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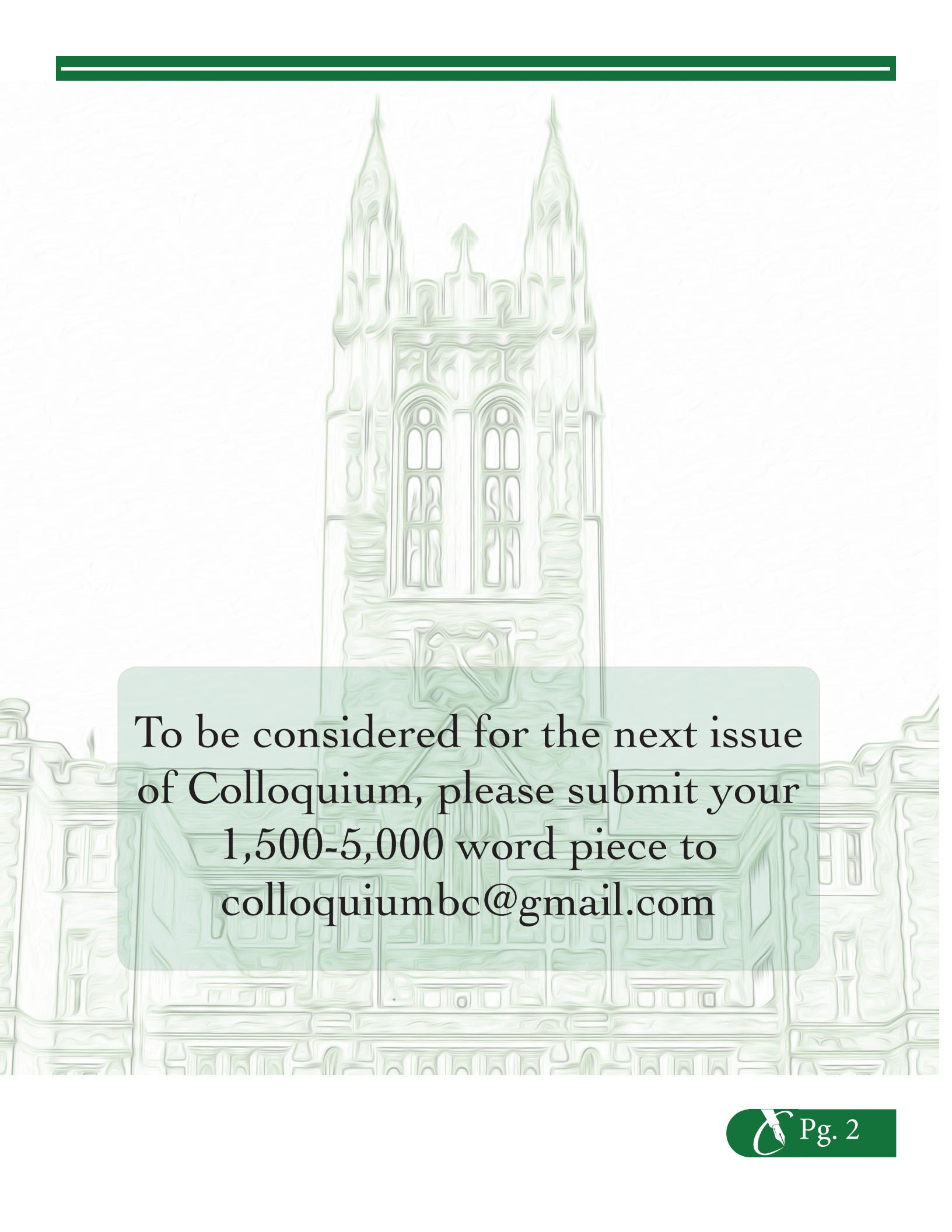

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# Reasons Behind High Unemployment Rates of MAGHREBIANS in FRANCE

By Sarya Baladi '19

## ABSTRACT

This paper aims to analyze the reasons behind the high unemployment and/or underemployment rates of French Maghrebians, meaning individuals of Moroccan, Tunisian, or Algerian origin residing in France. In effect, the Maghrebian unemployment rate is almost triple that of the national average and the underemployment rate is almost double. These statistics leave a bleak image for the potential of assimilation of the Maghrebian immigration community in this host country. This paper determines that there are three main barriers to the full employment of French Maghrebians (1) lack of educational opportunities, (2) geographical segregation, and (3) discrimination from French natives on the basis of both religion (Islam) and race (North African Arab). This paper concludes by arguing that it is in the French government's best interest to address the various challenges that halt full Maghrebian assimilation for the sake of both the immigrant group and the country's wellbeing.





## INTRODUCTION AND LITERARY REVIEW

Employment rates are an important indicator of the wellbeing of an immigrant population. Not only does employment bring in steady income that the immigrants and their families can use for food, housing, healthcare, and education, but it also contributes to the social integration of the immigrants as it allows them to build the network necessary to truly succeed in a country. High unemployment or underemployment rates (being without a job or being underused within a job) can severely impact immigrants and halt their assimilation on a multi-generational level: the poverty, social isolation, absorption into black markets, loss of self-worth, and radicalization that come with lacking employment can make an immigrant group feel excluded from mainstream society.

One group particularly affected by high unemployment rates in France is the Maghrebian population, the largest and most visible immigrant community in the country both in stock and in flows. Studies from 2007 show that compared to a national unemployment rate of 8.7% and underemployment rate of 26.3%, Maghrebians held an unemployment rate of 19.8% and an underemployment rate of 36.5%.<sup>1</sup> In other words, Maghrebians are over twice as likely to be unemployed than their French counterparts,

and in the cases where when they are employed, they are much more prone to being hired to work part-time or for jobs for which they are overqualified. Many researchers have tried to pinpoint the main factor behind the French Maghrebians' difficulty in finding employment, but the reality shows that a variety of factors are at play. The intersection of Maghrebians' lower levels of education, their housing segregation in urban outskirts, and their exposure to racial, cultural, and religious discrimination all have negative effects on Maghrebian employment rates, making Maghrebian immigrants and their children more likely than other groups in France to be unemployed or underemployed.

Many scholars have studied the poor integration of the Maghrebian community into French society. Alba and Silberman in "The Children of Immigrants and Host Society Educational Systems: Mexicans in the United States and North Africans in France" (2009) examine the factors associated with the lower education levels for Maghrebians, which result in strong employment disparities between natives and Maghrebians.<sup>2</sup> Blanc in "Urban Housing Segregation of North African 'Immigrants' in France" (1991) focuses on the concentration of Maghrebians in low-income dilapidated neighborhoods plagued by unemployment, making it very challenging for them to escape the social reproduction that keeps them in these neighborhoods.<sup>3</sup>

Moreover, Fellag's "The Muslim Label: How French North Africans Have Become 'Muslims' and not 'Citizens'" (2014) analyses the religious barrier Maghrebians have to face over multiple generations when attempting to integrate into French society, leading to discrimination related to but not limited to job acquisition.<sup>4</sup>

These scholars have made great contributions to the study of assimilation difficulties for Maghrebians in France, all of which negatively influence employment. However, none of these studies takes an intersectional stance by looking simultaneously into the multiple and various facets that limit employment for Maghrebians, as it is evident through the abundance of research done on the issue that many factors compete to explain this situation. Therefore, this paper will argue that a comprehensive approach is needed, as lower rates of education, housing segregation in urban areas, and discrimination based on race, culture, and religion all work together and compound each other to lead to high unemployment and underemployment rates for Maghrebians in France.

## BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Maghrebian immigration to France is not a new phenomenon. After the end of the Second World War, Western European countries opened their borders to migrants to contribute to the

manufacturing economic boom that lasted until the 1970s. Migrants from ex-colonial countries, particularly Moroccans, Tunisians, and Algerians, were top picks for France since they were considered more culturally and linguistically compatible than migrants from other non-European countries. These migrants, mostly young single men, were generally well received by the French population as they were considered to be temporary workers, present in France only to fill low-paying jobs needed to respond to high production demands. European economic prosperity, however, could not last forever: the oil crises of the 1970s ushered an era of higher unemployment rates that disproportionately impacted migrants as most of them worked in the industrial sector. Although the French government started to attempt to push out migrants due to lack of employment, Maghrebians had already started forming ethnic communities in low-class neighborhoods and inviting their families to settle in France. The French government decided to allow the migrants' families to join them in hopes of avoiding male riots, but the French people started to become aware of the social costs of migration, leading to a rise of anti-immigrant sentiments and right-wing parties. Consequentially, as René Giraud predicted with his theory of the threshold of tolerance, "which holds that there [is] a point at which a minority group's population would become high enough



to cross the threshold and increase conflict between ethnic groups,” Maghrebians started to face widespread hostility in France due to their growing influence and visibility in urban areas.<sup>5</sup>

Today, Maghrebian immigrants in France are known to be poorly integrated, even though the French government has no information on how this group is faring. Contrarily to the liberal American model, the French republican assimilationist model refuses to collect data between particular groups, for instance between immigrant versus native groups or Christian versus Muslim groups. In other words, the French government is legally obliged to remain “religiously and ethnically blind” and refuses to recognize “the relevance of ethnic or religious differences, treating citizens instead as part of one monolithic, national ‘French’ community.”<sup>6</sup> While the intention behind this philosophy is noble and meant to foster a sense of unity among natives and immigrants, it limits the possibility for the French government to identify disenfranchised groups (in this case Maghrebians who are suffering from high unemployment rates) and to assist them in the most efficient way. The French government thus runs the risk of further perpetuating the social inequalities between Maghrebians and other groups, as it has been doing at its own detriment for the past half century. This is illustrated in George Packer’s article “The Other France” (2015) from *The New Yorker*, which paints the

bleak image of the lives of Maghrebians in Paris and how they are stuck in a system that incessantly fights against their success: social isolation, economic disparities, cultural differences, and ideological radicalization experienced by young Maghrebians are creating ever-growing rifts with no clear solution between them and other groups in France.<sup>7</sup>

Although many different factors could contribute to better integrating Maghrebians in France, ensuring that their employment rates are brought up to the levels of natives or other immigrant groups can go a very long way in bridging this assimilation gap. To confront this daunting task entails analyzing the reasons behind the high unemployment rate in the Maghrebian population, most notably lower rates of education, housing segregation in urban areas, and discrimination based on race, culture, and religion, all of which have negative ramifications on employment.

## ANALYSIS

### EDUCATION

The first important factor that negatively affects employment rates for Maghrebians in France is the lack of educational opportunities compared to those available to the Native French: a study from 2003 reported that while 18% of the Native French had no educational credentials, the number shot up to 30% for

Maghrebians born in France from 1969 to 1978. These numbers have improved compared to those of earlier Maghrebian generations and continue to improve thanks to better linguistic fluency and democratization of the French education system; nonetheless, while children of Maghrebians have higher education rates than their parents, their educational attainment remains much lower than those of the children of natives and very few of them reach post-secondary education.<sup>8</sup> Lower education rates have adverse consequences for employment since a much smaller portion of the job market is open to those with fewer diplomas and low-paying jobs are more likely to be replaced by mechanization. A study from Indiana University's Kelly School of Business (2010) highlights this correlation between unemployment and education: according to this research, "labor force participation goes up as educational attainment levels increase," "the unemployment rate goes down as educational attainment goes up," and "the unemployment rate [for those] with less than a high school degree was nearly 20 percent, dropping to about 4 percent for those with a bachelor's degree or higher."<sup>9</sup>

The causes for lower levels of education are multiple. Many blame the French educational system, as they argue that it prevents social upward mobility and keeps Maghrebian youths in positions from where it is much more difficult

to reach higher levels of education. For example, underfunded school programs in immigrant communities are important impediments to success since schools that serve immigrants cannot give their students the same resources as schools that serve natives. Additionally, the hierarchical system within French high schools tends to place children of immigrants into "the lowest tracks" meant for students who do not wish to proceed with secondary education. Higher achieving students, who are disproportionately children of affluent natives, complete the baccalauréat général with a choice between a scientific, economics and social sciences, and literary route. On the other hand, lower achieving students, who are disproportionately children of low-income Maghrebian immigrants, complete the séries technologiques or lycée professionnel designed for those who do not wish to go on with higher education and need to learn professional skills as of high school.<sup>10</sup> The combination of underfunded schools and higher rates of Maghrebian students in "lower tracks" that do not offer a path to higher education are systematic issues that create lower education attainment, and ergo higher unemployment rates, for Maghrebian students.

Moreover, others see the familial situation of Maghrebian students as an impediment to high education rates. Many Maghrebian children come from "single-parent homes and larger



families, which would necessitate reforms in family and educational policies” to better accommodate students from those family backgrounds and ensure their success.<sup>11</sup> As Maghrebian parents are much less likely to have received a formal education, it makes it more challenging for their children to perform well in school as they do not possess the same support at home as those who come from better educated families: in effect, “until the late 1970s, about three quarters grew up in families where neither parent had earned any sort of diploma; only 10-12 percent had parents who had both achieved a diploma of some kind. Undoubtedly, many of the Maghrebians had not even attended school for more than a year or two, at most.”<sup>12</sup> Being raised in a bilingual family also comes with its challenges, particularly if the parents have low literacy rates (which many immigrants from the Maghreb have), since French schools do not provide much assistance for students that come from non-French speaking backgrounds.<sup>13</sup> Coming from difficult family situations, in addition to structural issues within the French education system, thus hurts Maghrebian students and impedes their ability to reach higher levels of education.

#### SEGREGATION

In addition to lower education rates, the geographical segregation of “undesirable” immigrants, particularly those from West and North Africa, makes it difficult for Maghrebians to

reach regular levels of employment. As of the 1950s, Maghrebian immigrants started to settle in low income neighborhoods right outside of Paris which, over time, “became more permanent settlements and widened the discrepancies in living standards between immigrants and the rest of France.”<sup>14</sup> The French banlieues, or suburbs of a large city, are known for housing immigrant communities in low-income housing projects and for being a hub of strong ethnic networks separate from Native French networks. Maghrebians in Paris, for example, who represent one third of the Parisian population, are disproportionately concentrated “in old housing in formerly industrial and working-class districts of the north and east of the city [...] in large public housing estates planned for reducing the distance between residence and place of work;” it was estimated in 2006 that around 50% of Maghrebian immigrants lived in these banlieues.<sup>15</sup> This has created a strong geographic and cultural separation between Maghrebians and the Native French: according to Packer in his *New Yorker* article about the banlieues, the Native French population only has pejorative associations with the banlieues, such as “decayed housing projects, crime, unemployment, and Muslims,” and most have probably never set foot there in their lives. He also illustrates this bubble very clearly as something Maghrebians feel is an impediment to their true integration in

France:

“The highway that encircles Paris is known as the Périphérique. Entering or leaving the suburbs is often called ‘crossing the Périphérique,’ as if it were a frontier. Banlieue residents joke that going into Paris requires a visa and a vaccination card. Mehdi Meklat, a young writer at Bondy Blog, which reports on the banlieues, told me, ‘There are two parallel worlds.’ He called the dynamic between Paris and the suburbs ‘schizophrenic.’ [...] Compared with American slums, the banlieues have relatively decent standards of housing and safety, but the psychological distance between the 93 and the Champs-Élysées can feel insuperable—much greater than that between the Bronx and Times Square. The apartment blocks in the cités, often arranged around a pharmacy, a convenience store, and a fast-food joint, look inward. Many have no street addresses, obvious points of entry, or places to park. The sense of separation is heightened by the names of the surrounding streets and schools, preserved from a historical France that has little connection to residents’ lives. The roads around Gros Saule—a drug-ridden cité where the police dare not enter—include Rue Henri Matisse and Rue Claude Debussy.”<sup>16</sup>

Being stuck in the banlieues negatively affects access to employment. Physical exclusion from the hubs of education and of the high-skilled jobs market makes admissions to top universities and access to desirable jobs elusive, especially since public transportation from the banlieues to the city is limited. Education and

employment opportunities are sparse in the banlieues, and social reproduction over multiple generations denies children of Maghrebians the chance to break out of the low-skilled immigrant bubble or to find employment that is suitable for their skills: as a result, many Maghrebians “have to settle for unskilled labor jobs in higher crime neighborhoods, which perpetuates their living in the suburbs and continued economic and social marginalization.”<sup>17</sup> Fighting engrained social reproduction without governmental interference is almost impossible, and the French government with its philosophy of republicanism and assimilationism is unlikely to implement geographical integration policies based on race. While recently there have been some initiatives to reduce the gap between the banlieues and Paris, such as Sarkozy’s Grand Paris Project of 2007 to facilitate transportation from the banlieues to Paris and set up a structure that allows for greater cooperation between the two, the divide between the banlieues and Paris persists, limiting employment opportunities for young Maghrebians.<sup>18</sup>

## DISCRIMINATION

To say that all Maghrebians have low levels of education and live in the banlieues is a big overgeneralization: while it is true that a disproportionate number are affected by these two factors, some have been able to break from poverty and gain higher levels of education, hence





accessing the middle class. Although economic prosperity facilitates legitimate job acquisition, Maghrebians in France still face severe discrimination that negatively affects multiple facets of their lives, including their access to employment. Algerians and Moroccans, second only to Haitians, are the groups who feel the most discriminated against in France, which is probably due to their “visible and culturally distant” nature.<sup>19</sup> The numbers pertaining to discrimination are especially divergent when comparing Native French discrimination rates with Maghrebian and Sub-Saharan African discrimination rates: “While only 8 percent of the Native French

claim to have had personal experiences with labor-market discrimination and most of them say it happened just once, about 40 percent of the Maghrebian and the other African-origin men make this claim and the great majority of them perceive it as having happened multiple times.”<sup>20</sup>

More specifically, the way discrimination against Maghrebians influences employment has been made clear by “discrimination testing” studies which have proven that employers are less likely to hire someone with a Maghrebian name. In a survey conducted by the Discrimination Observatory (2004-2006) with 258 resumes sent out for applicants with both French

and Maghrebian names, “The applicants with ‘French’ names [...] received more than five times as many positive responses as those with ‘North African’ names.”<sup>21</sup> A second study found that “all other things being equal, a Muslim candidate is 2.5 times less likely to obtain a job interview than is his or her Christian counterpart.”<sup>22</sup> In other words, even though a child of Maghrebians and a child of Native French citizens can have the same qualifications, the job will likely go to the Native French child due to the employer’s bias, either conscious or subconscious. Since the large majority of those in high-skilled positions are Native French and not from Maghrebian origin, it is very difficult to avoid perpetuating the potential discrimination that hurts Maghrebians’ chances of acquiring employment. This competition between French and Maghrebians increases with a more aggressive job market, with more educated qualified individuals than jobs, which makes ethnic origin “important to the attainment of stable employment (rather than a precarious or short-term job or unemployment) and of the more desirable positions (linked to better remuneration and long-term prospects).”<sup>23</sup>

Much of the discrimination stems from the persistence of the of the Muslim identity over the French identity of Maghrebians, something that has carried on despite multiple generations of Maghrebians being born in France. The Muslim identity of Maghrebians is what stands out

among all their other identifiers, and it is perceived by many French Natives to be directly at odds with the “Christian foundation on which Europe has been built” as well as a threat to the “increasingly secular nature of European society.”<sup>24</sup> The still visible nature of the Maghrebian community has upset many among the Native French, who believe that Maghrebians want to maintain their identity and consciously seek to distance themselves from French society. In addition, a heightened sense of Islamophobia in France following the Islamist terror attacks in the past few years, particularly the attacks on the Charlie Hebdo offices and the November 2015 Paris attacks which killed 130 people, has further marginalized Maghrebians from mainstream French society despite being in France for over half a century. As a result, many young Maghrebians go through very strong identity crises between their two seemingly incompatible identities. This is especially problematic in the republican France, a country that considers all its citizens to be French above anything else; while France claims to be religiously and ethnically blind, religious and ethnic background continues to play a very important role in job acquisition, as having a less favorable religion or ethnicity can lead to much fewer employment options.



