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President of the Council on  
Foreign Relations

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Reconsidered*



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Executive Director of APSIA

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# LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Dear Readers,

It is my pleasure to present the twelfth edition of the Sigma Iota Rho Journal of International Relations. Each year, our Journal has increased its circulation, broadened its appeal in the field, and sought new ways to reach out to Sigma Iota Rho members throughout chapters across the country. This year, our efforts to expand the Journal culminated with a record number of submissions, a meeting with the Foreign Affairs editorial board at the Council on Foreign Relations and a growing relationship with the organization, and the selection of nine outstanding undergraduate manuscripts.

It is also our honor to feature a preview of Dr. Richard Haass's most recent book, *War of Necessity, War of Choice: A Memoir of Two Iraq Wars*, to be published in May. As the President of the Council on Foreign Relations and former director of policy planning for the U.S. Department of State, Dr. Haass is a highly respected member of the international relations community and offers us his views on some of the most prominent U.S. foreign policy issues of today. Dr. Haass offers a unique look at U.S. decisions to go to war, either as a matter of necessity or choice, as determined by U.S. interests and other policy options.

The articles selected in the twelfth edition reflect attention to issues of growing importance in the realm of international relations. This year we are featuring an historical analysis of the Communist parties in Italy and France by Peter Ceretti. The Journal also includes studies on national identity and democracy written by Alexandra Leavy, Joshua Roberts, and Irina Kotchach. JoAnna Tonini and Cory Siskind analyze policy choices regarding economic sanctions and biological weapon nonproliferation. Finally, Elena Blebea studies the effects of industrial agriculture in Latin America and Brian Chao offers analysis of the U.S. and Chinese naval powers.

I would like to thank the University of Pennsylvania's Student Activities Council and our long list of sponsors for their continued support of our Journal. I would also like to express my gratitude to Dr. Frank Plantan, National Director of SIR, Dr. James McGann, faculty advisor to the Journal, and Donna Shuler, Administrative Director of SIR, for their invaluable guidance and assistance. But most of all, I would like to thank the Editorial Board members and our Associate Editors for their dedication, without which the twelfth edition would not have been possible.

Sincerely,

Becca J. Balis  
Editor-in-Chief  
Epsilon Chapter, Sigma Iota Rho  
University of Pennsylvania



# FROM THE S.I.R. PRESIDENT

Dear Colleagues,

It seems trite to say that we live in a time of crises and conflict and to call for more attention to foreign affairs and the human condition. Yet the world remains beset international conflict, genocidal attacks, civil wars, terrorism, and state-sponsored attacks on its citizenry. Economic crises, pandemics, mass migrations, piracy, climate change, WMD, human rights (the list goes on) makes it a good time to be a student of world affairs. These issues impinge on college students facing an uncertain future. It has meant more anxiety and uncertainty about jobs and post-graduate opportunities of various kinds. Yet, the demand for young people with good analytical, research and writing skills, along with complementary technical skills and foreign language ability remains high. International experience and a global perspective are key leverage points in the job market and is why Sigma Iota Rho members have a competitive advantage over many of their peers.

The fact that S.I.R. members are the *crème de la crème* of students in international affairs continues to attract the attention of the American Professional Schools of International Studies (APSIA). The support of the APSIA schools and our other advertisers—The Economist, Council on Foreign Relations, Foreign Policy, the Browne Center for International Politics and the Lauder Institute-- helped make this edition possible.

If you are flying in July or August this summer on U.S. Airways or American Airlines be sure to set your audio control to Sky Radio for a feature story on Sigma Iota Rho. I will be doing an interview about the impact of world politics and economics on all aspects of our lives, the growth of international studies, and the mission of Sigma Iota Rho and its members to advance our understanding of how the world works.

A special thanks to Dr. Richard Haas, President, Council on Foreign Relations (CFR), for contributing our “headliner” piece this year. The CFR continues in a special advising and mentoring role with our Editorial Board, and we are looking forward to the production of an S.I.R. Reader in Contemporary International Politics, produced by the CFR be made available next academic year.

Finally, I want to extend my personal thanks for Dr. James McGann for serving as the Faculty Advisor to our outstanding Editorial Board, to Ms. Rebecca Balis, our Editor-in-Chief, and the entire editorial board for maintaining the standards expected of a blind peer-reviewed publication. I hope all our chapters and members will consider participating or contributing in some way again next year.

