unified through one legal code that would allow equal protections and freedoms under the law. This would bypass any potential confusion resulting from the different laws within the states and eliminate inefficiencies that result from their differences. It would also allow for the federal government to use their larger pool of resources to research the safest and most effective solutions to gun related problems. This solution would not only protect the public by using federal resources and manpower, but also could protect gun owners from unjust scrutiny. Having a single defined set of descriptive laws would better protect gun rights. One set of laws would eliminate any potential prosecution for breaking federal or state laws when they conflict. Gun owners would be fully aware of any gun legislation the federal government passes and be able to protest any regulation to a single entity rather than having to deal with multiple sets of governmental groups to have their voices heard. This solution may also be the cheapest, as state and federal taxes on guns would be merged into one tax and eliminate

differences in state tax rates on firearms. Finally, this solution would allow federal law enforcement to enforce gun laws. This would be both more efficient and more effective tapping far greater federal resources.

However, for this to be accomplished, the gray areas and ambiguities in federal legislation would need to be filled in. Most state gun laws are designed to address situations not mentioned in the federal law code. If a unified legal system is to be created, it would require a complete overhaul of all gun legislation. This would inevitably lead to serious debate over gun laws and may take years of congressional arguing to hammer out the new codes. While this solution may be optimal, with the current trends in politics, it may be years away from ever coming to fruition.

Unified State Law. Another solution to these inequalities would be to create a unified policy on gun laws among the states. Since state laws are designed to fill in the gaps in the federal law codes, it makes the most sense to have all state laws be the same. Without equal state laws, equal protection under the law does not truly exist. The identical act of ownership, transportation or sale of a firearm can result in felony prosecution in one state and no action in another. Creating a unified code of state laws would eliminate the inefficiencies that arise when states have different laws. Furthermore, it would allow all citizens to have a direct and clear knowledge of what is a crime in each state, and thus have no fear of accidentally breaking the law when entering a new state. Although this solution would require the cooperation of all 50 states, it would create true equal rights among the states. It would allow states to maintain independence from the federal government and would take some weight off the shoulders of the federal government. In the long run, this solution would cost the federal government less money, as the individual states would handle all law breaking in-house without the need to involve the federal government. It would also increase state revenue as states would be able to charge the full tax rate on guns without having to charge citizens federal gun taxes. This revenue could easily be reinvested into the state gun system, creating even more opportunity for increased safety of citizens while also protecting personal liberties.

Current Legislation. There are many current proposals to address the issue of the ineffectiveness of gun legislation. To start, the house recently passed a bill that would solve the issue of background check laws varying between states by requiring mandatory background checks for all sales including private and gun show sales. This attempts to close the hole of many states not requiring background checks for private or gun show sales. With this legislation in place all states would have to follow this federal law and all citizens would be subject to the same standards. Next, President Biden has proposed a new federal ban on assault rifles. This ban would follow California and other states' lead towards a uniformity of what guns may be legally possessed by the public. President Biden is also pressuring congress to create legislation that would prevent stalkers and all domestic abusers in every state owning or possessing a firearm. Currently, not all states have misdemeanor level domestic abuse or stalking convictions as a qualifier for the prohibition of possessing a gun. If such legislation were to pass it would not only impose a consistent standard among the states it would protect victims of domestic crimes from firearm related threats or violence. Finally, the Biden administration plans to create a set of laws that will ban stabilizing braces that can allow a semi-automatic weapon to imitate a fully automatic weapon. These braces are legal in many states and are illegal in many others. If passed, this federal regulation would create extra safety from gun violence by imposing consistent standards banning them in all jurisdictions and prevent the trafficking of them from states where they are legal to states where they are illegal, defeating some states attempting to enhance public safety by banning their use.

Penal Codes

This final segment of the paper is designed for reference purposes. It lists all the penal codes in the wording that they appear in the law code. For the complete segment, visit [this link](#).

Disclaimer: Since the completion of this paper, the California ban on assault-style rifles [was struck down in court](#). The impact of this decision is not certain, but it may have a large effect on the rates of gun violence in California.

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Communications

*Eitan and I have been working on this for almost a full year now, and
we are so happy to finally present the first edition of the SPEX Journal.
We hope you enjoyed reading it as much as we enjoyed bringing it to
life!*