## CONCLUSION

Maghrebians in France have suffered from high unemployment and underemployment rates in the past few decades, starting with the oil crisis of the 1970s, the resulting decline of the manufacturing sector, and rise of anti-immigrant sentiments. Since then, lack of employment has always affected immigrant groups, especially Maghrebians, at a higher rate than the Native French. Although many scholars have tried to pinpoint a single reason explaining these particularly high unemployment rates, it is clear that Maghrebian unemployment is due to the intersection of a variety of factors that heighten barriers to employment. Most notably, lower levels of education make it harder to attain employment, geographical segregation reinforces the exclusion of Maghrebians in low-income high-unemployment areas, and racial, cultural, or religious discrimination results in lower hiring rates for Maghrebians. While these are the main factors contributing to unemployment and underemployment of Maghrebians in France, additional factors may also come into play, with further research needed to study their implications.

It is in the French government's best interest to address the high Maghrebian unemployment rates, even though it is a challenge to do so without census information based on religion or race. The 2005 protests in the Pari-

sian suburb of Clichy-sous-Bois are a perfect example of the dangers of ignoring the systematic disadvantages faced by a group that is left behind. While these protests were triggered by the death of two teenagers at the hands of police brutality, underlying factors such as low rates of employment, economic disenfranchisement, and discrimination caused by xenophobia had been brewing anger among this population and drew them to violent protests.<sup>25</sup> Had the Maghrebian population experienced better integration and higher employment rates, the chances of revolting against the French system they claim works against them would have been low as they would have felt to be truly part of the system. For France to be the true cohesive and inclusive republic it claims to be, the French government should take specific action to ensure the successful integration of the Maghrebian population by fighting against the factors, notably substandard education, segregation, and discrimination, that limit their access to employment.

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# an UNCERTAIN FUTURE

the Vulnerability of Djibouti's

Location as an Economic Asset

By Robert Hawes '19

## ABSTRACT

How did Djibouti, a country the size of New Jersey, go from a sparsely populated desert to drawing comparisons to 1940s Casablanca, a city filled with intrigue and pivotal powers “rubbing elbows with each other?”. Djibouti can thank its location. The country’s location on the Horn of Africa allows it to offer a secure location for shipping conglomerates looking to refuel safely and disembark goods destined for the interior of Africa, as well as governments launching military operations in the Middle East and Africa. As a result, Djibouti has built an economy similar to those of countries that exhibit symptoms of the so-called “resource curse.” However, the more pressing issue facing Djibouti is not the symptoms of a “resource curse,” but rather the growing threats to the value of its land. Djibouti’s neighbors Somalia, specifically the region of Somaliland, and Eritrea are becoming more attractive destinations for foreign investment. China poses another threat. While China may appear an economic benefactor, the strings attached to its investment ultimately hurt recipients. Benefactors of Chinese investment tend to default on their loans, which Djibouti is in serious risk of doing. In the past, when countries have defaulted on their loans, China has gained the lease on the new infrastructure.

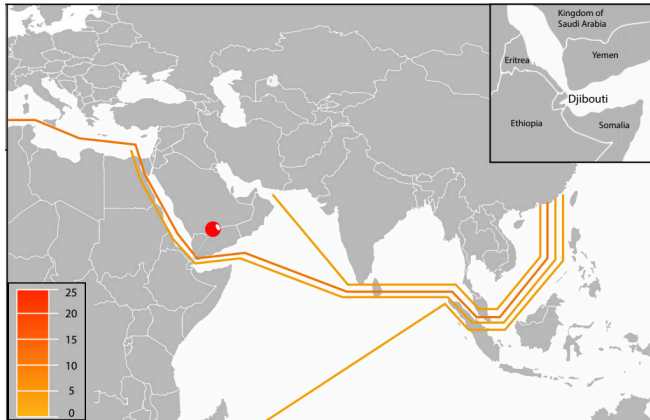


## I. THE “RESOURCE CURSE”

Djibouti serves as an important trading port because of its proximity to critical shipping routes. The Asia-Mediterranean and Asia-North Europe routes pass by the country as they travel through the Gulf of Aden into the Red Sea or vice versa. Djibouti serves as the only viable option for ships to refuel or disembark goods destined for interior Africa. As will be discussed later, Somalia and Yemen do not currently have stable governments that can facilitate trade, and Eritrea’s oppressive dictatorships and poor human rights record deters states and corporations from entering into economic relations with it. Therefore, Djibouti remains the only country that governments and corporations can work with safely and not face public backlash. As a result, the majority of Djibouti’s GDP comes from services that result from its strategic location. Services comprise over 70% of the country’s economy and have tripled the size of Djibouti’s economy since 2000.<sup>1</sup> The country’s economic hotspots revolve around its port on the Red Sea, military bases, and the railway that connects to Ethiopia.<sup>2</sup> Without its location and the economic interests it serves, Djibouti’s economy would certainly collapse. Djibouti serves as an important military location because of its proximity to the Middle East, African conflict zones, and piracy hotspots. The United States, China, France, Italy, and Japan all currently have bases in the

country, and Saudi Arabia is also exploring the option of building one there.<sup>3</sup> These countries decided to build strongholds in Djibouti in order to serve their economic and military interests. Djibouti’s neighbor, Somalia, serves as the launching point for pirates looking to exploit cargo ships traveling around the Horn of Africa. Countries establish bases in Djibouti to place naval forces that can quickly respond to piracy situations.<sup>4</sup> Djibouti also lies in close proximity to the Middle East and conflict zones in Africa. For example, the missions launched from Camp Lemonnier, the United States base in Djibouti, are drone strikes or classified special forces operations in Yemen, or nearby African countries like Somalia and Mali.<sup>5</sup> Countries lease the land to build these bases; the United States pays Djibouti \$30 million a year to retain its position within the country.<sup>6</sup> The money from military base leases further bolsters Djibouti’s economy.

Countries that rely on one commodity to support their economies are subject to an economic phenomenon known as the “resource curse.” The “resource curse” refers to the issues a one-pronged economy faces, which include corruption, wealth inequality, widespread poverty, and neglect for the development of potentially lucrative industries.<sup>7</sup> Many countries in sub-Saharan Africa also experience this issue. For example, Nigeria controls massive reserves of crude oil, and the presence of this resource fo-



cuses all investments on ways to exploit the commodity. As a result, the government and investors neglect Nigeria’s potential as a producer of livestock and food. The agricultural industry has become so underdeveloped that Nigeria is forced to import most of its food.<sup>8</sup> “Resource cursed” states also have centralized authoritarian governments that operate on patronage and corruption. In a country like Nigeria, citizens must have direct access to the oil industry to obtain wealth. The Nigerian government controls the distribution of wealth from the commodity, and only friends or those who bribe officials get a portion of the revenue. As a result, only 1% of Nigerians gain 80% of the revenue from oil. Oil has caused widespread corruption, wealth inequality, and economic mismanagement within Nigeria.

Geographic location acts as Djibouti’s critical commodity. As discussed previously, the country’s economy relies on its proximity to trading routes and the military interests of foreign powers. Because of this dependence, Djibouti demonstrates the symptoms of a “resource

curse.” President Ismail Omar Guelleh operates the state with a tight grasp because he and his allies need to control the revenue accrued from Djibouti’s strategic location to control the country. While the country displays some features of a democratic polity, Guelleh’s ruling party crushes dissent. The political opposition has the ability to publish its own newspapers and radio broadcast, but harassment by the Djiboutian government prevents these parties from gaining broad popularity.<sup>9</sup> Guelleh maintains power through his control over real estate valuable to China, the United States, and other major powers. Guellah also heavily favors his own ethnic group. Guellah belongs to the Issa group, and disburses more patronage to the Issa than the Afars, the other significant ethnic group in Djibouti.<sup>10</sup> Controlling the rights to land are critical to his regime. He rewards those individuals who act to legitimize his government. Guellah has created an unequal society with one favored ethnic group that relies on real estate revenues. Djibouti and the power of its president are dependent upon the value of the country’s strategic location.

In order to boost the revenues he has access to, President Guelleh directs investments towards trade infrastructure and economic ventures that flow into the coffers of the state.<sup>11</sup> As a result, the relationship between the governed and government is weak. Jennifer Brass asserts

that the social contract in Djibouti is virtually non-existent, as Guelleh's government does not rely on citizens for taxes and returns none of the political goods associated with a conventional social contract.<sup>12</sup> By practice, not design, the Djiboutian economy has become virtually state-run. The government expresses no interest in promoting private enterprise, demonstrated by its abysmally low property rights score of 19%, which lies 10% below the average for sub-Saharan Africa.<sup>13</sup> Djibouti will maintain a strong economy as long as foreign countries see its land as valuable, but as competition increases, or China finds a way to control the land, the country's economy and government will deteriorate.

Unlike Nigeria, Djibouti has no alternative course of action if the value of its main resource falls. Djibouti has almost no natural resources, and its arid desert conditions cannot support agriculture.<sup>14</sup> If oil loses enough value to a point at which it can no longer support Nigeria's economy, the country could shift to agriculture or mining, but Djibouti does not have this option. Thus, the threats to the value of Djibouti's land are significantly more important than threats to the value of its oil, like the growth of renewables. Djibouti's economy has no back-up plan. If its land loses value, the country's economy and government will collapse.

## II. POTENTIAL COMPETI-

## TORS TO DJIBOUTI

Two other countries boast the same valuable location as Djibouti: Eritrea and Somalia. Eritrea, however, poses little threat to Djibouti. Eritrea was an Italian colony until 1941, when it became a British protectorate. In 1952, the British handed over control to Ethiopia, and it remained part of Ethiopia until 1991, when conflict broke out and Eritrea gained full independence.<sup>15</sup> Since then, the country has remained an oppressive dictatorship. In 2016, a UN Commission of Inquiry looked into human rights violations within the country. Sheile B. Keetharuth, who served on the Commission, found that "the Government has made no effort to end ongoing human rights violations," and described these violations "as amounting to crimes against humanity."<sup>16</sup> The Eritrean government forces its citizens into indefinite military service, confiscates citizens' currency, and controls all the country's media outlets. As a result, foreign powers tend to avoid entering into economic and military relations with Eritrea to avoid the public backlash they would attract from doing business with an oppressive government. To the benefit of Djibouti, nothing indicates this will change. Unlike Somalia and Somaliland, Eritrea has received no interest from foreign investors, pointing to a future in which Eritrea's eco-

conomic infrastructure will not be able to compete against Djibouti's. Also, Eritrea has shown no signs of changing its repressive government or ending human rights abuses. Due to the presence of a stable and more reputable neighbor, countries ignore Eritrea and invest in Djibouti.

Djibouti's other coastal neighbor is Somalia. Countries shy away from Somalia not because of an autocratic government, but lack of a functioning one. The country has been embroiled by piracy, transnational terror groups, and armed conflict since its civil war in the 1990s. Shipping companies are still concerned about the threat of piracy as well. In the first half of 2017, Somali pirates attacked 9 vessels traveling around the horn of Africa.<sup>17</sup> The lack of state capacity attributes to this problem. The United Nations classified Somalia as a fragile state, which refers to a country that has some form of a functioning government, but is in imminent danger of collapsing.<sup>18</sup> The security threat poses too high a risk for countries to ship goods through Somalia which has resulted in nations launching military operations in the country, but not the construction of permanent bases. Since these operations are typically airstrikes, foreign powers have a longer range in which they can build a base, meaning they do not have to build a base in Somalia. Rather, they choose to build bases in Djibouti, which provides a secure location to launch these strikes from.

Despite this reality, Somalia may become a target of foreign investment in the near future. The country has demonstrated over the past few years a steady upward trend towards becoming a secure state. While its current state may not initially indicate a potentially prosperous future, Somalia has demonstrated improvement nonetheless. Its current status as a "fragile state" is an upgrade from its previous status as a "failed state", which Somalia held before 2015.<sup>19</sup> More recently, the Heritage Foundation was able to collect data on economic freedom in Somalia, and early results show promise. From its score in 2017 to its current 2018 score, Somalia's property rights score jumped over 25 points and lies only 5 points below the average score of Sub-Saharan Africa.<sup>20</sup> The rise of Somalia will eventually threaten the value of Djibouti's location. Djibouti's property rights score has fallen in the past few years due to endemic corruption. In fact, Somalia's property rights current score stands 14 points higher than Djibouti's. A stable Somalia offers states a longer coastline, meaning that naval bases do not need to be in such close proximity to each other as they are in Djibouti. Because Djibouti is small, the Chinese and US naval bases in Djibouti are only 7 miles away from each other. Somalia still lacks the security needed to court foreign investment, but the demonstrated improvements in this area, indicate that Somalia will not remain as a "fragile





state”.

However, the area of Somalia, called Somaliland, can threaten Djibouti’s monopoly in the short run. Somaliland operates as a de facto autonomous country within Somalia. The territory operates as a functioning democracy with high state capacity and legitimacy. Somaliland already boasts growing large ports on the Gulf of Aden and the Port of Berbera which transit 1.25 million TEU<sup>21</sup> per year.<sup>22</sup> In comparison Djibouti’s port transported roughly one million TEU per year.<sup>23</sup> In April 2018, DP World, a shipping conglomerate owned by the government of Dubai, invested 450 million into Somaliland to expand Bebera’s port capabilities<sup>24</sup>. Somaliland is receiving the investments for the infrastructure needed to compete with Djibouti’s shipping industry. The central government of Somalia tried to prevent the project from taking place and banned DP World from the country, but the central government demonstrated no ability to enforce this measure.<sup>25</sup> Similar to Djibouti, foreign states are starting to recognize the value of Somaliland’s location. Once Somaliland can court more foreign investment it will become a formidable economic competitor to Djibouti.

DP World complicates the relationship between Djibouti and Somaliland. DP World is currently developing the Port of Berbera expansion. Once the port can facilitate mass trade, DP World will operate and profit from the port.

Until very recently, DP World also operated a major port in Djibouti, but Djibouti’s government ended DP World’s contract to operate the port on the basis of an unresolved legal matter dating back to 2012. DP World has turned to the International Courts to arbitrate the decision and Djibouti indicated that they plan on buying DP World’s stake in the port to settle the matter<sup>26</sup>. Therefore, Djibouti’s attempts to shut out DP World from their only port on the Horn



of Africa has led to a greater incentive to grow the port and make Somaliland a competitor to Djibouti. Even further, in early March, Ethiopia bought a 19% stake in the Port of Berbera, adding Ethiopia to the list of actors that have an incentive in growing the Port of Berbera.

### III. THE THREAT OF CHINA

China also wields significant influence over the future of Djibouti. Djibouti is a critical military and economic port for China and, as a result, the Chinese invest billions into the country. China is currently financing the construction of a railroad between Djibouti and Ethiopia as well as the “mega” Doraleh Multipurpose Port. However, the financial realities of Djibouti predict that Djibouti will not be able to pay back these loans. The Center for Global Development, a non-profit research organization, believes that Djibouti will most likely default on these loans.<sup>27</sup> Once Djibouti defaults, they will be at the mercy of China.

Countries in Southeast Asia offer a glimpse into what China will do once Djibouti defaults on its loans. Sri Lanka lies on a trade route critical to the Chinese economy. In the mid 2010s, Sri Lanka, like Djibouti, looked to China to finance infrastructure projects in the country, including a trading port. The country defaulted on the loans and settled the debt by swapping debt for equity. China walked away from the deal with a 99-year lease on the port. China offered a similar deal to Pakistan, which also lies on an important trade route, and built the Pakistani port of Gwadar. Similar to Sri Lanka, Pakistan defaulted on the loans and now China holds a lengthy lease on the port.<sup>28</sup> Hopes of controlling these ports motivates China’s financing to these countries. China loans to eco-

nomically vulnerable countries that are in need of financing for infrastructure projects with the promise that these projects will help the recipient economy in the long run, knowing that in all likelihood, these countries will not be able to pay back these loans. Djibouti sits in the same position as Pakistan and Sri Lanka, and unless they reshape their repayment strategy, their port will end up in Chinese hands.

Whether or not Djibouti defaults on its loans, the Chinese insistence to use Chinese labor to build these infrastructure projects severely inhibits Djibouti’s ability to solve its country’s unemployment problem. Unemployment in the country lies just below 60%.<sup>29</sup> Chinese funded infrastructure projects use local labor, but Chinese workers occupy technical and administrative positions. The learning potential from these projects are squandered by China’s decision to bring in foreign engineers and managers. The lack of education in Djibouti could attribute to China’s decisions, but Djibouti should insist on measures in future contracts with China that require the training of Djibouti’s workers as engineers or managers. The lack of human capital in Djibouti will leave its average citizens out of the benefits on Chinese investment. Laborers can only access the wealth created by Chinese investment in a miniscule amount. At some point, the lack of expertise will hurt Djibouti. Eventually the rate of construction will slow due

to either lack of real estate or Djibouti losing its monopoly on ports on the Horn of Africa. When this occurs, Djibouti will have an overflow of labor and more unemployment.

### III. CONCLUSIONS

Djibouti faces a very real possibility of the economic growth that its location has brought them ending and regressing. Somaliland can become a formidable economic competitor that can serve as a realistic alternative to Djibouti's ports. As of now, Somaliland's Port of Berbera is too small, but the port will continue to grow due to massive amounts of foreign investment. China may gain the lease on Djibouti's newest and largest port if Djibouti defaults on its loans, meaning Djibouti can be shut out of its own value. The pathways to mitigating the damage this would cause to Djibouti are unfortunately minimal. Djibouti's lack of natural resources means opportunity for a diversified economy is low. For both threats, Djibouti should maximize the revenue from the ports and military bases and invest in education with the purpose of creating a skilled workforce that can support diversified industries. If China takes over its ports or if the Port of Berbera becomes a competition, Djibouti will have industries to fall back on to curb China's or Berbera's influence. Djibouti must be serious about democratizing their country to turn to Western financial institutions such

as the IMF for debt relief and then to the World Bank for future projects. While, instability in surrounding states could always keep investors in Djibouti, the future is not clear.

The outlook for Djibouti is not optimal. In order for Djibouti's economy to survive it must turn from a patrimonial state into a democracy that meets the standards of the World Bank in order to refinance its loans. It must avoid taking unpayable loans from the growing, expansionist China, which would likely result in disaster.. It must also grow enough human capital to reform its economy into a service based economy. The only thing Djibouti directly controls is democratizing the state and growing human capital. However, Guellah and his regime have no incentive to do either of those things. Defaulting on loans and entering into a lopsided deal with China for Guellah is a better option than loosening his grip on the country and educating his citizens, the latter of which requires money Guelleh knows he does not have to spend. Unfortunately, Guelleh and the government of Djibouti will likely do nothing to mitigate the eventual damages of devalued real estate to the Djiboutian economy.

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# a Comparative Analysis of FOREIGN DIRECT INVESTMENT ATTRACTION

By Andrew Kuna '19

## ABSTRACT

After the collapse of the Soviet Union over a dozen states had to learn how to adapt both their economies and their political systems. One crucial aspect of growing their new independent economies was attracting investment from other states. This paper analyzes the different strategies utilized for foreign direct investment by Czech Republic, Uzbekistan, and Moldova. The Czech Republic has been very open to foreign direct investment as they have joined the EU, and due to this openness it has had great success in attracting investment and growing their economy. Uzbekistan, a state plagued with corruption, has failed to reach the same high levels of investment resulting in a more poverty-stricken economy. Finally, Moldova has attempted to be more open than Uzbekistan through pursuing investment strategies in the 21st century, but it too has been afflicted with heavy levels of corruption. Through identifying the internal problems of each of these nations it becomes more clear how they can garner future investments to help further develop their young economies.