Best regards,

Frank Plantan  
President

Journal of International Relations



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## SPECIAL FEATURE:

# Wars of Necessity, Wars of Choice Reconsidered

RICHARD N. HAASS

*This article is adapted from the preface to the paperback edition of War of Necessity, War of Choice: A Memoir of Two Iraq Wars, to be published by Simon & Schuster in May 2010.*

Wars can be defined any number of ways: civil wars, wars of national liberation, world wars, cold wars, counterinsurgencies, a global war on terrorism, wars of attrition, defensive wars, nuclear wars, limited wars, just wars, and preventive wars all come to mind. What these and other such descriptions tend to reflect is scale, purpose, duration, the means employed, the nature of the conflict, and/or the nature of the undertaking.

There is, however, another way to think about war. Wars can be viewed as essentially unavoidable, that is, as acts of necessity, or just the opposite, reflecting conscious choice when other reasonable policies are available but are deemed to be less attractive.

Wars of necessity involve vital interests and the inability to protect them by means other than military force. The first Iraq war, triggered by Saddam Hussein's August 1990 invasion and occupation of Kuwait, was a war of necessity. The interests at stake – preventing hostile domination of the lion's share of the world's oil, setting a constructive precedent for the era of international relations just dawning in the wake of the Cold War – were truly vital, and neither diplomacy nor sanctions (both of which were tried) nor anything else other than resorting to force could safeguard them.

Wars of choice are just that, and involve uses of military force either on behalf of lesser interests (in which case, there is the option of not acting) or when alternative policies are available (in which case, military force may not be the preferred approach). The second Iraq war, initiated by George W. Bush in March 2003, was a war of choice. There was no new or pressing threat to U.S. interests, and there were any number of policy alternatives available, with shoring up existing sanctions against Iraq first among them.

Wars of choice are neither good nor bad per se. But they must meet two standards,

one absolute and another relative, in order to be advisable. First, the likely benefits of using force must look to outweigh the projected costs. Second, this ratio of benefits and costs must be superior to what would be expected from other policies. Fewer wars of choice would be initiated if these tests were applied rigorously.

There are several areas of debate on this theme. First, some argue that all wars are at some level wars of choice. This may be true in that governments could elect not to fight even when there is no other means to protect what is most vital. But this theoretical argument bears little resemblance to reality, as states tend for good reason to defend their vital interests by military means when there is no other option. What is more, many countries (including the United States) do not limit their uses of force to such situations. Wars of choice are thus both different from wars of necessity and a frequent reality.

Others agree that the Iraq war was a war of choice but disagree with my assessment that it was a poor choice. Their view is that it was a good choice that was poorly implemented for years, i.e., until the “surge” of 2007. Lending strength to this position are the improved conditions in Iraq. Violence is down; economic growth is up; basic services are improved; more people and groups have joined the political process.

At the same time, conditions in Iraq have not improved across the board. The economy is still narrowly based and highly vulnerable to declines in the price of oil; millions of Iraqis remain refugees or internally displaced; corruption is extensive; disputes persist between Kurds and Arabs over territory and between Kurds and the central government over oil rights and the sharing of revenues. Most important, the security situation remains volatile, as violence and high-profile attacks remain a staple of Iraqi life. Things could get worse, especially if (as President Obama has decided) American combat brigades depart Iraq by August 2010 and if (as the two governments have agreed) all U.S. troops leave by the end of 2011.

The most salient question is whether assessments of the second Iraq war would need to be altered if conditions in Iraq stayed much as they are or continued to improve. The answer is that it would still be a war of choice. How well things turn out may affect our view of the decision to go to war or its execution, but the outcome does not alter whether it was a war of choice or necessity. Indeed, the “success” of an intervention has nothing to do with its type: wars of choice do not become wars of necessity simply because they go well, any more than wars of necessity become wars of choice if they proceed badly.

More specifically, the second Iraq war would likely remain a poor choice even if things do not deteriorate, as everyone must hope is the case. The benefits – an Iraq no longer ruled by a despot who might have gone on to develop weapons of mass destruction, the example of a relatively open country in the heart of the mostly authoritarian Middle East – must be weighed against the enormous human, military, economic, strategic, and diplomatic costs of the policy. In my view, the downside remains considerably greater than any potential upside. The gap between the two grows if one holds a less optimistic view of Iraq’s future.