A crucial element in transitioning a command economy into a market economy with global trading partners is through developing relationships by attaining foreign direct investment. Countries have exploited a plethora of strategies to beckon investment. The four main areas that investors have appeared to focus on when determining the viability of their investment in foreign nations have been marketing factors, trade restrictions, cost factors, and investment climate. The marketing factors consist mainly of market size and growth, closeness to customers, and export potential. The trade restrictions boil down to trade barriers and the ethnocentricity of consumers. Cost factors include labor costs, transportation costs, technology and capital, access to raw materials and incentives provided by the government. Finally, the investment climate relates to political stability, attitudes towards FDI, and structures of the tax system.<sup>1</sup> This paper will evaluate and compare the effectiveness of three Post-Soviet nations; Czech Republic, Moldova, and Uzbekistan in providing the best overall environment for investment and how these four major categories have been addressed by the various nations, the extent to which they have affected the levels of investment, and suggest strategies countries could pursue to stimulate greater investment.

In order to become a globalized nation with a heavy foreign trade presence, a country

must open up. This means allowing foreign investors, extensive trading, and promoting cooperation between nations. The Czech Republic went through this processing of opening up when it joined the EU. The EU opened many doors of opportunity for this small planned economy to allow it to develop into a market economy. There were many driving factors for this development, but one of the most important was foreign direct investment (FDI). Over the past twenty years the Czech Republic has amassed between 2 and 14 billion US dollars in FDI year to year. (Appendix B). The centrally planned economy left over from the Soviet legacy was highly inefficient and lacked capital to grow, foreign direct investment acted as a major remedy for this. One of the desirable characteristics of the Czech economy was that it had a labor-centric economy, it simply lacked enough investment in capital and equipment. This allowed countries both in the EU and out to provide heavy levels of investment to help get it the capital it needed to help grow its economy and allow the labor force to be highly productive. In addition once the Czech Republic joined the EU and had countries invested in it and working in collaboration with it, it was able to lower the trade deficit because it had greater access to international sales networks and was able to increase its exports exponentially.<sup>2</sup> One of the major reasons that the Czech economy

was able to more effectively develop in the EU trade relationship versus its old COMECON relationships with Soviet nations is because of the stronger economies of its trading partners. European nations overall had much more expansive economies with greater levels of products, with greater amounts of capital, and more advanced technology. Trading partners that have access to greater levels of resources granted the Czech Republic more ability to expand and allowed its economy to explode to a much greater extent when it began to adopt the Western market framework. All of these developed traits that came about from joining the EU made the Czech economy not only enticing to fellow EU members, but to other Western countries i.e. the United States as well. The Czech products continue to grow in competitiveness as is displayed by the rising levels of exports specifically in high value commodities, one major example of this is in the automobile industry.<sup>3</sup> The joining of the EU paved the way for many different opportunities for the Czech Republic and made them more desirable for foreign direct investment allowing the planned economy to transition into a market economy. One major example of the types of opportunities foreign direct investment generates is International Joint Ventures (IJVs).

An international joint venture is essentially a contractual agreement between multiple parent companies, both local and foreign, that

cooperatively creates, manages, and owns a firm. This type of model is desirable because it allows high levels of collaboration between two countries, and it allows the investing countries, in this case Western countries, more control over the business. The Western countries are more inclined to invest when they have greater control because this mitigates their concerns about an economic transition like the Czech Republic's transition from planned to market economy. The IJV framework allows for successful organizational identities and business practices to be adopted from the Western economies while retaining the cultural knowledge of the local managers. An example that displays a joint venture in Czech Republic is through the Deutsche-Motor and AutoDil Joint Venture (DAJV). The parent company of Deutsche-Motors from Germany helped to modernize AutoDil by giving them more innovative technology that helped to increase productivity and helped prepare them for the global economy. It is more than likely that without this joint venture, AutoDil would not have been competitive in the world economy. The DAJV ended up dissolving due to different visions and a concern by AutoDil that Deutsche had ulterior motives relating to power, these fears can be partially attributed to cultural differences and past interactions between Germany and Czech Republic. The dissolution however does not mean that the ven-





ture was a failure as the organizational identity of Autodil had been permanently altered, and the senior managers whom were the pushers for ending the relationship admit that Deutsche's business insights helped prepare them for the world economy. "The post socialist enterprise advanced closer to a capitalist corporation through the acquisition of a very 'efficient philosophy'." <sup>4</sup> This is simply one major example of how opening up to direct investment has allowed the Czech economy to adopt Western market economy practices resulting in higher levels of growth and an ability to compete in an increasingly globalized world.



Foreign direct investment from both EU and non-EU Western market economies helped to develop the Czech economy into a more efficient machine, and FDI success in the country is due to three main factors; its EU membership, Czechinvest, and agglomeration. The Czech Republic becoming a member of the EU granted it a network of trading partners, who had a vested interest in the development of the country. In addition to the lifting of tariffs and trade barriers,

countries have a higher stake in their fellow EU members meaning that they promote a collective success that the Czech Republic was now a contributor to. Another crucial element was Czechinvest, essentially an institution that promotes trade and investment into the Czech Republic from other countries. Its main functions include information provision, incentive handling, and infrastructure development. CzechInvest acts as an international marketer by placing itself in various locations around the world to help promote relationships with foreign investors and breed excitement about opportunities in the Czech Republic. They are then able to act as an intermediary between companies internally and abroad with their knowledge of the local area and the relationships they have developed with foreign investors. It has placed its offices strategically to promote areas where it believes Czech Republic can thrive. Examples include their Chicago office, which is meant to attain investments for manufacturing, and its Silicon Valley office, meant for investments in advanced technology. CzechInvest displays Czech Republic's willingness to open its gates to investors, instead of passively waiting for it. CzechInvest markets the skill of the Czech workforce and helps energize investors about the many opportunities present in the Czech Republic. Finally, a vital factor for success of FDI in Czech Republic has been agglomeration. Agglomeration means

placing a large number of firms close together in a type of cluster. This strategy is pursued mainly by Non-EU countries, as the close proximity allows the firms to develop and share local knowledge so as to better get to know the workforce overall. Agglomeration minimizes marketing and cost factors by allowing for ease of exchange of information between various firms.<sup>5</sup> Foreign direct Investment has been crucial in turning the Czech economy around, and it did not just come naturally, but was due to active engagement with many foreign entities and fostering of relationships all around the globe.

The Czech Republic has displayed a heavy openness to investments, and this has paid off as displayed through numerous case studies of firms ranging from industrial gas to breweries to automobile manufacturing. Investors in the Czech Republic have emphasized some of the major reasons they have chosen to bet on the Czech Republic; the skills of its workforce, its location, and the government's openness and willingness to cooperate. As stated before the Czech Republic workforce is considered to be of high quality, which was discovered by Germany's firm Linde who chose to invest in Technoplyn, an industrial gas company in the Czech Republic. This relationship allowed Technoplyn to build a new facility, helped Linde to gain an entirely new market and credited the effectiveness of the Czech workforce as a major contributor to the

decision of the enterprise. The other major decision factors noted by Linde was Technoplyn's enthusiasm for a foreign partner and the strong distribution networks of the company. There are numerous examples of success stories in these types of joint ventures, and in all the examples the investors have credited the effectiveness of the workforce and the Czech peoples' ardor for advancing the economy to become a modern global market player. In addition companies are interested in the Central Eastern European area because many of its neighbors contain large economies including Germany and Austria and the distribution networks in these countries. This makes it a highly viable location for trade with all of Europe, and Germany although it has historically been intrusive upon Czech Republic sovereignty, has in recent years dedicated investment towards its ascension into the global economy. The final piece that these case studies all have in common is that the government has been clear and transparent, one advantage Czech has over other post-soviet nations is its free media, which provides accurate information enabling firms to gauge successful opportunities more clearly.<sup>6</sup> The Czech Republic has proven to be a nation willing to adapt, work with outsiders, and provide quality work all attractive qualities for an investment.

Overall the Czech Republic has been effective in gaining high levels of investment



from foreign firms and nations as it has marketed itself around the world through CzechInvest, and it has a strong closeness to customers due to its central location in Europe. It has minimized trade restrictions by adopting the open and collaborative structure of the EU. The labor force has been proven to be effective and overall their access to resources, although lower than some countries, has not been a heavy deterrent from investment. Even though it lacked advanced technologies, through help from investors they have successfully implemented innovation across their economy as displayed through the automobile industry. Finally their political stability and relatively welcoming attitude towards FDI has made them a strong candidate for investment.



Moldova, a country stuck in between Asia and Europe has struggled since the dissolution of the Soviet Union, unable to adopt an effective hybrid form of Western or Eastern market models or its own form. Moldova is one of the poorest countries in the world and one of the poorest of the Former Soviet Union, meaning

that it has a necessity for foreign direct investment. Over the past twenty years Moldova has only been able to accumulate around 100 to 700 million USD year to year in investment, a dismal number. FDI has the advantages of providing advanced technology, innovative business knowledge, global trading partners and more, making it vitally important for Moldova to grow its stagnant economy. Moldova's major reforms in order to attract greater levels of FDI have been focused on improving the investment climate. Moldova in the past has been plagued with high levels of corruption, it has lacked a strong regulatory framework, and these factors contribute to a lack of political stability and display no willingness to attract FDI. (CPI attached in Appendix) Due to high corruption in particular it has been difficult for Moldova to attract attention from Western investors such as the United States or European Union members, whom primarily trade with countries more akin to their lower levels of corruption. Moldova's primary investor has therefore been Russia, a country with similar levels of corruption, but Moldova wishes to expand its diversity of investors.<sup>7</sup> In an interview when discussing the levels of foreign direct investment in Moldova, an IMF representative stated the following, "Competitiveness and political stability are needed to for higher FDI inflow. Foreign investors need to feel comfortable, to have the opportunity to

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work here without worrying about political factors” (Tokhir Mirzoev)<sup>8</sup>, Corporate Wire Newspaper. Moldova’s deteriorating economy has made it acutely aware of this structural problem and has been working hard to amend it.

Over the past decade Moldova has sought out new ways of attracting foreign investment, it adopted a strategy in 2006 to turn its investment climate in a whole new direction. The main goal was to increase exports and begin to produce commodities that would attract investors. The first part of the newly adopted strategy focused on developing free economic zones and building industrial parks. The purpose of these free economic zones is to incentivize firms who are generally concerned with trade barriers and restrictions when determining investments; these free economic zones alleviate concerns over higher costs from trading with Moldova and help to bring in fresh investments. The industrial parks can help promote agglomeration, a key factor in successful direct investment because when firms are located in close proximity, the development is much more rapid as they are able to exchange information, not only about technologies and business acumen, but also local culture. The second part of the strategy has to do with setting high goals for themselves and instituting a civil police whom will oversee the attainment of those goals, as well as ensure that Moldova is adhering to all proper economic practices. The setting of

goals displays Moldova’s drive and ambition to grow, attractive qualities for investors. The civil police grant Moldova a more respectable image repairing their previous appearance as a corrupt nation.<sup>9</sup> The investment climate of a nation is a heavy determinant of whether or not outsiders wish to invest valuable resources, and Moldova although in the past has been deemed a corrupt nation, making investment a risky venture, it has been pushing new strategies to ensure investors a level of stability and make Moldova a country worthy of investing in.

In addition to regulatory strategies and a commitment to decreasing corruption, Moldova also seeks other means of attracting foreign direct investment through decreasing their cost factors. One effective means of enticing large corporations is through offering them tax incentives. Moldova after its transition sought tax policies that it hopes will make it a more desirable location for investment. Some of these tax policies include a 50% tax reduction for the first five years for foreign companies if the foreign company’s share is valued over 250,000 USD. This type of tax incentive intrigues larger corporations who get a break in the short term, and can then grow their business more quickly in Moldova as they do not have to pay heavy taxes during their first few years of business. A complementary tax policy that promotes long-term growth is Moldova’s low capital gains tax



rate of only 9%. Since generally a capital gains tax seeks to value money more heavily now than in the future, a low capital gains tax renders a commitment to long-term growth, and induces higher levels of investment.<sup>10</sup> These tax policies help decrease foreign corporations' cost factors therefore making Moldova a haven-like area for taxes, and this will help them to attract investment for both the short and long term.

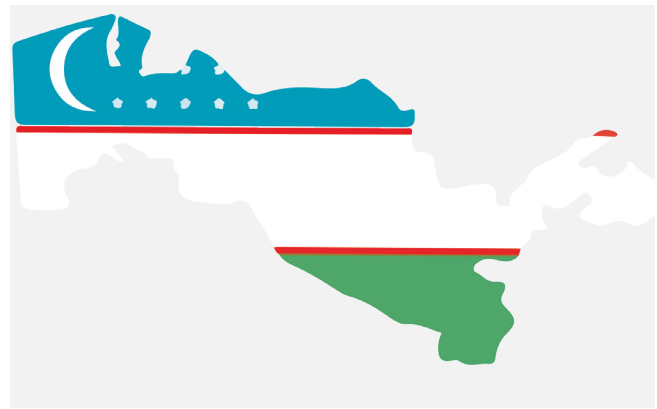
Another area where Moldova has had serious issues is human capital. Human capital is crucial in long-term economic growth, and overall an educated and skilled workforce is minimal in Moldova. As displayed in the Czech Republic, having a skilled and motivated workforce is an important factor for firms because it ensures that their costs will be minimized and production will be efficient and of high quality. One way that Moldova can overcome this problem of developing human capital is through developing relationships with foreign institutions and gaining FDI in higher educational universities at a local level. Moldova is not a physical resource rich country, therefore, developing high levels of human capital is essential to growth. Then, through an educated workforce it can employ strategies that utilize its central location, which is one of its major attractive attributes being geographically located directly between the Eastern and Western worlds. Moldova also needs a greater marketing strategy and one possibility would be

merging the Investment Attraction Team and the Moldovan Export Promotion Activities Coordination Council, this merging will create better coordination between these two separate teams and bring the goal of attracting and working with investors all under one roof. Finally, the regulatory regime in Moldova is still relatively ambiguous and restructuring it could help to induce investment by developing more financial incentives for investment and devising a transparent tax system.<sup>11</sup> It appears Moldova has a large number of possible strategies it could undergo to improve its investment situation, but it needs to implement them officially to help spur economic growth.

Moldova has indeed been making strides toward the future to turn their economy around by welcoming foreign direct investment, however it needs to garner great support nationwide. Research displays that the press in Moldova tends more to highlight the disadvantages of foreign direct investment such as loss of autonomy and foreign access to resources, rather than the major advantages including access to global markets and sharing of business knowledge. The negative attitude displayed in the press trickles down to the people of Moldova, as the press in any society tends to form and portray the opinions of the people. A negative view on FDI will not promote collaboration with various countries and makes Moldova less desirable of

an investment as a whole.<sup>12</sup> This cultural opposition and apathy towards investment is not desirable and must be addressed if Moldova wants to attract the same level of capital inflows as its Western neighbors.

Moldova has been able to attract some level of foreign direct investment, but it has remained relatively minimal over the last two decades. This is partially because in the past it has been deemed as not viable because of its corrupt nature, therefore, it did not contain the desirable investment climate. Moldova lacks the same competent workforce of the Czech Republic, but this obstacle can be overcome through greater emphasis on education. Moldova has not granted high levels of financial incentives in the past besides the advantages of free economic zones, however they do have a strong location therefore market growth displays great potential. Overall Moldova appears to have a poor investment climate that is undergoing promising reform, its cost factors are higher due to low levels of human capital, trade restrictions do not appear high, but could be more favorable, and finally their market size is small, but has high potential for growth due to its location. Moldova appears to have a strong capacity to be a good candidate for investment if it is able to fully repair their previous corrupt frameworks, improve their workforce, and place a heavier emphasis on FDI as a nation overall.



Uzbekistan, a nation in the middle of Central Asia, a part of the infamous “Stanland” is another example of a nation struggling with the economic transition and has faced many problems in attracting foreign direct investment. Uzbekistan has been able to attract only around 200 million to a peak of about 1.5 billion year to year over the past two decades, numbers almost as low as Moldova. Uzbekistan is also a country that has faced massive problems with corruption and a lack of strength in the rule of law. These are two major conditions that tend to deter investors, as they do not wish to put their assets at risk when the investment climate is unsuitable, as it is in Uzbekistan. Foreign investment in Uzbekistan has been low for many reasons including low access to resources and an unstable environment. Foreign investors have stated that Uzbekistan poses unacceptable risks to investors, and unless significant changes are made, it is an unviable place for investment. Other concerns of investors include that Uzbekistan tends to utilize their resources for domestic purposes



almost exclusively squandering any potential for outsiders to use those resources. It is an understandable decision to make for Uzbekistan as it has gone through a difficult transition over the past twenty years, and the domestic problems have forced it to focus primarily on itself. This is a problem that is often faced in economics because consumption in the present allows for the people to live a sustainable lifestyle, unfortunately for growth to occur a certain level of resources must be sacrificed for investment. This creates a huge problem for a country with limited access to resources because although it would like to have cooperative relationships with foreign investors who could employ its resources, this comes at the cost of a lack of resources for its general population.<sup>13</sup>

Another huge roadblock investors have stated is Uzbekistan's lack of legislation progress, specifically in the negotiation of contracts. Uzbekistan although seeking investment, does not welcome investors as it is not willing to allow outsiders in on the decision making progress. This lack of collaborative willingness is highly problematic for investors as they require some levels of control, and in particular this impedes the opportunities for joint ventures, as those require working in concert throughout the process. Uzbekistan in addition has a paucity of clear tax incentives. It offers tax vacations, that provide a few years of no taxes to excite investors, but it

makes certain exceptions for various enterprises including trade and food services. This problem of unclear tax codes boils down to its overall dearth in the rule of law, these kinds of distinctions and absence of uniform codes makes the investors less inclined to do work in Uzbekistan. Overall Uzbekistan has failed to reform economically to make it a desirable area for investment, as it has a hazy tax system, it has imposed import tariffs and excise duties, and requires monotonous contract registration. Uzbekistan is a country of high levels of domestic problems including scarce resources, corruption, and low rule of law, this causes investors to be incredibly wary as they fear for the stability of the government, and Uzbekistan does not soothe investors' worries by blocking their control over specific matters.<sup>14</sup>

Uzbekistan although lacking in large investments into their infrastructure due to their unstable political environment has been able to gain some levels of investment into their private businesses. Through the use of the Export-Import Bank foreign investors are able to minimize their risk of doing business in a country like Uzbekistan by conducting sovereign lending. Uzbekistan has not defaulted once on a payment from this sovereign lending framework allowing for many private business firms to garner international financing through the public sphere of the US Export-Import Bank essentially just

an intermediary that evaluates risks and helps finance loans and provides a level of insurance. Unfortunately the conducting of business in the country between various private institutions has done little to improving Uzbekistan infrastructure as a whole. In order to fully take advantage of assets foreign direct investment brings to the table, Uzbekistan will need to adopt more market-style reforms that change their banking system, tax system, and improve their overall investment climate.<sup>15</sup>

One area of particular interest for Uzbekistan involves its gas and oil resources that are not being fully utilized under its current system. China has expressed great interest in this area and over the past decade has invested in large-scale projects that will build pipelines to help ease the transportation of the gas, a major problem currently facing Uzbekistan. The countries of Central Asia have a large amount of gas and oil resources, the issue is that they are not evenly distributed and the countries have failed to cooperate and create effective trading networks. Uzbekistan's biggest issue is transporting the oil through Russian pipelines, but hopefully through China's investment in larger scale projects it is able to solve this infrastructure problem. Central Asian countries have failed to utilize comparative advantage, a key strategy for collective success. If the Central Asian states are able

to put aside their ethnic differences and begin to collaborate the way the European Union does there is high potential for strong trade in the region that would help to redistribute the resources so that everything is being used most efficiently.<sup>16</sup>

A final key for Uzbekistan to promote greater levels of investment will be to provide both financial and non-financial incentives. Financial incentives will come in the form of reforming its tax system as it has done in previous years so as to make the five year tax holiday a policy for all joint ventures with greater than 50% foreign ownership which produce consumer goods (a market that have very little stake in currently, but wish to focus on in the future). This sort of incentive and other reformations of its tax and trading policies will help clarify the system for the investors. In the past due to the ambiguous nature of their financial systems and laws, investors are wary that they will be cheated by a country with such a poor record for rule of law, but focusing on economic reforms to present a fully realized tax and trading policy could help attract greater levels of interest into Uzbekistan. The other type of incentive Uzbekistan can offer investors comes in the form of non-financial incentives, which are somewhat discretionary policies that promise monopolies or grant exclusive rights.<sup>17</sup> One example of Uzbekistan already employing





this strategy and showcasing its tax holiday is through the investment of BAT into UZTABAK. BAT is a UK enterprise primarily focused in the financial services and tobacco, they invested into UZTABAK, a very poorly run aging tobacco manufacturing plant. The funds supplied by BAT helped to modernize the plant and in return they received a tax holiday and other tax incentives, but most importantly exclusivity in the manufacturing of tobacco. Although this did not grant them a monopoly as Kazakhstani brands were very popular, but by creating an excise tax and allowing BAT to produce a national brand known as Saraton they were able to corner the tobacco market. These sorts of excise taxes and policies had to come from the very top of the Uzbek government, and although it is not completely clear the role incentives played in BAT's choice of investment, the policies of the Uzbek government created a lucrative environment where everybody internally profited. The Uzbek government must continue to provide financial and non-financial incentives to help attract business, and the government's overall firm grip on society could be advantageous as displayed in the BAT case where they were able to manufacture a monopoly on tobacco even with the heavy presence of the Kazakhstani brands.<sup>18</sup>

Uzbekistan is known for its lack of rule of law, similar to most Central Asian States. This makes the negotiation of contracts, the tax

system, and overall trading with the country an onerous task, therefore turning many investors away. Uzbekistan also fails in the area of collaboration, as it often demands control over what occurs domestically impeding the ability of investors to help modernize the nation's industries. Uzbekistan has begun to provide greater levels of financial and non-financial incentives but even these lack high levels of clarity making it still a strenuous candidate for investment. The country requires a transparent tax system, the lowering of trade barriers, and greater relationships with its neighbors, but even these changes may not be enough for it to overcome its biggest problem, the lack of rule of law.

Foreign Direct Investment has been present in all three countries during their transition from a command economy to a market economy, but the extent has varied dramatically. This is due to their different levels of addressing the four categories mentioned throughout. The marketing factors have been much higher in Czech Republic, and although Moldova displays potential due to its location it does not currently have a large market, Uzbekistan has a tough location because its neighbors are highly unfriendly, and this limits its market potential. Trade restrictions are minimal in the Czech Republic due to its membership of the EU, while Moldova does not have extensive barriers, they could be reduced. Uzbekistan faces transportation

problems that contribute to trade barriers. Czech Republic has low cost factors and has provided strong financial incentives, as has Uzbekistan although the incentives have been unclear at times. Moldova requires greater focus on creating a better labor force and providing greater financial incentives. Finally investment climate has probably proven to be the greatest factor as Czech Republic contrary to the other two nations has relative political stability, a positive attitude towards FDI, and a clear tax system. Both Moldova and Uzbekistan have serious problems of corruption both in the present and the past heavily contributing to wariness by investors, the tax systems are also somewhat ambiguous and the two countries do not appear to understand the vitality of gaining FDI as Uzbekistan in particular has not granted enough power and influence to their investors, wishing to do everything its own way. It is crucial to make these comparisons because of the vital nature foreign direct investment has in turning an economy around and developing a nation. By looking at these various factors countries can determine what they truly need to focus on and what is inhibiting them from attracting investment. It appears investment climate may be the most important factor and clearly has acted as a strong inhibitor for both Uzbekistan and Moldova. Both countries have been making strides towards a more stable climate, however due to their political systems and corrupt past

it will be a difficult obstacle to overcome. All three countries have potential for greater levels of investment, and if they are able to effectively identify their internal problems, FDI can help to solve them through external influences.

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# HEZBOLLAH'S POLITICAL CLOUT

## Organizationally Effective Social Jihad and Public Relations Outreach

By Mahima Menghani '21

This paper seeks to outline the tactics that have allowed Hezbollah, a Shi'a Islamist terrorist group and political party based in Lebanon, to gain significant political influence in comparison to its non-state organizational competition within the Middle East. Specifically, Menghani analyzes how Hezbollah's use of social services through its "hearts and minds" campaign, as well as its propaganda PR efforts, have enabled its unprecedented advancements in weakening the Israeli government, gaining a broad base of popular support, and ultimately spreading its interpretation of Sharia law. First, the paper indicates how Hezbollah has leveraged Iranian sponsorship and funding to create a brand of legitimacy, while gradually replacing the role of the Lebanese government by providing aid and economic opportunities to the population. This explanation is followed by an analysis of the group's PR efforts, which communicate the inevitability of popular resistance and inculcate this message in the minds of young generations. The paper concludes with a recommendation for future counter-terrorism efforts, which should target Hezbollah's appeal to the poor and replace its social jihad with government intervention.



## GEOPOLITICAL SIGNIFICANCE

Hezbollah, meaning “Party of God” in Arabic, rose as a radical Shi’a, Lebanese-based militant power following the Israeli invasion of Lebanon in the 1980s. Today, Hezbollah’s primary objective is the establishment of an Islamic government across the Arab world in accordance with its pillars of obligatory jihad and Islamist implementation of Sharia.<sup>1</sup> With a steady life-line of Iranian support, Hezbollah has attracted defectors of rival parties, received sympathy from within the Lebanese population through its provision of social services throughout the country, and achieved the status of a legitimate political party. Notably, the group has weakened the local government and has become embedded in the multiparty political infrastructure of the country.<sup>2</sup>

The connection between Iran and Hezbollah is described by analyst Daniel Byman as “probably the strongest and most effective relationship between a state sponsor and a terrorist group in history.”<sup>3</sup> Using external aid strategically, Hezbollah has cultivated a positive and far-reaching public image that has garnered a broad base of popular support. Hezbollah’s reliance on funding to create an appealing brand, alongside its commitment to a “hearts and minds” social campaign has contributed to unprecedent-

ed organizational successes, earning the group a reputation as one of the most geopolitically significant and pervasive non-state actors in the Middle East.

## ORIGINS

Hezbollah’s emergence as a radical jihadist group was a direct result of the 1982 Israeli invasion of Lebanon, which exacerbated the country’s deteriorating infrastructure and prompted the return of Western troops to Beirut, creating further grievances against perceived U.S. imperialism. The Iranian Revolution of 1979 was another equally important factor in the rise of Hezbollah, which according to analyst David Rapoport marked the beginning of the fourth wave of religious terrorism and sparked a new Islamic century.<sup>4</sup> Around the same time, various contemporaneous Islamic movements occurred across the Arab world and increasingly politicized the Shiite population of Lebanon.

Hezbollah possesses a distinctive feature as an Islamist movement fighting for organizational strength in a multiparty government, differentiating it from groups like the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt that have opposed authoritarian regimes. Hezbollah primarily wishes to compete with political forces in Lebanon and to engage in a “war of positions” before turning to its broader goal of a nation built on Sharia

law.<sup>5</sup> Its innovative approach to gradually winning the loyalty of Shiites by creating a credible brand before engaging in the broader Islamist movement has allowed its integration into the Lebanese political system, earning it an enduring base of support since its early shift to a legitimate political party.

## STATE SPONSORSHIP

Hezbollah's Shiite identity has attracted active sponsorship from Iran, which in turn has provided the terrorist organization with financial and military support in the form of safe havens, funding, training, and organizational aid. Byman categorizes Iran's relationship with Hezbollah as a case of "strong support" in which the state is highly committed to the group and able to offer it significant resources that extend to the provision of missiles and other arms as well as diplomatic backing and ideological direction.<sup>6</sup> Iran's support of Hezbollah stems from the incentive to fight a proxy war against Israel as a means to destabilize the state and export Shi'a ideology.<sup>7</sup> In particular, Iran's long-term commitment to sponsoring Shi'a militants allows Hezbollah to differentiate itself within the broader Islamist movement by providing the funds necessary to build an organization suited to engage in a prolonged conflict against Israel, while also enabling the group to establish itself as a key player in the politics of Lebanon.

Financial support dramatically expands Hezbollah's capabilities to gain popular support through attractive welfare services and an appealing reputation. State sponsorship elevated Hezbollah to strategic significance in the Arab-Israeli conflict, as opposed to succumbing to the strain of organizational competition with other Islamist actors. The magnitude of Iranian support, which has been valued at around \$100 million per annum, endows Hezbollah with greater resources than most other sectarian militant groups.<sup>8</sup> However, Hezbollah's success in leveraging financial resources to mobilize the Lebanese population in favor of its political aims derives from the group's internal characteristics that were suited to state sponsorship. Iran's financial support proved essential to Hezbollah's realization of its goals from the outset of its formation, as its founders developed a transparent financial model that would ensure its fighters' dedication to the cause. Limited salaries that prevented the retirement of fighters, coupled with welfare benefits that secured the approval of Lebanese families, allowed Hezbollah to develop a durable military force at a time when other Arab armed groups, such as Amal and Fatah, faced corruption and an absence of financial incentives that weakened the loyalty of combatants.<sup>9</sup>

In addition, the early success of Iranian sponsorship can be attributed to the military and



social expertise of Hezbollah's founders, as Subhi al-Tufayli and subsequent secretary generals already possessed influence in the Shiite political circles of Hizb al-Da'wa and Amal (two other powerful Shiite groups). The reputable origins of Hezbollah account for its predisposition to political survival in a war of positions, while the availability of external resources from Iran has assured continual progression and institutionalization of its intended "hegemonic ideological space."<sup>10</sup> Naim Qassem, deputy secretary-general of Hezbollah, asserts that the group openly embraces Iranian support because its leaders have long viewed Iran as "a vivid manifestation of Islam's applicability," and one to which every Muslim should adhere.<sup>11</sup> Iran thus constitutes a credible source of support that opens doors for Hezbollah in appealing to the ummah beyond sectarian ties and using finances as an opportunity to capitalize on prominent public relations platforms.

## SOCIAL SERVICES

The poverty of Shiites remains an important factor in determining Hezbollah's share of power within the Lebanese government as well as its popular support in winning the "hearts and minds" of communities that rely on the terrorist group as a provider of social services. As Von Hippel emphasizes in "Poverty is an Important Cause," poverty creates an "enabling environ-

ment" for terrorist groups when their charitable causes are the first to arrive at the scene of a disaster. Hezbollah seeks to reveal the weaknesses of competing political parties, as seen when the group compensated Lebanese families affected by the Israeli bombings of 2006 before the government could do so. Shi'a sympathizers of Lebanon even attribute their support to Hezbollah's unique efforts to provide "security and support while remaining transparent" about their intentions.<sup>12</sup> The group's supply of social, educational, and medical services is especially prevalent in southern Lebanon, and ultimately empowers the community thus sustaining the loyalty of poor Shiites to Hezbollah's political policies and terrorist tactics.

The presence of Hezbollah-affiliated non-governmental organizations (NGOs) within Lebanon secures the unwavering support of citizens who feel disenfranchised by other powers within the government. After the 2004 municipal elections, Hezbollah gained control of the majority of municipalities in southern Lebanon, where it continues to meet public health needs through hospitals and affordable health-care for low-income populations. As the living conditions in the region have deteriorated due to economic troubles, Hezbollah has stepped in with the necessary social welfare network that appeals to peasants and laborers, including free education for children and initiatives for deliver-

ing water.<sup>13</sup> To disadvantaged Shiites, Hezbollah represents a charitable organization that fills the holes left by an incompetent government. In a survey regarding the image of Hezbollah, 72% of the poor preferred the political party and 64% believed it provided the greatest social services in Lebanon.<sup>14</sup> In the words of Qassem, Hezbollah's social work "serves to enrich supporters' confidence in the viability of the Party's cause and course," and the party's official institutions have boosted its reputation by responding to societal needs. The extensive services provided by Hezbollah pinpoint government weaknesses (such as waste accumulation, restoration of destroyed buildings, electricity, and sewage utilities) and ultimately encourage the population's lasting cooperation with the party.<sup>15</sup> Hezbollah thus forms an agreeable image, develops the cultural context necessary to facilitate religious terrorism, and distinguishes itself from other organizations within the Islamist movement by openly and tangibly signaling its concern for the Muslim community.

## WELFARE BENEFITS AND RECRUITMENT

The group's monetary handouts, allotted from Iranian funding, include welfare provisions such as medical care for injured fighters, free vocational schools, and employment for the

dependents of fallen fighters through the Martyrs' Foundation branch of Hezbollah.<sup>16</sup> As Von Hippel reiterates, Hezbollah's apparent charity work takes advantage of the needs of the poor to persuade Lebanese families to send potential recruits to fight for the cause as foot soldiers, despite the Islamist charity's widely truthful reputation among local populations.<sup>17</sup> In addition, many of Hezbollah's 14,000 school children march in militant parades, indicating that the group effectively integrates propaganda against Israel into its school curriculums. NGOs run by Hezbollah have also been found to refuse service for Lebanese citizens who fail to abide by Shi'a religious principles.<sup>18</sup> Qassem, on the other hand, views active support from the population as a "natural consequence" of generous social work.<sup>19</sup> In truth, Hezbollah evidently capitalizes on the low standard of living and widespread alienation experienced by poor Shiite neighborhoods. Its social services serve primarily to boost its own image of necessity, and the success of the strategy confirms that poverty remains an individual motivation of lower-ranked fighters to join Hezbollah as a full-time fighter, or at the very least to support the party politically in elections. Charity and welfare give insight into a crucial individual cause of poverty that lies behind participation in a terroristic Islamist movement and these provisions enhance the organizational effectiveness of Hezbollah by building a





solid constituency and expanding its approval to particularly vulnerable populations.

## PUBLIC RELATIONS GAME

Hezbollah's adeptness in its propaganda strategy in the midst of Lebanese political developments, in addition to the strength of its social service network, remains unmatched by similar Islamist organizations and highlights the organizational effectiveness of Hezbollah in continually presenting its image as a purified resistance force. Hezbollah leverages Iranian funding to display its power visually through PR campaigns, which include billboards that publicize graphic photos of Israeli defeats, speeches on the group's Al-Manar television station that aim to undermine Israel's trustworthiness, and large-scale marches that are marketed as protests against foreign occupiers.<sup>20</sup> The speeches and interviews of Hezbollah's charismatic current leader, Nasrallah, are intentionally conveyed as "dramatic political performances" that communicate a sense of urgency for action and further mobilize the population in favor of Shi'a politics. Hezbollah media outlets even began publishing sentimental poetry and anthems that praised the achievements of Nasrallah following the 2006 Lebanon War.<sup>21</sup> Furthermore, the authenticity of the group has been projected through *The Arab Knight*, a children's book released by a Hezbollah-affiliated publisher that praises the secretary

general as an extraordinary hero for the ummah. His actions are justified throughout the text as uniting the mujahideen and "bring[ing] them together to struggle for freedom."<sup>22</sup> Through its propaganda PR efforts, Hezbollah sets a precedent of establishing a credible, prominent brand that other Islamist terrorist groups have attempted to reproduce.

Hamas, a Sunni-Islamist jihadist group in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, has been known to "take a page out of Hezbollah's playbook" through its recent formation of a social service wing and advances in propaganda efforts that similarly involve television stations, newspapers, and Internet sites.<sup>23</sup> Many Islamist groups like Hamas have followed Hezbollah's example to use media as a tool of war and gain popular support through the provision of services that aim to weaken their common enemy, Israel. Like Hezbollah, Hamas has inflated its success in media and presents a one-sided narrative to the public in order to rise as a political entity in the Gaza Strip. Unlike Hezbollah, however, Hamas has failed to convert its imitated efforts into genuine popular support, as the number of Palestinians who benefit from its social services is much smaller and is dwarfed by NGOs as well as the public work of the Palestinian government. In fact, lasting support for the authority of Hamas derives from the appeal of its uncompromising stance on Pales-

tinian rights and the demonstrated credibility of its threat to Israel, rather than its commitment to caring for its population through aid.<sup>24</sup> The instruments used by Hezbollah to draw support and manipulate its image have served as the epitome of organizational strength that Hamas has failed to replicate solely as a result of propaganda. Moreover, Hezbollah's track record in providing social welfare to the Shiite community serves as an innovative and revered example of maintaining popular support, an aspect of group strength that remains critical to the organizational success of actors in national movements.<sup>25</sup>

## FRAMEWORK OF INEVITABILITY

Above all, PR efforts consistently portray Shi'a supporters as marginalized and therefore acting out of a need to resist oppression through Islamist violence. In its 2004 Identity and Goals declaration, Hezbollah insists that its resistance is a "natural and inevitable" part of a greater war against Israel and that the group acts violently out of necessity due to circumstances beyond its control. The document states that the "Israel threat obliges Lebanon to endorse a defensive strategy that depends on a popular resistance."<sup>26</sup> Its defensive discourses are similar to those of totalitarian regimes. Explaining how despotic rulers have justified their use of terror, Hannah Arendt in *Ideology and Terror* highlights the

self-proclaimed progression of "natural law" often cited by perpetrators of horrific crimes to overcome traditionally-accepted legality and to force all individuals to play a role in advancing the unavoidable. In the distorted sense of totalitarian lawfulness, everyone must participate in producing an obligatory, natural development.<sup>27</sup> Throughout the history of terrorism, both non-state and state actors have defined terror on the basis of laws that transcend norms of morality, as they claim to act in pursuit of an inevitable justice in which the oppressed must overcome the powerful. Hezbollah has notably operated within the framework of necessity by which powerful terrorist groups have advanced their movement in the past. This very brand of a defensive war perpetuated by Hezbollah in an innovative manner allows it to gain popularity and to encompass the entire Muslim community as essential to the success of a war waged by Israel, just as terrorism throughout history has long described itself as virtuous and destined to succeed in order to promote its legitimacy.

## RELIGIOUS WAVE

Hezbollah's violent tactics align with characteristics of Rapoport's "religious wave" that rely mainly on bombings, including the tactic of suicide bombing that the group popularized in Lebanon.<sup>28</sup> However, the group's tactical successes remain average and thus fail



to account for its longevity as a high-level player in Middle East politics, positioning itself as a leader by frequently holding the most Shiite seats in Lebanon's parliament and overshadowing groups in the Arab-Israeli conflict in terms of social strength as well as popular support.<sup>29</sup> When comparing the tactics of Hezbollah (Figure 1) with those of Hamas, another key actor in the Islamist movement (Figure 2), the reasons behind the durability of the organizations cannot be reduced to their similar tactical achievements and approaches to violence. Both groups possess a record of high civilian deaths mainly due to bombings and explosions. Hezbollah's reliance on violence has even declined in recent decades, which Byman attributes to a greater need to protect the appeal of its brand by avoiding actions that alienate the Muslim community.<sup>30</sup>

Instead of pointing towards Hezbollah's capacity to inspire fear through violence, scholars recognize that Hezbollah has attained lasting respect in comparison to other non-state actors in the Middle East due to its adaptive communication strategy and consequent dissemination of ideology.<sup>31</sup> The mediocrity of Hezbollah's tactical violence relative to other terrorist groups in the religious wave confirms that the group has achieved organizational survival and renown in Lebanon through its display of prowess in PR initiatives and demonstrated representation of supporters by means of its extensive regional

service network. Hezbollah's operational infrastructure is moreover regarded as much more cohesive and capable of directly resolving conflicts in its support base than that of Hamas.<sup>32</sup> Its elaborate public relations strategy and endorsement of a positive political brand have built a foundation for Hezbollah that enables long-term organizational survival, whereas mere tactical effectiveness prevents the group from distinguishing itself from other established powers in the region.

## FUTURE OF COUNTERTERRORISM

Hezbollah has evidently differentiated itself in the Islamist movement and the fight against the enemy of Israel through its maintenance of organizational survival and a widespread mobilization of support in Lebanon. Its ability to rise as a brand within a local multiparty system while also transcending the boundaries of sectarian tensions stems from its provision of services for marginalized communities as well as tremendous investment in public relations efforts that have shown progress in uniting the global ummah in favor of its cause. Given that Iran's partnership with Hezbollah allows for its expansion of PR platforms and political survival through sustained funding, the U.S. should adopt a counterterrorism approach that punishes Iran's use of terrorist groups as proxies. The

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sanctions involved in the 2015 Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (colloquially known as the Iran Nuclear Deal) held the “collateral benefit” of reducing Iran’s financial backing of Hezbollah and inhibiting the terrorists’ international operations, and the United States should therefore return to the agreement of nuclear sanctions to prevent an influx of Iranian aid to terrorists.<sup>33</sup> Byman agrees that the U.S. should demonstrate a prioritization of counterterrorism policy by pressuring Tehran through an allied coalition to hold Iran accountable as a state sponsor of terrorism.<sup>34</sup>

Finally, counterterrorism from the Lebanese government should constitute a pragmatic approach that incorporates minority Shiite voices and establishes strong local institutions of social services that replace those under the control of Hezbollah in impoverished Lebanese communities. Government intervention may then undermine Hezbollah’s appeal to the poor and limit its influence as a jihadist political party. Weakening the skillfulness of Hezbollah’s PR strategy would require a combination of sanctions against Iran alongside a proactive Lebanese government that assumes the role of Hezbollah in representing Shiite constituents, while facilitating solutions to internal conflicts through the development of inclusive, government-provided public services. Only when the Lebanese government is regarded as competent among the most vulnerable

segments of the population will the brand of Hezbollah lose its appeal to the ummah and succumb to organizational competition in the war of positions within the Middle East.



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# WOMEN'S RIGHTS

a study of

# IRAN & TUNISIA

By Meghan Gorman '20

## ABSTRACT

What factor is the most important determinant of a successful expansion of women's rights? Through my research, I have concluded that societal norms are the most crucial factors in the expansion of women's rights. As a reflection of collective attitudes and expectations, norms determine how willing a society is to adopt new ideas about women's rights and gender parity. However, these norms and expectations must be a genuine reflection of public sentiment and not simply imposed on an unwilling population. The two cases I have examined in this essay are the Iranian Revolution of 1979 and Tunisia's Jasmine Revolution of 2011. These cases have different outcomes: Tunisia experienced an expansion of women's rights while a retraction of those rights occurred in Iran. Both cases prove that women's rights are only expanded when a society believes that they align with its values and supports their integration.





## PART I

This past year, women's rights issues have made headlines around the world. In the United States, the #MeToo movement has inspired women to fight back against normalized sexual violence. Saudi Arabia has announced that women will be legally allowed to drive for the first time beginning this June. The Democratic Republic of Congo, a country plagued by deep-rooted violence, has appointed a historic number of women to serve in peace-building efforts. Women in Iran have begun publicly protesting the government's mandatory veiling policy. These events, among others, have led to this question: what factor is the most important determinant of a successful expansion of women's rights? Women's rights are defined as "legal, political, and social rights for women equal to those of men."<sup>1</sup> This analysis will determine whether an expansion of women's rights has taken place by examining policy changes as well as political representation and economic opportunity. Some favorable policy changes for women include elevated personal autonomy, economic rights, reproductive rights, and greater access to education, but for these changes to be successful, they must take root long-term. Through two historical cases, I will examine the factors that allow women to obtain more rights in some cases and not in others. I will look at an expansion of women's rights when they are already enfranchised;

these gains are focused on gender parity rather than suffrage. This paper will examine how women's rights issues become salient and how they transform from ideas into concrete changes.

To determine which cultural, economic, or political factor is most important to the expansion of women's rights, I will examine two cases: the Iranian Revolution of 1979 and Tunisia's Jasmine Revolution of 2011. Through my research, I have discovered three powerful arguments that attempt to answer my central question. In looking at the Iranian Revolution and the Jasmine Revolution, I will be able to assess the validity and explanatory power of the following arguments: (1) Revolutions that result in regime changes lead to an increase in women's rights and political representation in the creation of the new government. (2) Societal norms are integral to the successful increase of women's rights. (3) Women have more rights and opportunities when a state's economy is growing and prosperous. After equally assessing all cases, my research has shown that Argument 2 on societal norms is the strongest because it explains why women's rights increased in Tunisia but not in Iran. Argument 2 emphasizes the importance of societal norms and, consequently, how those norms shape the willingness of a society<sup>2</sup> to accept an increase in women's rights. Women's rights will not successfully expand if the public feels that increased opportunity and parity

for women are against their cultural values and identity, as was the case in Iran. As evidenced by the case of Tunisia, women's rights will only be successful when a society sees increasing women's rights as consistent with its core values. I also found that the economic basis of Argument 3 does have some factual support, but it lacks consistent explanatory power. The level of women's rights in both Iran and Tunisia did coincide with the level of economic growth and prosperity that the country was experiencing. However, Argument 3 is weakened by the fact that it fails to account for the economic discontent that was rampant among both populations. Argument 1 was the least valuable because revolution that led to regime change was present in both cases, but only Tunisia experienced an increase in women's rights. Therefore, this variable is not a reliable determinant of an expansion of women's rights.

The rest of this essay will build upon the evidence and arguments that I have briefly presented above. In Part II, I will outline the logic behind each of my three competing arguments and present relevant literature that supports these claims. I will outline the evidence that would need to be present in each case in order to determine its validity. In Part III, I will compare the cases of Tunisia's Jasmine Revolution and the Iranian revolution. I will specifically highlight the evidence that strengthens or supports each competing argument. Finally, I will con-

clude by noting the relevant implications of my study for scholarship and policy in Part IV.

## PART II: REVOLUTION, CULTURE, AND ECONOMICS

There are three powerful arguments that seek to answer the question of what factor is the most important determinant of a successful expansion of women's rights. All of these arguments assume that women are already enfranchised. Citizenship and the right to vote "[serve] as the legitimate basis for future claims on the state, new demands for extended rights, and new social movements."<sup>3</sup> I will explore the expansion of women's rights from this point of enfranchisement, such as increased political representation and concrete policy changes.

**ARGUMENT 1:** Revolutions that result in regime changes lead to an increase of women's rights and political representation in the creation of the new government.

This theory argues that revolutions that result in a change of the state's regime lead to an increase in women's rights. During the revolution, women utilize the social upheaval to work in new roles that are not usually available to them. After the revolution, women leverage that participation to obtain more power and representation in the new government, as well



as to promote favorable policy changes. A regime change must be present for this argument to hold. Rights expand when women's voices are present in the creation of the new government, and this is not true when revolutions are unsuccessful. This argument was inspired by "The Iraqi Women," a chapter of *What Kind of Liberation?: Women and the Occupation of Iraq* by Nadie Al-Ali, Nicola Pratt, and Cynthia Enloe. The authors argue that women felt liberated by the new roles and opportunities that they had during the American occupation of Iraq, and then shifted their attention toward a more politically charged movement.<sup>4</sup> This book focuses on war, but I am translating social upheaval presented here into that which is caused by a revolutionary regime change. Another piece that utilizes this argument is "Where do African women have more power? Surprise- in countries emerging from war" by Aili Mari Tripp. Tripp argues that "post-conflict countries had considerably higher rates of female political representation" than those who did not recently experience conflict.<sup>5</sup> This occurs because "during conflicts, women are pushed into new roles in the economy, in their households and communities and even in national politics."<sup>6</sup> In order for me to find this argument convincing, women need to be given rights and more political opportunities at the onset of the new regime, because that will show whether revolution and regime changes

themselves increase women's rights.

**ARGUMENT 2:** Societal norms are necessary for the successful increase of women's rights.

Norms are the factors that lay beneath policy changes and women's political representation; they are vital to the deep-rooted success of women's rights movements. I define norms as informal understandings and social expectations that govern the behavior of members of society. In "Women's Rights as Human Rights: An International Perspective," Marian Lief Palley argues that cultural constraints determine a society's willingness to implement more rights for women. The industrialization and modernization of a country does not mean that its social norms will be redefined because behavioral culture often remains stubbornly tied to tradition.<sup>7</sup> In "The True Clash of Civilizations," Ronald Inglehart and Pippa Norris argue that the culture and history of a nation determine the rights of women: "A society's commitment to gender equality and sexual liberation proves...how strongly that society supports principles of tolerance and egalitarianism."<sup>8</sup> Therefore, the acceptance and perpetuation of women's rights are dependent upon the expectations, values, and identity of a given nation. Governments have tried to force change in regard to women's rights by imposing legislation and granting political representation. However, if the decisions do not align with

society's norms, these measures will not create deep-rooted change. Norms need to be absorbed by society to be influential, and policies that contradict them can be viewed as a betrayal of national culture, identity, and values.

How can societal norms be changed? International influence plays a huge role in exposing citizens and rulers alike to new ways of thinking and is often a large part of a country's decision to expand women's rights. International institutions and transnational advocacy networks are some formal ways to define and spread international norms. They often frame "women's political empowerment in terms of modernity, which carries expectations not only of improved status in the world, but also of financial rewards."<sup>9</sup> The international women's movement has actively promoted a discourse on gender inclusion, ensuring that norms about female rights, equality, and participation in economics and politics are transmitted to nation-states.<sup>10</sup> However, international norms can also be proliferated through more informal means such as trade, media, and travel. International norms can influence leaders and take a top-down path, or they can permeate the popular level and make the public aware of different ways of living. Pressure to heed the example of other countries is an important way that societal norms can change, but this only matters if the nation's people and government are open to change and the infiltra-

tion of new ideas.

**ARGUMENT 3:** Women have more rights and opportunities when a state's economy is growing and prosperous.

This theory argues that the economy is the most important determinant of women's rights. Raquel Fernández makes this argument in her article entitled "Women's Rights and Development:" "In almost all industrialized countries, women went from being the properties of their husbands and/or fathers, with very few legal rights, to possessing the same political rights and most of the same economic rights as men."<sup>11</sup> When an economy is doing well, there are more jobs for everyone, so women are better able to leverage their contributions to the workforce into concrete policy changes. Economic development generates changed attitudes in virtually any society. In particular, modernization compels systematic, predictable changes in gender roles.<sup>12</sup> This argument from "The True Clash of Civilizations" maintains that economics change societal expectations about gender because growth grants women new economic and professional opportunities. I will look specifically at developing countries where economic growth and industrialization are still relatively new. I will measure economic growth and prosperity through reports of international institutions, industrialization initiatives, and growth in GDP, and then compare it to the subsequent position



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of women in each country. For this argument to be valid, economic growth must coincide with increased rights and political representation for women.

## PART III: WOMEN'S RIGHTS IN IRAN AND TUNISIA

The two cases that I will examine are the Iranian Revolution of 1979 and Tunisia's Jasmine Revolution of 2011. I chose these cases for a few reasons. First, a revolution that led to regime change is present in both cases. This will allow me to accurately assess whether or not regime change is a reliable cause of the expansion of women's rights. Second, Iran and Tunisia were both developing economically during the time periods that I am researching, so I will be able to discern whether economic growth and stability coincide with more opportunities for women. Third, Iran and Tunisia are both countries with Muslim majorities. Tunisia was a French colony, and although Iran managed to evade colonization, it was influenced by the British Empire for its natural resources. Both countries have a largely Muslim identity with a history of Western influence, which will serve as helpful control factors to see why women's rights increased after the revolution in Tunisia and not in Iran.

## BACKGROUND ON THE IRANIAN AND TUNISIAN

## REVOLUTIONS

The goal of the Iranian Revolution in 1979 was to push Mohammad Reza Pahlavi out of power. The Pahlavi period had been one of modernization, industrialization, and secularization in Iran. Mohammad Reza Pahlavi's father, Reza Shah, "introduced policies that altered the lives of Persian women radically...For the first time, some women entered into modern sectors of the economy, family laws were modified, unveiling was enforced, and public co-educational primary schools were established in 1936."<sup>13</sup> Women were also given the right to vote under the Pahlavis. After the revolution, a new Islamist regime headed by Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini was instated. This shift in the political rule of Iran resulted in the decline of women's rights and political participation, which undid much of the progress made during the Pahlavi era. Feminism and women's rights were viewed as fundamentally incompatible with the tenets of Islam and were rejected as a result of the public's dissatisfaction with the imposed secularism and Westernization of the shahs' regimes.

Tunisia has long been considered the beacon of modernization in the MENA (Middle East and North Africa) region. Since its independence from France in 1956, the Tunisian government has placed an emphasis on securing and advancing women's rights. Tunisia has long occupied an important position in the

Arab world since the historic promulgation of its progressive family law in 1956, which placed the country at the forefront of the Arab world in regard to women's rights.<sup>14</sup> Even the authoritarian regime of Zine El Abidine Ben Ali continued this progress. However, both men and women were increasingly dissatisfied with Ben Ali's repressive government, and that frustration blossomed into the Jasmine Revolution of 2011. This was the first successful regime change of the Arab Spring and it inspired revolutions across the Arab world. The end of Ben Ali's regime brought with it a new democratic government and a significant increase in women's political representation. Women maintained the rights that they had been afforded prior to the revolution and enacted further reform as a result of their political voice. Why were Tunisian women able to keep and build upon their rights in the new regime while Iranian women were not?

## REGIME CHANGE

### THROUGH REVOLUTION

#### IRAN

I will first examine the claim that revolutions that result in a regime change lead to the increase of women's rights and political representation in the creation of the new government. It is first important to discern whether women were active participants in the Iranian Revolution, as this is an inextricable condition for this

argument. Surprisingly, although the shah had granted women new rights and opportunities, women rallied around the Islamist revolution in incredible numbers. If we believe that Iranian women are rational actors and responsible individuals capable of taking their destiny into their own hands...then we must be able to explain the massive support that women lent to the revolution and in its aftermath.<sup>15</sup> Khomeini inspired women to back the revolutionary efforts, and their support was instrumental to his success. Women were certainly present in the Iranian Revolution and adopted new political roles during the protests. The Islamic revolution broke the barrier overnight. When Khomeini called for women who would otherwise not have dreamt of leaving their homes without their husbands' or fathers' permission or presence, took to the streets.<sup>16</sup> In fact, women helped to make the Iranian Revolution one of the most bloodless in history because of their large turnouts at protests which made soldiers hesitant to use violence to subdue them. But were they able to leverage those goals in the creation of the new regime?

Although women were a large part of the success of the Iranian Revolution, "the militant left assumed a passive attitude toward women's causes."<sup>17</sup> Women's issues were not central to the goals of the revolutionaries. Women were viewed as instruments for success instead of



agents that needed to be empowered by the new regime. However, this may be partly the fault of the women themselves. As Ashraf Zahedi states, “Women participating in the revolution adhered to different political ideologies, some secular, others religious. They did not participate in the revolution as women and they did not put forward a political platform advancing their cause. They subordinated their own cause to that of the revolution.”<sup>18</sup> Women did not fight explicitly for their rights and representation in the new government, so it was not a major consideration of the revolutionaries.

After the revolution, women lost many of the rights that they had been granted in the Pahlavi era. Iranian women essentially took a giant step backward. Although the 1979 revolution in Iran is often called an Islamic revolution, it can actually be said to be a revolution of men against women. It led to the enactment of numerous discriminatory laws against women, which effectively took the society backward in time.<sup>19</sup> In the decade following the revolution, women in the workforce fell from about “13 percent to 8.6 percent,”<sup>20</sup> and women were largely removed from positions of authority. Dr. Shirin Ebadi was a judge prior to the revolution and initially supported the revolutionaries’ cause, but soon after their success, the new regime decided that “women could no longer hold positions such as judges and had to instead take administrative

positions.”<sup>21</sup> Khomeini’s removal of the Family Protection Act was a huge blow to the personal autonomy of women. This act, instituted in 1967 and revised in 1975, was fundamental to the rights of women in the family. The Family Protection Act increased the marriage age to 18 for women and 20 for men, and restricted polygamy by only allowing men to marry a second wife with the consent of the court. These laws also granted the right for both men and women to file for divorce. Another change was that the courts determined which parent would gain custody of the children on a case-by-case basis, as opposed to automatically granting custody to men as had been done in the past.<sup>22</sup> Its withdrawal meant a huge decrease in the personal autonomy of women within marriage and the family.

The new Islamic regime also re-instituted a compulsory hijab law in July of 1980. As Zahedi states:

It was implemented in two phases. First, female government employees were required to comply with the compulsory hijab. Those who did not comply were fired. The second phase covered all Iranian women, including members of the religious minorities. Even girls as young as nine years old had to comply.<sup>23</sup>

With this law, women lost the right to self-expression and their bodies once again became monitored by the state. These examples show that the regime change brought about by

the revolution was not successful in advancing women's rights, and in fact had the opposite effect. It is important to consider that success is contingent upon how well women utilize their participation in the uprising to make political and social gains. This demonstrates that revolution itself does not increase women's rights, but rather is dependent upon the attitudes of the nation and how well women themselves push for representation and consideration in the new government.

### TUNISIA

As in the case of the Iranian Revolution, "a resounding feature of the protests was the presence of women... Women participated as organizers and demonstrators and, consequently, gender equality has been central to discussions of Tunisian politics, most eminently as it relates to elections and the drafting of the constitution."<sup>24</sup>

The latter part of that quote illustrates the key difference between the Tunisian and Iranian outcomes: Tunisian women utilized their positions in the revolution to make women's rights a central part of the discussion within the new government. Lawyer Bilel Larbi pointed out, "Just look at how Tunisian women stood side-by-side with Tunisian men. They came out to the streets to protest in headscarves. They came out in miniskirts. It doesn't matter. They were there."<sup>25</sup>

Tunisian women were an active part of the Jasmine Revolution, and they fought collectively for women's rights and advancement. The Tunisian

women's movement has always stressed that you cannot have increased rights for women in the absence of democratic rights, social justice and liberty for all.<sup>26</sup> Tunisian women largely did not support Ben Ali because his commitment to women's rights seemed insincere, strategic, and contrived. They recognized that supporting democratic rights and social justice for all was key to continuing advancements in the department of women's rights, and Ben Ali's repressive regime certainly did not create those conditions. This is very similar to the case of Iran: the Shah instituted many reforms that benefited women, yet his authenticity was a point of concern and debate. In both cases, women wanted to expand their rights and representation according to their own definitions of what is important.

After the revolution, Tunisian women's groups held various public protest to ensure that women would be included in the leadership of the new government.<sup>27</sup> In Iran, women were not aggressive about explicitly promoting their goals. Contrastingly, the primary focus of Tunisian women was expanding women's rights throughout the revolution, and they continued to be vocal about enforcing change at the creation of the new government. Tunisian women were unrelentingly passionate and tenacious in working to obtain their goals: "The mass demonstrations that witnessed the extensive participation of Tunisian women were a preliminary





sign of the transformations to come through their participation in popular elections, their ascension to political power, and the debates to which they contributed in regard to the drafting of the constitution.”<sup>28</sup> Women in the Jasmine Revolution leveraged their support for the revolutionaries to push for increased representation in the fledgling democratic government. As a result, there was a “transformation of Tunisian politics...in which Tunisian women, Islamist and other, have been central figures.”<sup>29</sup> In fact, “there is a constitutional mandate for parity in the election lists: every party is obliged to field 50 percent women in elections.”<sup>30</sup>

The argument that regime change via revolution gives women more rights in the new government leaves the following question unanswered: why were Tunisian women able to achieve increased rights and representation as a result of the revolution while Iranian women were not? This argument lacks factual basis and



explanatory power because revolution led to an increase in women’s rights in one case but not the other. Therefore, this argument in itself is not sufficient to explain my findings, and the difference in outcome must be explained by another variable.

## NORMS

### IRAN

The Iranian Revolution is unique because society shifted from progressive, secular laws and practices back to its roots as very conservatively religious. This phenomenon is explained by the fact that the changes instituted by the Pahlavi rulers were not normalized by the Iranian masses. Contact with the West exposed Iranians to new ideas about gender norms and social dynamics. The importance and pervasiveness of international norms was evident in the Pahlavi regime. The shahs’ advancements were largely made in response to the Western world’s perception of Iran as a backward, religiously zealous country. For that reason, “international pressure played a significant part in the initiation of the changes which took place in Iran in the 1960’s.”<sup>31</sup> However, only the upper class was exposed to these norms and supported their instatement in Iran.

A major example of the shah’s’ controversial modernization techniques was the unveiling of 1936. Iran was historically a Muslim

country, and the imposition of the unveiling was seen as a betrayal of its Islamic identity in favor of an inauthentically secular one. Although this mandatory unveiling only lasted from 1936 to the Reza Shah's ouster in 1941, unveiled women were given preference during his son's rule as well; they remained the image of the modern woman that Iran wanted to project to the rest of the world.<sup>32</sup> The Pahlavi's ideal woman was educated, unveiled, liberated, and entirely un-Islamic. Conservative Iranians saw her as a deep betrayal of Islam and a symbol of the Western world that had long oppressed and belittled their culture. Women's rights and liberation became synonymous with Westernization and inauthentic modernization, and were seen as a means of projecting a West-approved image of Iran. This image was also mostly confined to the upper class and did not fit the majority of Iranian women. Slowly, the revolution gathered support from women who traded their granted rights for rights they wanted to earn themselves.<sup>33</sup> Women wanted their rights on their own terms, and rights that would allow them to embrace their Muslim and female identities. For these reasons, many women came to support the revolution.

The question of the veil is illustrative of a major misstep by the Pahlavi regime: it imposed change on a society that was not ready or willing to accept it. Many felt that these policies abandoned Iran's Muslim heritage in favor of

adopting the Westernization that the nation had historically resented. Societal norms, therefore, had not changed. International norms of gender equality unquestionably infiltrated Iran during the Pahlavi era, but they did not have an authentic impact on the preferences and ideologies of the people.

The Iranian Revolution marked a resurgence of Islamic norms and ideals that had been silenced by the Pahlavi regime. In the 1970's many Iranians, dissatisfied with rapid social change and ever-increasing Western influences in Iran, turned to religion for a new social paradigm.<sup>34</sup> Islam provided them with a framework to reconstruct their ideal society and draw on their 'authentic' cultures and beliefs.<sup>35</sup> This shift from imposed Western values in regard to women's rights back to culturally authentic, Islamic interpretations of the role of women prove the importance of norms in creating lasting social change. Therefore, it is evident that norms are the true reason why women's rights movements are successful. As the Iranian Revolution demonstrated, norms cannot simply be imposed on an unwilling population. To normalize is to bring into conformity with a standard,<sup>36</sup> but these standards were not adopted or internalized by the Iranian public. The Pahlavi ideal of a liberated, modern woman was viewed as an egregious departure from the Islamic ideal, and in the end, the return to an Islamic state cleansed



Iran of international influences by ousting the Western norms with which women's rights had become synonymous.

## TUNISIA

Prior to the Jasmine Revolution, Tunisia had a history of promoting women's rights in a way that starkly contrasted with the rest of the region, including Iran. Its independence in 1956 brought immediate benefits to women and these rights became ingrained in Tunisian society: "the reality is that women's rights have been a fact of life in Tunisia for decades."<sup>37</sup> The institution of women's rights occurred with the creation of a new, autonomous Tunisian national identity, and I think that had a lot to do with its success. Societal expectations had been shaped to normalize rights for women from the beginning, and they became ingrained in both society and women themselves. Tunisian women credit the 1956 civil rights code for their freedom and equality, as well as an excellent education system that was equally accessible to both men and women.<sup>38</sup>

Surprisingly, Zine El Abidine Ben Ali, the nation's second president, kept the ball rolling in terms of women's rights despite his harsh authoritarian rule. For example, as recently as in 2007, the minimum age of marriage was raised to 18 for both men and women... Other reforms initiated under Ben Ali in the 2000s expanded women's rights in regard to marriage contraction, alimony, and custodial rights over

children.<sup>39</sup> However, many felt that Ben Ali's commitment to women's rights was a way to garner Western admiration and to cover up the harsh reality of his regime.<sup>40</sup> There were similar concerns that women's rights in Iran during the Pahlavi era were just for show. However, the key reason for their survival in Tunisia was that gender parity considerations were not first introduced as a part of Ben Ali's oppressive regime. Women's rights were considered important to Tunisians from the creation of their sovereign national identity, so the empowerment of women did not become synonymous with corruption and unwanted modernization as it had in Iran.

The Jasmine Revolution also marked a resurgence of political Islam in Tunisia. Many women worried that the revival of long-repressed Islamist parties would pose a threat to the advancements made by women.<sup>41</sup> It was feared that a popularization of Islamist norms and ideals would create obstacles to women's participation in the new government. As Sulehria states, "It is not clear whether Islam is the religion of the state or the society. At the same time, on the positive side, there is a commitment to universal human rights... Not only have women been acknowledged as equal, there is a commitment to empower women politically."<sup>42</sup> The political reintroduction of Islam in Tunisia ultimately did not hurt women's rights because gender equality was not viewed in opposition

with the tenets of the Islamic tradition. In Iran, women's rights, Westernization, and the rejection of Islam came in one threatening package that needed to be removed to ensure a successful return to the country's cultural roots. Tunisia, on the other hand, had made social justice a part of its national identity from the beginning, so it did not seem like a Western import that was shoved down the throats of an unsupportive public.

## ECONOMIC STABILITY AND GROWTH

### IRAN

This section will explore the claim that women have more rights in states whose economies are growing and prosperous. I will look at the economics of the Pahlavi dynasty and compare it to the post-revolutionary Islamist regime. Between 1946 and 1979, Iran was gradually transformed from a largely farm-based economy to a modern society by way of major changes in the traditional socioeconomic order.<sup>43</sup> The state was able to create impressive growth through a combination of public planning, urbanization, and industrialization introduced by the White Revolution of 1963; its annual growth rate was about 9.6 percent from 1960-1977 and it had very low, regionalized unemployment rates.<sup>44</sup> Iran's fortunes surged even more dramatically after the explosive rise in oil prices in the 1970s, helping fuel the shah's grandiose ambitions to

overtake the French and German economies.<sup>45</sup> Iran's prospering economy aligned with the creation of new social and professional opportunities for women; women's suffrage was also a part of the White Revolution. The educational progress made during this period, combined with rapid economic growth, led to employment opportunities which facilitated the participation of Iranian women in the labor market.<sup>46</sup> Women were more educated and better able to pursue careers that matched their qualifications. This evidence supports the theory that a quickly growing and modernizing economy yields more personal, political, and economic rights for women.

Iran's economy under Ayatollah Khomeini was a different story entirely. Since the 1979 revolution, the Iranian economy has been beset by a costly eight-year war, unremitting international pressure and isolation, and ideological conflict. The revolutionaries clashed over what constituted an Islamic economy - and whether growth or social justice should be the top priority.<sup>47</sup> Khomeini struggled with the decision to pursue economic growth or social justice, and his resulting economic plans were not well thought-out. This lack of organization combined with the costly Iran-Iraq War, and the country's reliance on fluctuating oil prices put the post-revolutionary regime "on the brink of economic collapse."<sup>48</sup> Surely enough, women



also suffered. They were stripped of personal and economic rights. Although education was still very much accessible to women, “The Islamic Republic...failed to provide them with rights that would match their qualifications: women were discriminated against at court and married women were made dependent on their husbands who were often less educated than their wives.”<sup>49</sup> Comparing the economic state of Iran before and after the Iranian Revolution does support the argument that women are better off in stable and growing economies. The Pahlavi era ushered in new possibilities of economic growth and industrialization, and women in turn were granted new rights and professional opportunities. However, the post-revolutionary Islamist regime did not have a clear or sustainable economic vision for the country. The Iranian economy was in a place of incredible turmoil, and women lost many of the rights that they had won in the preceding period of greater prosperity.

## TUNISIA

In addition to its standout performance in regard to social justice, Tunisia also shone as a beacon of economic stability and growth in the MENA region. It is recognized by many as an economic success story amidst the poverty and instability of the rest of the region. This perception was cemented by the country’s progress in recent years, including its brisk recovery from the 2009 economic crisis characterized by a

GDP growth of 3.7% in 2010.<sup>50</sup> However, the country’s economic situation looked much better from the outside than it did to the majority of Tunisians: “The combination of youth graduate unemployment, conspicuous and predatory corruption as well as political and economic disenfranchisement had created an untenable condition of discontent amongst Tunisians.”<sup>51</sup> Mohammed Bouazizi, a young vendor whose produce cart was confiscated by the police, quickly became a symbol of the economic desperation shared by many Tunisian people when he self-immolated in protest of the corruption of the government.<sup>52</sup>

After discovering this, it is difficult to find this economic argument to be credible. On the outside, Tunisia’s economy was relatively prosperous, and women had rights, which would support this economic argument on a shallow level. It seems that this argument makes sense and has factual support because women did have more rights in this economically more prosperous country. However, while the numbers looked great on the outside, Tunisia was experiencing incredible economic frustration, with a notably high rate of unemployment amongst educated young people. Coupled with the repressive nature of Ben Ali’s regime, the situation in Tunisia was desperate: “Economic frustration was compounded by political repression.”<sup>53</sup> While on the surface women had more rights,

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which coincided with Tunisia's relative economic stability, in reality, the period's conditions did not allow educated women to exercise their full potential. They were highly educated but lacked outlets in which they could leverage that education. As in Iran, a shiny exterior masked a large problem of discontent and dissent amongst the population. Through these cases, it is evident that the economic argument seems correct upon first glance, but crumbles under further scrutiny.

## PART V

The three arguments that I have examined through the cases of the Iranian and Jasmine Revolutions provide different answers to my central question: What factor is the most important determinant of a successful expansion of women's rights? Through my research, I have concluded that norms are the most important variable in the expansion of women's rights. As a reflection of a given society's collective attitudes and expectations, norms determine how willing a society is to adopt new ideas about gender parity. However, these norms and expectations must be a genuine reflection of public sentiment and not simply imposed on an unwilling population. Women's rights are expanded when a society believes in social justice and equality, as was the case in Tunisia. The economic argument is also convincing on a shallow level, but it fails to account for public discontent prior to both rev-

olutions. I have concluded that revolution that leads to regime change is not a significant cause of an expansion of women's rights, because it is entirely dependent upon the norms proliferated by the rising government.

This conclusion presents some challenges for policymakers because it shows that women's rights cannot simply be imposed on a society that does not support them. In societies where women's rights are not held in high regard, policymakers should try to implement change slowly so that the public has an opportunity to develop new ways of thinking over time. This will reduce public dissatisfaction and make the changes feel more in line with the state's cultural values and goals. An example of this technique is Saudi Arabia's decision to let women drive. The decision was reached last year, but is not being implemented until this June. The Saudi government allowed people time to adjust to this idea, which was radical to some, before it implemented the change fully. Through my research, additional questions about women's rights have been raised for me. Is female political representation an accurate measure of gender parity? Does having more female political leaders change people's views of women? Is this only a formality or does it carry real weight? In light of my observations, these are important questions to consider.



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# an Inquiry into the Controversy of KOREAN COMFORT WOMEN

By Lauren Healy '19

## ABSTRACT

During World War II the Japanese Imperial Army utilized government sanctioned prostitution to increase troop morale and diminish contention with the local population. These “comfort women” (as they came to be known) recount tales of kidnapping, rape, and poor conditions that have prompted decades of international debate over the legitimacy of their claims and the resulting reparations they may incur. Due to a variety of cultural, economic, and political factors, the voices of these women were not heard until the 1990s. This essay will explore the intersectional factors that affected the comfort women’s silence as well as address the lingering tension between Japan and Korea on an international political scale.



## INTRODUCTION

Following the atrocities of World War II, the public eye centered its gaze on Eastern Europe. The horrors of the Holocaust warrant the attention that has been given, but while the world remained focused on the Jewish plight, the Pacific front remained relatively ignored. It was here, in Japan and Korea, that thousands of women were pressed into prostitution for the Japanese Imperial Army. For 46 years the testimonies of these “comfort women” were suppressed through socio-economic, cultural, and political factors within Korea, until finally, the first ex comfort woman, Kim Hak-Sun, came forward in 1991. Her testimony marked the start of public discourse on the intimate, highly controversial issue of systematic rape by the Japanese Army. However, it also called into question the previous failures of the South Korean regime to recognize, support, and advocate for the thousands of women that were now coming forward. The victims have focused their attention on reparations from the Japanese but this paper will expand further to analyze the successes and shortcomings of the South Korean state in supporting and advocating for ex-comfort women both before and after 1991.

### CHAPTER 1: WHO ARE COMFORT WOMEN

The origins of the comfort woman oper-

ation rested on the complete inability of Korean society to protect their women from an occupying power. Korea was colonized by Japan in August 1910. The ensuing Japanese imperial rule was characterized by exploitation of Korea’s economic markets and the complete denial of civil rights to the subjected Korean population. Japan utilized their success in Korea to build up a strong national identity that was founded upon the superiority of Japan over its colonized neighbors. The result was a large pool of poor, uneducated Koreans at the mercy of apathetic rulers.

The subservient position of Korea under colonialism came to a head at the outbreak of World War II. In the beginning Japanese military leaders had engaged in hiring local prostitutes to serve soldiers. Sex was used as a way to mentally and physically decompress soldiers from the tensions of front-line battle. It provided moral support to the troops and also gave the government some control over the spread of venereal diseases since prostitutes were routinely examined. An added benefit of supplying prostitutes was reduced rape in occupied communities which helped to limit animosity from civilians. In order to efficiently manage this business, the Japanese army created its own “comfort division” of state-controlled prostitution. However, as the war continued to escalate, the demand for sex far outweighed the supply voluntary pros-

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titutes could offer. Fearing that “soldiers would explode into a riot and revolt,” military leaders realized they would have to source in women from occupied territories to provide the necessary supply of women.<sup>1</sup>

The means used to obtain the estimated 20,000-200,000 women are universally unsavory.<sup>2</sup> The Japanese government licensed contractors, “to recruit or procure women under collaboration with local governments and police departments,” throughout their new empire.<sup>3</sup> Many were promised lucrative work in industries like textiles as false pretense for leaving their villages but quickly ended up trapped in comfort stations until the war ended. Other forms of recruitment, especially in the rural, colonial area, included coercion and brute force. In some cases, the Japanese specifically targeted the daughters of Korean resistance leaders who had attacked police to emasculate local leaders and demonstrate Japanese control.<sup>4</sup> Approximately 70-80% of comfort women during the war period were Korean, but they also came from China, Taiwan, the Netherlands, and Indonesia.<sup>5</sup>

Once the women arrived at the comfort stations they were divided into hierarchies that determined the price soldiers would pay for her services. How women were categorized was determined by her class and nationality and they were subsequently paired with a corresponding military group. Japanese and European women

were the most desirable and were reserved for high level officers. Korean and other colonial women, who were often illiterate and poor, were left for the common soldiers.<sup>6</sup> Soldiers paid money for the women’s services and about half of the sum went to the women and the other half to the comfort stations proprietor. However, the women could not leave, had to follow military schedules, and if they refused customers they were shot.

On August 15<sup>th</sup>, 1945 the Pacific War ended. Following Japanese defeat, the disassembly of the fronts caused massive chaos and confusion for all involved. Thousands of women had contracted diseases, physical injuries that impacted fertility, and extreme PTSD from their time at the stations. Due to the close proximity comfort stations had to the front lines, many women found themselves in China and other foreign territories. Eye witness accounts recall comfort women being abandoned, tortured, and shot as incriminating papers were burned in the chaos.<sup>7</sup> While officers and common soldiers rushed to get home, the comfort women were often completely forgotten. Their stories would not surface again for another 46 years.

## CHAPTER 2: EXPLORING THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC AND CULTURAL VALUES OF KORAN SOCIETY

Following the end of WWII, the socio-economic and cultural values of Korean society contributed to the silence of comfort women. The comfort women arrived back in Korea to a newly liberated state that was in no condition to provide support or assistance for them. The North and South were divided under two separate spheres of influence, the Soviet Union and the United States, teetering on the brink of the Korean War. As Japanese industry had mainly been centered in the northern parts of Korea, the South emerged from WWII completely reliant on the United States to economically bolster its fledgling country and provide military defense against future threats. The North on the other hand, had strong legitimacy in their anti-Japanese foundations and were economically more stable than the South. The new Southern regime under Syngman Rhee, was faced with a very real threat of completely collapsing and being absorbed by the North. The plight of a few thousand, very poor, usually illiterate women was not a pressing issue for the regime; survival was.

The Southern regime had little to gain directly from supporting and advocating for politically insignificant women. Still, it is intriguing

that they did not utilize survivors to bolster their own anti-Japanese credentials. Following the split after WWII, the South was plagued by accusations of complicity with Japanese supporters. Rhee continued using the same police force and high level bureaucrats that operated under Japanese rule to maintain order. However, the much more anti-Japanese North used its more hostile position to bolster legitimacy within its regime. In order to help bolster the South's anti-Japanese platform, one might expect Rhee to have provided greater support for ex comfort women. These women made up some of the most heart-wrenching casualties in the wake of Japanese imperialism and this would have helped Rhee prove his Pro-Korean, Anti-Japanese sentiments. Regardless, Rhee's decision to ultimately ignore the situation was a valid reaction given his need to keep pro-Japanese bureaucrats and police officers in his regime in the face of extreme social instability. It also would have been considered extremely shocking for the patriarchal government to address sexual assault survivors at all, much less for political gain. Still, Rhee's decision to not address comfort women marked the initial and continued neglect by the Korean government to help advocate for a marginalized section of its population.

The new South Korean regime neglected to provide any attention to the returning comfort women. However, Korean society, as

a whole, did notice and proceeded to shame, disgrace, and ostracize those who dared to talk about their experience. South Korea remained extremely conservative after the end of Japanese occupation and the Korean War. While women were officially given suffrage in 1948, under Article 11 of the new constitution, their role in society continued to remain as mothers and homemakers.<sup>8</sup> It was not until Park's economic reform in the 60's and 70's that women began to venture into entry level positions in the workforce. This meant that regardless of social class, women everywhere were left with very limited economic status and influence on political discourse. This marginalization was exacerbated even further for survivors. As previously mentioned, most Korean comfort women were among the rural and poor demographics before being pressed into service by the Japanese. Illiteracy and poverty was compounded with the ingrained sexism of Korean culture and essentially diminished the importance of the comfort women's plight in the eyes of the political elite. The women were unable to advocate for themselves, and even if they had been educated and fiscally secure, their inability to speak about their traumas prevented it from coming onto the political scene until the 1990's.

It is tempting to view the silence of the comfort women as a result of mainly cultural and economic suppression. However, regardless of

either of those factors, many survivors of sexual assault do not talk about their experience. The highly intimate and extremely traumatic experience of rape is in its very nature a way of silencing women. That being said, Korean culture did play a role in perpetuating the feelings of guilt and shame that silenced women. While economic reform raced forward, society progressed beyond its traditional values at a much slower pace. Koreans embraced the Confucian tradition which placed substantial importance on a woman's chastity to maintain her value. As one saying reads, "To starve to death is a small matter, but to lose one's chastity is a great matter," exemplifying the supreme importance of a woman's virginity, even over that of food or her life.<sup>9</sup> Unfortunately for the comfort women, this tradition views rape in the same way as consensual, premarital sex. Thus, victims who had been raped to the point of barrenness were now viewed as 'tainted goods', ineligible for marriage, unable to have children, and a stain on their families. In a society where that is the totality of a woman's purpose, the comfort women were disgraced. As a result, Korean society failed in its moral duty to support mentally and physically injured women in its communities and instead victimized them further through ostracism and shame. This outcome was common among comfort women, and, upon liberation, many realized that they could never go home to



their families and villages. Suicide gave women the option to end the humiliation and shame to themselves and their families. While many chose this route, for the survivors, South Korea's push towards modernization proved to be an opportunity to blend back into normal life.

The road to political and economic empowerment was not a straightforward path. Following a series of coups, Park Chung-hee took control of South Korea in 1963.<sup>10</sup> He pursued a ruthless regime that transformed Korea from a struggling dependent nation to an international



power. In 1972 Park declared martial law and, simultaneously adopted a policy of intensively promoting tourism as a source of foreign ex-

change that was previously acquired through participation of Korean troops in the Vietnam War. Sex tourism made up a substantial part of this and brought in the finances that Park needed to project South Korea into a developed country. Discussions on women's human rights in sex tourism were, "considered so radical as to challenge the stability of the nation by hampering economic growth...and was thus subject to sanction."<sup>11</sup> The Korean government was cautious about contentious issues like comfort women with Japan during this critical time of economic development and thus there was political pressure from the top of the Korean government for others to not bring up a controversial issue like sexual slavery to the detriment of national growth.

However, Park's reforms would indirectly lead to the rise of women in the workforce and their resulting political activism. Tourism made up a small component of economic growth, but Park's leading focus was on building export-led industrialism.<sup>12</sup> To provide the necessary manpower but also keep costs low, women across the country were employed in factories. They were favorable because they were willing to work long hours for minimum pay. During this time frame, "South Korea gained notoriety for having the world's longest work week and the highest accident rate."<sup>13</sup> Factory women were subjected to sexual harass-

ment, poor working conditions, and stunted educational opportunities as many sent wages home to pay for their brothers' education. However, the "economic miracle" under Park would not have been possible without the exploited labor of female factory workers.

As a result of Park's reforms, the economic and living conditions of South Koreans slowly began to improve. Again, the factory women proved to be instrumental, this time with the rise of the feminist movement. Tired of poor working conditions and low wages, factory women became involved in the minjung undong labor movement, and later would use their experience in political advocacy for workers' rights to also advocate for women's equality in the workforce.<sup>14</sup> These internal movements were echoed in 1976 when the United Nations began a program dubbed the 'United Nations Decade for Women' with the goal of, "promot[ing] equal rights and opportunities for women around the world."<sup>15</sup> The UN's declaration powerfully exemplified a worldwide movement towards engaging and empowering all women.

The growing agency of Korean women resulted in a historic case in 1986 when a labor organizer name Kwon Il Suk rocked Korean society by coming forward with accusations of sexual assault against Korean police.<sup>16</sup> She was the first woman ever to file suit against the Korean government. Kwon claimed that she had been

sexually assaulted at a police station while under interrogation for her participation in a labor protest. Her frank admission of being abused, as comfort women well knew, was previously considered an unspeakable experience in Korean society. However, Kwon refused to allow officials to diminish her trauma as exaggerated, "tactics used by student radicals," against the government.<sup>17</sup> Her defiance against submitting to the patriarchy prompted thousands of women to protest her treatment. This resulted in the formation of Korean Women's Association United (KWAU) in February, 1987, and while the protest was shut down by government officials using tear gas, the advocacy of women's rights, including sexual rights, had finally gained precedent in South Korea.<sup>18</sup> Kwon's bravery was monumental, and despite the government's attempts at diminishing the issue, the wave of public protests ensured that women across Korea were witnessing the success of a woman speaking out about sexual assault despite the own risks to her reputation. One such woman, was Kim Hak-Sun, an ex-comfort woman who, like many others, had lived in silence about her experience until that moment.

## CHAPTER 3: KIM HAK-SUN COMES FORWARD

Inspired by the growing feminist rights movement, in August, 1991 Kim Hak-sun gave





a public testimony that continues to color Japanese-Korean politics to this day. Kim recounted, as the very first woman to come forward, her first hand experiences as a comfort woman during the war 46 years prior. In December, 1991 she filed a class action lawsuit against the Japanese government, formally seeking an apology and compensation for the physical and emotional trauma she endured during her time at comfort stations. The case, formally named the Asia-Pacific War Korean Victims Compensation Claim Case opened on December 6, 1991 demanded compensation for the Pacific War victims, including two other unnamed women who filed with Kim Hak-sun.<sup>19</sup> The Japanese government refused to apologize, provide reparations, or open an investigation. However, similar to the #MeToo movement today, once one woman came forward, thousands of others began speaking about their experiences. Hak-sun went on an international tour speaking about her experiences and brought world attention to Japan's refusal to sincerely apologize. This combined with discovery of documents confirming Japanese military involvement with intimate details of the comfort woman operation prompted Prime Minister Kiichi Miyazawa to publicly apologize for the harm inflicted. An official apology, called the Kono Agreement, was made in 1993. The Kono Agreement admitted that the "Japanese military was, directly or indirectly, involved in the establish-

ment and management of the comfort stations, the recruitment of the comfort women was conducted mainly by private recruiters who acted in response to the request of the military, in many cases they were recruited against their own will, through coaxing, coercion, etc., at times, administrative/military personnel directly took part in the recruitments and that they lived in misery at comfort stations under a coercive atmosphere."<sup>20</sup> For decades the Japanese government had flatly denied its involvement in the comfort women issue, making the Kono Agreement a huge victory for advocates of these women. However, critics have been swift to point out that the apologies never assume legal responsibility for Japan's actions.

Once Kim Hak-sun came forward, another ex-comfort woman, this time a Dutch woman named Jan Ruff-O'Herne, felt empowered enough to share her story. O'Herne advocated very publicly for the issue of comfort women to be treated as a human's rights violation rather than a shameful topic, and in 2007 she testified at the US House of Representatives as part of a congressional hearing on "Protecting the Human Rights of Comfort Women."<sup>21</sup> O'Herne's advocacy helped to garner international support for the survivor's complaints against the continued apathy displayed by the Japanese government.

## CHAPTER 4: LEGAL ISSUES AND COMPENSATION

It is noteworthy that Kim's complaints were aimed exclusively towards the Japanese government. Naturally, the government was directly responsible for her suffering and thus should provide adequate compensation. However, as Japan has consistently pointed out since 1991, compensation has already been made through the Treaty of Basic Relations in 1965, which established diplomatic relations between Japan and South Korea. In it, Japan provided Korea with approximately \$800 million in economic reparations after the war with the condition that it also released Japan from further claims. Conservatives in the Japanese right wing have argued that this means Korean comfort women have no legal claim for reparation regardless of not being mentioned directly in the treaty.<sup>22</sup> As previously addressed, the Korean government was undergoing massive economic reform under Park Chung-hee. Because of this, the majority of reparation money was used by the Korean government for industrial economic development, including the Sonyang Dam. Compensation for individuals was limited to only 300,000 won (\$277.00) per death in victims of forced labor.<sup>23</sup> As a result, comfort women were given no direct compensation by their government, despite money being allotted for war

victim reparation. In this, the Japanese provide a reasonable argument for their refusal to continue to provide money to individual claims, as heart wrenching as they may be.

Despite not being legally responsible for more compensation for ex comfort women, the Japanese government set up the Asian Women's Fund in 1994 to distribute money donated by Japanese citizens to ex comfort women.<sup>24</sup> The fund was financed in part by private donation of about \$5 million but mostly through a \$40 million donation by the Japanese government.<sup>25</sup> Victims also received a signed apology from the prime minister, stating "As Prime Minister of Japan, I thus extend anew my most sincere apologies and remorse to all the women who underwent immeasurable and painful experiences and suffered incurable physical and psychological wounds as comfort women."<sup>26</sup> While most of the survivors eventually accepted the monetary compensation, many complained that by using private donations, the government was essentially 'buying them off' instead of actually officially apologizing and giving compensation. This detail seems small yet remains an ideological sticking point to protests that continue to this day. In 2015, the Japanese government officially apologized and gave another \$6 million in compensation to the remaining survivors.



## CHAPTER 5: THE KOREAN GOVERNMENT

The progressive support of ex comfort women through cultural change and advocacy groups led to a substantial shift by the Korean government from its historical apathy. As discussed, immediately following World War II, the government was too weak and disorganized to address the issues of women who, at the time, were few in number, poor, and politically insignificant. However, in the 1960's, the Park regime actively suppressed the issue and even went as far as promoting sex tourism within Korea to increase foreign currency flow into the country.<sup>27</sup> In 1991 reform began taking place on an institutional level as a result of three decades of lobbying from women's rights advocates. Previously, the laws complied with the Confucian patriarchy and systematically limited women's legal rights in Korean family and property law. In 1991 legislation was passed that, "gave daughters equal rights to inherit family property, and gave divorced and separated women the right to child custody."<sup>28</sup> Legal empowerment within familial dynamics was a hard won battle against conservatives that had long dominated the government and marked a significant step forward in the Korean government recognizing women's rights.

The rise of the feminist movement, the increasingly public support towards survivors,

and the continued denial of involvement by the Japanese government prompted the Korean government to establish the Korean Council for Women Drafted for Military Sexual Slavery by Japan in November 1990. The Council seeks to, "restore the victims rights and dignity by solving the "comfort women" issue and is trying to form solidarity with women who are experiencing similar pain from current wars and armed conflicts."<sup>29</sup> Through this organization, ex-comfort women began organizing weekly protests every Wednesday since January 8<sup>th</sup>, 1992 in front of the Japanese embassy in Seoul.<sup>30</sup> Known as 'The Wednesday Protest', supporters and ex-comfort women reached their 1000<sup>th</sup> protest in 2011, and marked the milestone with a statue of a comfort woman placed directly outside the Japanese embassy in Seoul. Known as the 'Statue of Peace', the bronze statue was revealed only days before the arrival of Prime Minister Shinzo Abe.<sup>31</sup> The Japanese government ferociously called for the statue's removal but its requests were ignored until 2015 when Japan agreed to pay 1 billion yen to survivors in exchange for the removal of the statue.<sup>32</sup> Both sides claimed this would be, "a final and irreversible resolution" towards the divisive issue.<sup>33</sup> However, it proved to be an unpopular decision as Japanese "conservatives condemned the agreement as unnecessary given previous Japanese expressions of remorse and,

more significantly in South Korea, critics in the media described the deal as Park effectively selling out the dignity of survivors of wartime sexual slavery for short-term diplomatic and geopolitical gain.<sup>34</sup> Korean protestors refused to recognize the deal and continued to put up statues throughout South Korea. Tensions peaked when one was placed in front of the Japanese consulate in Busan resulting in Japan recalling two of its ambassadors and stating, “it would suspend negotiations over a currency swap meant to help South Korea stabilize its currency, the won, in times of financial crisis.”<sup>34</sup> Frosty relations have continued into 2017 with South Korean President Moon Jae-in telling Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe last June that, “The reality is the majority of our people cannot emotionally accept the comfort women agreement.”<sup>35</sup>

In addition to disputes about public statues, South Korea has also sparred with Japan about how history is being told. In 2006, the Japanese government employed an edited version of middle school textbooks that noticeably downplayed the involvement of the Japanese government in the comfort women issue as well as controversies regarding Japanese imperialism and the Nanking Massacre.<sup>36</sup> Wary of the Japanese rewriting of history, the Korean embassy in Japan released a statement directly objecting to the changes stating, “The Republic of Korea expresses regret over the fact that some of the 2006

Japanese middle school textbooks ... still contain content that justifies and glorifies wrongs committed in the past.”<sup>37</sup> Despite clear objections by the Korean government, the Japanese textbooks were not amended and continue to be viewed as self-favoring historical revisionism. The Japanese counter with the argument that Korean history books are equally self-favoring and politically censored and therefore South Korea has no legitimacy in its complaints.

This series of issues has severely eroded diplomatic ties between South Korea and Japan. Many Japanese feel that Japan has issued enough apologies and paid enough in compensation. The continued protests by South Koreans are viewed as a detriment to potential economic and political ties and are forcing an issue that has long been addressed in the public limelight much to Japan’s continued embarrassment. Conversely, Koreans believe Japan is trying to sweep its horrific human rights violations under the rug using vague language and second hand payouts to victims. They remain unsatisfied by Japan’s half-hearted attempts at reconciliation and continue to press the issue on a domestic and international scale. Regardless, neither side has received closure and tensions continue to escalate despite 72 years passing since the end of World War II.

## CONCLUSION

While political issues remain unresolved,



time is running out for comfort women. Kim Hak-sun passed away in 1997 with her case still unresolved.<sup>38</sup> That was nearly twenty years ago, and today only a handful of women remain. Many women lived their entire lives feeling as though Japan had never officially and sincerely apologized for its actions, and continued to protest until their deaths. Despite the unresolved friction between Japan and Korea, Korean society itself has made massive improvements in its treatment and advocacy for survivors. Initially, the women's plight was deemed too inappropriate for public discussion and had little importance in the eyes of political leaders. Apathy was enhanced by Korean culture's emphasis on female chastity and those who did acknowledge their experiences in the years immediately following the war were shame and ostracized. Under Park, the initial oppression of women's rights and democratic reform gradually gave way to increased political activism as the economy began to improve and women became more independent throughout society. This culminated in extreme social change throughout the 1980's, ultimately leading to improvements in the legal rights of women and Kwan's suit directly against the Korean government. Her actions were paramount in opening dialogue about sexual assault and the failures of the Korean government to adequately address women's rights abuses, setting the ground for Kim Hak-sun to come forward.

In 1991, Kim provided the first eye-witness account of her experience as a comfort woman, providing direct evidence that Japan had systematically coerced and raped thousands of women. Kim's testimony marked the beginning of the Korean government's evolution of support towards comfort women. Throughout the turn of the century the Korean government has become increasingly more vocal against Japanese repression of the issue and has remained resilient in its protests despite it causing diminishing political and economic ties between the two countries. In 2015 the issue was said to be finally resolved, however, that decision was later reversed in 2017 following Korean sentiment that Japan's apologies were insincere and grounded in a desire suppress the issue instead of legitimate remorse.

Despite the unresolved nature of the conflict, the lives of comfort women helped catalyze immense change within Korean politics and society. They have represented women's rights issues, served as witnesses against Japanese attempts to diminish the severity of its actions, and continue to fight against sexism and apathy in Korea. While the stories of comfort women are complicated and full of issues on all sides, their advocacy has had a profound impact not only on the lives of other victims, but also attitudes regarding women's rights around the world.

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# REALISTIC INTERNATIONALISM

## When Two Worlds Collide

By Czar Alexei Sepe '21

### ABSTRACT

“Domestic politics can only defeat us; foreign policy can kill us,” U.S. president John F. Kennedy quipped shortly after the Cuban Missile Crisis. Almost sixty years later, his words resonate on an international stage plagued with hostile tensions. Following a euphoric acceleration of economic growth and democratization in the aftermath of the Soviet Union’s dissolution in 1991, the liberal world order has fallen short of the ideas of international cooperation and globalization with the rise of China and Russia. Some said internationalism was inevitable, yet illiberal ideas continue to advance, regardless of this unprecedented historical progress of humankind.



This current state of affairs is simply a continuation in the ongoing study of international relations and its two competing theories, liberal internationalism and realism. Each theory offers a perspective on the causes and possible solutions for war. Both realism and liberal internationalism have strengths and weaknesses in explaining certain circumstances in contemporary politics, while lacking answers to other phenomena. In an attempt to remedy these contentions, I propose a new grand strategy – realistic internationalism. This article will reveal the policy implications of this strategy as the United States moves forward in its attempt to navigate its international relations.

Kenneth Waltz's groundbreaking literature, "Man, the State, and War," outlines three "images" that reflect the causes of war. The "first image" is that human behavior causes war and that "men must be changed" to solve this dilemma.<sup>1</sup> Hans Morgenthau, the father of modern realism, extensively wrote on this cause in his work, "Politics Among Nations." According to him, "political realism believes that politics...is governed by objective laws that have their roots in human nature."<sup>2</sup> This pessimistic view, influenced by philosophers such as Machiavelli and Hobbes, is realism's foundation. Human nature is self-interested, focused on advantage, and willing to use force all in the name of "self-preservation."<sup>3</sup> In turn, war "results from selfish-

ness, from misdirected aggressive impulses, [and] from stupidity."<sup>4</sup> Not only is this a image bleak, it is also fixed, as it is an objective universal truth. The threat of harm forces society to protect individuals from the 'lowest common denominator' – humanity's worst.

Does this mean war is inevitable, and peace is impossible? Yes, according to realists, who maintain that peace is impossible as war is the human condition. The goal of international politics is to recognize human self-interest and limit miscalculation to reduce instances of conflict. Nevertheless, when war occurs, it must be conducted to reach clear objectives while minimizing destruction. Although there will inevitably be bloodshed, politicians and diplomats must ensure that the state will survive. The question remains: can this mentality be used to explain the past two or three decades of relative peace?

The opposing theory of liberal internationalism sheds light on this question. Whereas realists believe humanity's tendency toward conflict is inevitable, liberals find that human nature is malleable. The minds of men are formed through education, where "individual goodness, if it could be universalized, would mean peace."<sup>5</sup> There is hope for a warless future only if people are enlightened in liberal values. Humans can be trained to do good, to cooperate, and to flourish within a framework of values-based institutions. Classical liberalism reconciles with realist

self-interest in that “it is entirely in the individual’s self-interest to cooperate.”<sup>6</sup> Peace is inherent in “liberalism’s ends [which] are life and property, and its means...liberty and toleration.”<sup>7</sup>

Moreover, liberal internationalists claim that rapid democratization after the Soviet Union’s collapse has engineered a more peaceful world. In Waltz’s analysis, this is the “second image,” where “the internal organization of states is key to understanding war and peace.”<sup>8</sup> The most peaceful state systems, according to liberal internationalists, are liberal democracies. Evolving from the Enlightenment’s classical liberal thought, the argument for liberal democracy is that “the very vices of man contribute, indeed are essential, to the progress of society.”<sup>9</sup> Liberalism harnesses the inherent selfishness in human individuals proposed by realists through structures in the state that balance them out. The protection of people and private property, justice, equality, and rule of law are all mechanisms that socialize and institutionalize this notion. In democracy, “interest and opinion combine to ensure a policy of peace,”<sup>10</sup> thereby ensuring the best constitution for a state. Stephen Walt raises a realist counter argument claiming that this phenomenon reveals correlation and not causation, noting that “...the growth of international trade, communications, and currency (often lumped under the heading of globalization) has been underwritten by U.S. military power and backed by an exten-

sive array of alliance commitments and regulatory arrangements.”<sup>11</sup>

There is no denying the fact that the United States’ overwhelming military might stabilizes regions throughout the world; however, it can be argued that the country’s alliance network results from the spread of democracy. The American triumph over illiberal communism signaled liberal democracy’s success to the rest of the globe. Therefore, the burden falls upon other countries to initiate the developmental process towards democratic government as it is in their interest of self-preservation to join the tidal wave of prosperity. G. John Ikenberry notes that the liberal order is influencing rising democracies such as Brazil, India, Mexico, and South Korea with considerable economic clout.<sup>12</sup> Consequently, this newfound “global middle class of democratic states has turned China and Russia into outliers – not...legitimate contestants for global leadership.”<sup>13</sup> Clearly, this internal structural approach is popular among today’s scholars and policymakers. This view has been the U.S.’s grand strategy for over thirty years and its powerful argument solidifies liberal internationalism as a serious theoretical contender.

Neorealism, a branch of realism, offers the “third image” in Waltz’s book. He proposes that war is “a consequence of international anarchy”<sup>14</sup> or the structure of the international order.



States are bodies of individuals who reflect human behavior, similar to the modern realist first image analysis. Waltz goes one step further to argue that “states in the world are like individuals in the state of nature.”<sup>15</sup> Hobbesian philosophy is magnified on the international level, as nations act in their rational self-interest in a continual competitive state. Though the first and third perspectives are similar, international anarchy relies on a structural account of war rather than the normative and behavioral one presented by Morgenthau. The conclusion that can be drawn from this theory is that world government is the solution to international anarchy. . Similar to realists, neo-realists are skeptical of the feasibility of world government’s ability to achieve peace and prefer a balance of power politics to pur-

sue stability within anarchy. In contrast, third image liberal internationalists emphasize the importance of world institutions to achieve the semblance of global governance. More radical institutionalists want to change the very definition of state sovereignty as supranational world government.<sup>16</sup>

Without a doubt, institutionalism is a hallmark of liberal internationalism. Multilateral institutions are instrumental in today’s liberal world order. Institutions, treaties, and agreements, such as the United Nations, the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, and the North American Free Trade Agreement arise when states realize they can “jointly benefit from cooperation.”<sup>17</sup> Realism maintains that these institutions have minimal effect on international politics and



**States are bodies of individuals who reflect human behavior, similar to the modern realist first image analysis.**



are mere reflections of the great powers' will to legalize the existing system, protecting against threats to the status-quo.<sup>18</sup> In the case of the United Nations, the U.N. Security Council is based on realist doctrine. World War II's victors - the United States, Great Britain, France, the former Soviet Union and current-day Russia, and China - control the organization's executive authority. Under the guise of the General Assembly's inclusionary 'one nation, one vote' constitution, the Security Council exercises indirect supremacy over international issues through its veto power. Any United Nations decision must garner the five great powers' stamp of approval, effectively turning this institution into a puppet manipulated by the world's strongest states.

Other realists contend that the United Nations is inherently flawed in its recognition that "states want to maintain their sovereignty."<sup>19</sup> World government, which internationalists believe is the solution to conflict, cannot be sustained when states are sovereign, as sovereignty must be transferred to a higher authority. A union of nations is incompatible with this vision. Therefore, the only way to achieve such a radical system is to absolutely and fundamentally strip states of sovereignty in order to transform the United Nations so that it resembles its former self only by name.

Practically, the split between the political philosophies of realism and liberal international-

ism results in competing mechanisms attempting to remedy the problem of war. For realism, theorists depend on power politics and balance of power theory as the means by which states can attain their end of survival.

Classical realism states that "the concept of interest [is] defined in terms of power."<sup>20</sup> Power is controlling the minds and hearts of citizens, and the state's goal, as a mechanism of the individual, is to control the minds and hearts of other states through three instruments: "the expectation of benefits, the fear of disadvantages, and the respect of love for men or institutions."<sup>21</sup> Each state either maintains power in a dominant position as a status-quo state, increases power in order to change the status-quo as an anti-status-quo or revisionist state, or demonstrates power in a policy of prestige.<sup>22</sup> Thus, a leader's duty is to identify his or her state's interests and acquire the power to achieve them. Logically, this results in a relativity of power. If every state's goal is to attain power, absolute power is unachievable and only relative power can truly gauge how much power a country possesses. For example, it does not matter that nation "A" has five soldiers while nation "B" has four, however, it does matter that nation "A" has one more soldier than nation "B." Revisionist states seeking to acquire more power trigger status-quo states to maintain their dominance. This hinders peace treaties and international



law because cheating is an incentive for relative gains politics due to the states' competitive nature.<sup>23</sup> Recently, China has seized the free trade economic consensus in the liberal international order by implementing a monetary policy of currency manipulation, thereby gaining a competitive advantage on the backs of states that do not blatantly manipulate money.<sup>24</sup> This results in backlash towards free trade and a consequential retreat in the direction of protectionist policies. China upholds its own advancement at the cost of international norms, and other nations retaliate accordingly in an effort to keep up. In sum, realists believe that supranational cooperation is futile at worst and superficial at best.

The unfortunate result of relative gains power politics is the security dilemma. Relative gains analysis reveals that countries will never be content with their respective levels of power when others will try to gain the upper hand. States accumulate power voraciously in order to have the relative edge, no matter how exorbitant the pursuit of absolute power may become. Realists maintain that this situation is a necessary evil, noting that "building capability cannot guarantee security, but failing to do so can guarantee insecurity."<sup>25</sup> This can escalate to an arms race, most notably seen with the United States and the Soviet Union after World War II.

U.S.-Soviet relations deteriorated after World War II's conclusion as Stalin's revisionist

ambitions pushed the Soviets to occupy Eastern and Central Europe while expanding further into Hungary and Czechoslovakia. The United States miscalculated Soviet ambition and failed to respond, allowing the Soviet Union to rise in power. After the Soviet Union successfully tested a nuclear weapon in 1949, the United States finally felt it necessary to respond to the impending Soviet threat. This security dilemma paved the way for nuclear deterrence theory, which combines "two competing goals: countering an enemy and avoiding war."<sup>26</sup> During the Eisenhower administration, the U.S. embraced deterrence theory by following a policy of brinkmanship. The goal of this strategy was to amass nuclear weaponry in order to escalate actions and threats until the enemy began to retreat. It was a game of 'chicken' with nuclear weapons. The sheer magnitude of the arms buildup was absurd, clearly illustrating the unsettling relations between states that can be imposed by the security dilemma. This classic case highlights the alarmingly tense world that realism depicts. Mutually assured destruction could have been unleashed by mere miscalculations.

Responding to the security dilemma, "liberal theories identify the instruments that states can use to achieve shared interests" through institutions.<sup>27</sup> When the security dilemma became a serious threat to the international community, a number of treaties ensured a reduction in ar-

maments during the Cold War. President Nixon's policy of détente allowed for bilateral dialogue through the Strategic Arms Limitation Talks (S.A.L.T.). S.A.L.T. I led to the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty which limited strategic missile defenses.<sup>28</sup> When states create and follow international law and treaties, all states benefit from a de-escalated situation, where cooperation fosters mutual self-interested peace.

Understanding the polemical relationship between power relativity and competition, states practice balance of power politics to maintain their survival. Balance and equilibrium are natural universal truths, and they "maintain the stability of the system without destroying the multiplicity of the elements composing it."<sup>29</sup> The world's natural scarcity limits the accumulation of the elements of power. An individual state is limited to its resources within its sovereign borders, so that smaller states who see larger states as ambitious seek to balance power with the help of others. In a multistate world, balance provides an atmosphere in which all states can survive. However, this multipolarity poses risks because "dangers are diffused, responsibilities unclear, and definitions of vital interests easily obscured."<sup>30</sup> Many actors increase the chance for one actor to miscalculate and lead the rest to stumble into war. For instance, the European great powers prior to World War I deeply entangled themselves in an alliance system which

included the Triple Alliance and the Triple Entente. These strategic alliances were unstable due to each player's variable intentions. In the days leading up to the war, this intense mistrust ensured that Russia would not back down against Germany and thus World War I began.

In light of these strategic failures, Waltz concludes that a bipolar system is better for maintaining the balance of power. He claims that the "rigidity of alignment in a two-power world results in more flexibility of strategy and greater freedom of decision."<sup>31</sup> The clearly-defined structure between two superpowers causes fewer miscalculations. When missteps occur, they are dealt with swiftly as the focus is on only one adversary. They cannot be concealed or overlooked, which is more likely to occur in a multipolar situation. Tension would be ever-present, but war could be avoided. Instead of having to balance many different sized blocks, it is easier to balance two large, but equivalent, blocks on a scale. Such a theory explains why the Cold War never turned hot.

Unlike realists, liberal internationalists rely on democratic peace theory, just war theory, and humanitarianism to explain today's more peaceful disposition and the progression to Kantian 'perpetual peace.' As U.S. president Bill Clinton said in his 1994 State of the Union address, "Democracies don't attack each other." Democratic peace theory is based on





Rousseau and Kant's optimistic beliefs which are in opposition to the pessimistic foundation of realism. Liberal values and human rights are universal truths because humans are an end in themselves. Democratic peace theory proposes that "when liberals run the government, relations with fellow democracies are harmonious;" thus, democratization is essential because its structure executes liberal ideals. Popular sovereignty in a democratic system is naturally conflict-averse, so public opinion contributes to a more diplomatic approach in international affairs.<sup>32</sup> John Owen emphasizes that immature democracies with illiberal leaders pose threats because they are incompatible with liberal democracies.<sup>33</sup> Mature democracies, which include the likes of the United States and western Europe, are torch-bearers of democratic peace and must lead the international community into a new world order of institutionalized cooperation, thereby paving the way for progress. According to liberal internationalists, realists fail to recognize "that ideas matter in international relations, both as shapers of national interest and as builders of democratic institutions."<sup>34</sup>

Consequently, international norms guide actors towards institutions, and institutions legislate and enforce international norms, which creates a circular dynamic that cements democratic values. For example, popular elections are an international norm that even illiberal states

and dictatorships emulate. Revisionist authoritarian Vladimir Putin recently won re-election to a fourth term of the Russian presidency under false pretense amid forced voting and ballot stuffing.<sup>35</sup> Human rights and humanitarian intervention have clear underpinnings of international mores and values. Because certain human rights have been normalized in the liberal international order, certain obligations are expected of powerful states to safeguard against "war crimes, crimes against humanity, ethnic cleansing, and genocide when national governments fail to do so."<sup>36</sup> New doctrines such as "the 'responsibility to protect,' which holds that the international community has a special set of responsibilities to protect civilians – "by force, if necessary" – encourages democratic forces to fight wars as the protectors of humanity, transcending borders.<sup>37</sup> Nonetheless, this paradigm shift occurred only after the Soviet Union's fall, when the United States' liberal international order became a unipolar hegemony.

Further, just war theory incorporates humanitarian intervention and regime change as methods to forcibly democratize nations, thereby helping to form a cooperative world network. Just war theory contends that a state's "aggressiveness... [and] murderousness... makes a political regime a legitimate candidate for forcible transformation."<sup>38</sup> The role of the state is to protect its citizens, and if a state is

purposefully undermining this principle through the systematic killing of its population or minority groups, it forfeits its sovereignty and invites foreign intervention to dispose of the tyrannical government. Just war must first overthrow the despotic regime, and only after this task is achieved should the democratizing forces focus on changing institutions and state building. This type of war warrants the “forcible and justifiable democratization—and that will sometimes require an attack on traditional hierarchies and customary practices” that may cause pushback from the people being saved.<sup>39</sup> Internationalists view this tumult as small steps backwards in the push towards progress. When history is regarded as a linear progression, such difficulties add to the building blocks for peace. To these optimists, hope resides in the fact that “history is on the side of the angels.”<sup>40</sup> This positivity does not bode well with realist theory, which focuses on the concept of universal truths that are immutable in nature. In this scenario, just war condones Western liberal imperialism. In this vein of thought, humanitarian intervention is delusionary and will often backfire, therefore risking a state’s own power.

Paradoxically, humanitarianism often calls for killing people in order to save people from being killed. “Even if the ends of such actions could be unambiguously humanitarian,” Benjamin Valentino argues, “the means never

are. Using force to save lives usually involves taking lives, including innocent ones.”<sup>41</sup> Developed countries risk lives in foreign entanglements in the name of human rights, yet encounter opposition from the locals the countries they intend to save. Rival factions seize on this itch to attack liberal democracies through antagonizing the current regime, baiting the government to injure them in order to paint it as a war crime, as what happened in the 2011 Libyan intervention.<sup>42</sup> This trick prolongs conflict and cultivates the conditions for small factions to seize power and institute their own regime, which may harbor murderous intentions as well. This moral hazard “encourages the excessively risky or fraudulent behavior of rebellion by members of groups that are vulnerable to genocidal retaliation.”<sup>43</sup> More concerning, though, is that these newly emboldened rebel groups “cannot fully protect against the backlash.”<sup>44</sup> Humanitarian intervention is antithetical to the realist belief that a state’s sovereignty is sacred. States, no matter what kind of constitution, must preserve themselves in the anarchical international order. When a foreign state intentionally invades or intervenes in another state, that state has a right to fight back, and it will. If a “self-help” system has been established, states will resort to any means for self-preservation, including genocides and ethnic cleansings.<sup>45</sup> Even if the sovereign is ‘bad,’ ignoring sovereignty invites invasion



and imperialism. The state has no morally objective laws and must not be concerned with such, or else that state falls into an ideological trap. Therefore, pushback in these countries should be expected when unnecessary exorbitant foreign power and bloodshed breeds resentment and retaliation.

Sadly, humanitarian intervention cautiously treads the line between being a benevolent obligation to humankind and being an imperialistic tendency by the dominant powers, which in this case are liberal democracies. The failure of the United States intervention in Somalia's civil war sparked public outrage and forced then-president Bill Clinton to withdraw military personnel. On the other end of the spectrum, the Rwandan genocide and the United Nations' failure to effectively respond to such widespread killing questioned Western liberalism's credibility and resolve to enforce their 'universal' values.<sup>46</sup> Later on, the Bosnian crisis proved a turning point, as humanitarianism had its first successful instance of protecting civilians and preventing ethnic cleansing.<sup>47</sup> Quick, strategic intervention stabilized the region while ensuring leaders were held accountable for crimes against humanity. Liberals claim they have discovered the recipe for forcible humanitarianism, but each circumstance has intricate nuances in rationale, culture, norms, and politics, making such a generalization too overarching and invalid. Ultimately, the Pan-

dora's box of humanitarianism negates any of its potential holiness.

Both realism and liberal internationalism have clear merits to their argument. In crafting policy, however, politicians must moderate their views on either theory, and should strive to find a middle ground through 'realistic internationalism,' in which realist principles drive internationalist goals. Through this balance, the United States can maintain its predominant political clout, while ensuring its ideas are implemented in a realism-based plan.

A United States grand policy of realistic internationalism has four goals. First, the sanctity of sovereignty must be preserved, which implies that humanitarian intervention and regime change are unjustifiable causes for the U.S. to go to war. Second, liberal democracies are intrinsically more peaceful than other forms of government, and the United States must push forward with liberalism to foster further democratization without the use of force. Third, since institutions are key to reduce mistrust, diffuse tension, and promote cooperation, the U.S. must maintain all its treaties and alliances and establish hard red-lines to back those up. Fourth, the United States must hone in on its vital interests and restrain its influence as a great balancer in secondary spheres of interest.

The first new American principle is that states have an inalienable right to sovereignty,

no matter what constitution. The nation is “the supreme authority” that is “free to manage its internal and external affairs according to its discretion...”<sup>48</sup> Thus, any direct humanitarian intervention and regime change is unjustifiable. The detrimental consequences outweigh the benefits, and artificial democratization at the point of a gun is unsustainable and politically counter-productive.<sup>49</sup> Nevertheless, the United States can indirectly aid impoverished countries through resources and economic means. Though this method may also have its downsides, the U.S. can flex its soft power on developing countries and plant the seeds for a liberal economy, an essential foundation of liberal democracy. Preventative measures such as public health programs and disaster-relief efforts reduce the risk of instability, ultimately stopping future atrocities.<sup>50</sup> Thus, the U.S. must restrain interventionist urges, provide conditions conducive to natural democratization, and opt for a prudent exercise of force.

Another principle is that liberal democracies are inherently more peaceful than illiberal, non-democratic states. Political and economic conditions align so that these specific values and structures promote prosperity over conflict. Thus, more democracies in the world will lead to less war, but not the elimination of it. This realist principle must be the foundation for any claims for peace, as the anarchical order will most likely not create world government.<sup>51</sup> Short of world

government, this outlook says that democracies, with their shared norms, will naturally gravitate towards one another. Realistically, “forward progress on this agenda will need to come voluntarily...rather than as a result of some top-down edict from a supposedly authoritative body or actor.”<sup>52</sup> In keeping states sovereign, states choosing to democratize will also opt to cooperate in a symbiotic relationship that would further the semblance of stability in anarchy. Regime change, though, is not an option. Forcible democratization is risky, as retaliation may mean the complete upheaval of the liberal order. Blunders in foreign policy have resulted in a more volatile international system, casting doubt on the liberal hegemonic order. Sovereignty must be respected, but democracy must flourish.

Additionally, institutions are beneficial for all states who partake in them, as they provide information, increase dialogue, and promote common norms. When war is a result of human miscalculation, institutions reduce this risk when open forums provide transparency in foreign affairs.<sup>53</sup> The United Nations is the hallmark of the liberal world order, and the U.S. must defend its premise when it is used as a forum for dialogue. On the other hand, the United Nations cannot transform to the likes of the European Union, therefore, the United States should emphasize individual states’ sovereignty. The United States should also emphasize



the benefits of keeping the separated structure of the United Nations in which the U.N. Security Council's power ensures its executive control over force. Moreover, instead of shying away from international treaties such as the Trans-Pacific Partnership and the Paris Climate Agreement, the United States must uphold these commitments to maintain credibility and avoid hypocrisy.<sup>54</sup> Simply put, the United States cannot go at it alone in the age of globalization, because the rise of transnational terrorist organizations forces nations to "use soft power to develop networks and build institutions to address shared threats and challenges."<sup>55</sup>

In considering the role of international cooperation in nuclear theory, there are no relative gains when there is the potential for absolute annihilation. The U.S. must lead the pack and embark on multilateral nuclear deals and treaties to reduce arms and stop any further nuclear proliferation, for "as the number of nuclear powers increases, the probability of illicit transfers, irrational decisions, accidents, and unforeseen crises goes up."<sup>56</sup> American policymakers should consider steps to reduce the stockpile mutually with other states, especially when modern-day "deterrence doesn't require a lot of nuclear weapons."<sup>57</sup> If rogue states dare to weaponize nuclear energy, the United States must use swift and decisive military force to uphold the international norms of non-proliferation.

While American vital interests must be prioritized, a more restrained policy is ideal for secondary interests such as Middle East security. The current U.S. primary interests are Western Europe and East Asia. In this respect, American commitment, personnel, and presence will continue to provide security for allies in a defensive posture. Russia and China, as the present adversaries to the liberal world order, pose imperialistic risks to American allies. Sustaining the current military presence signals the United States' resolve to protect against their aggression. To limit Russian or Chinese balancing against the U.S., "the United States' principal aim...should be to maintain the regional balance of power so that the most powerful state in each region...remains too worried about its neighbors to roam into the Western Hemisphere."<sup>58</sup>

In the Middle East, the United States cannot entangle itself in civil unrest and other internal affairs, in line with the aforementioned principle of sovereignty. Barry Posen paints this restrained American stance as follows: "the United States should help protect states in the region against external attacks, but it cannot take responsibility for defending them against internal dissent."<sup>59</sup> Middle Eastern balancing is integral to regional stability. Artificially propping up one side hurts the American image, which means the further loss of prestige at a

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time when the U.S. cannot afford more popular anti-American rhetoric from these countries. Withdrawing the American military presence will readjust the Middle East scale and foster an advantageous balance of power politics. Keeping these nations divided halts any regional unification and hegemonic behavior, and if a state exhibits anti-status-quo intentions, the U.S. could tip the scale to the other side. Overextending American might will lead to the acceleration of the United States' recent decline, and only restraint will halt it.

War is the struggle for peace. This indelible reality rings true in the annals of history, both past and present. In international relations, these innate complexities breed innovative solutions and eye-opening perspectives to world consciousness. While realism's focus on the undeniable role of power and liberal internationalism's focus on the success of democratic, ideals-driven institutions seem rigid in theoretical work, these two views are more of a spectrum or mixture in American politics. Pragmatically, any hardline approach to these theories will receive harsh criticism from either side. It is imperative, then, to soften the edges and compromise to create a practical U.S. grand strategy of realistic internationalism. With the latest developments in the world, the United States must adapt to the stark realities this declining superpower is facing methodically, not impulsively. After careful analysis,

the four key principles outlined balance sovereignty and power politics with institutionalism and indirect humanitarian aid to create the 'third way' in international relations. This new policy reflects the United States' identity as an innovator, and guarantees that, as Abraham Lincoln proclaimed, "the government of the people, by the people, for the people shall not perish from the earth."



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