Recently, the choice/necessity debate has come to center less on Iraq than on Afghanistan. Afghanistan was for years the uncontroversial war; for many Americans and

others it was (unlike Iraq) a good war. It was also (in the immediate aftermath of 9/11) a war of necessity, waged to oust a government that was aiding and abetting terrorists who had attacked the United States and might do so again. It was thus a hybrid, partly an exercise in retaliation, partly a preventive war to eliminate the chance of additional attacks on the American homeland. It was also undertaken only after diplomatic efforts failed to persuade the Taliban government then in power in Kabul to end its support of al-Qaida and terrorism more broadly.

Somewhere along the way, though, Afghanistan changed from a war of necessity to one of choice. It is hard to pinpoint a precise moment, as the change was gradual. But early in the presidency of Barack Obama the line was crossed. Al-Qaida was no longer a force in the country. The Taliban had regained some ground. What changed was not just that U.S. troop levels were to increase by 21,000, from 47,000 to 68,000, but that the new mission (as articulated by President Obama on March 27, 2009, in the aftermath of an initial two-month policy review) would be “to take the fight to the Taliban in the South and the East.” The United States had opted to become a protagonist in Afghanistan’s civil war.

Such evolution of mission and objective is not unheard of. Indeed, wars of necessity have a way of becoming wars of choice, usually after the vital interests have been secured. The Korean War, which began as a war of necessity after the North Korean invasion of the South in June 1950, became a war of choice once the invading force had been pushed back. What made it a war of choice was the decision urged by General Douglas MacArthur and made by President Harry Truman to try to reunify the peninsula by force.

The first Iraq war had the potential to evolve from a war of necessity into one of choice with the defeat of the Iraqi army in February 1991. But President George H.W. Bush chose not to go to Baghdad, in part because of the lesson of Truman’s decision some four decades earlier, in part because of the feared military and diplomatic costs of getting embroiled in Iraq’s internal struggles.

The U.S. and British governments have resisted the description of Afghanistan as a war of choice. Speaking on Afghanistan to the Veterans of Foreign Wars in Phoenix on August 17, 2009, President Obama stated, “We must never forget: This is not a war of choice. This is a war of necessity.” It was a theme echoed three months later by British Prime Minister Gordon Brown: “The Afghan campaign is being prosecuted not from choice, but out of necessity.”

I took issue with President Obama’s statement. In an op-ed appearing in the *New York Times* just days after the president’s speech, and in a subsequent piece published in the *Washington Post* in mid-October, I argued that U.S. interests in Afghanistan were less than vital. There is nothing unique about Afghan real estate; terrorists have many other locales (most recently, Yemen) from which to ply their trade. Nor is it obvious that what happens in Afghanistan will determine the fate of its more important neighbor, Pakistan: the Taliban and al-Qaida already have a sanctuary in Pakistan itself from which to challenge the country’s stability. Decisions made by Pakistanis and developments in Pakistan will largely determine the future of that fragile but consequential country. What is more, designating Afghanistan a war of necessity would require that the United States do all it possibly could to “succeed” there. Such a potentially unlimited investment would make no strategic sense.

The President did not reiterate that Afghanistan was a war of necessity in his December 1, 2009, “Address to the Nation on the Way Forward in Afghanistan and Pakistan.” He maintained that vital national interests were at stake, yet his pledge to begin withdrawing American troops after only 18 months (by mid-2011) was an implicit acknowledgement that Afghanistan was a war of choice that did not warrant large-scale, open-ended commitment. Interests can exist but not rise to the level of vital. Afghanistan today is such an instance.

But what makes Afghanistan a war of choice is not just the limited stakes; it is also that there are viable policy alternatives to increasing the number of U.S. combat troops and the intensity of U.S. combat and counter-insurgency operations. Emphasizing the training of both national as well as local military and police forces in Afghanistan comes to mind, as do efforts to persuade (using cash or other inducements) some of those individuals and groups calling themselves Taliban to alter their behavior and loyalties. Doing more militarily may not result in lasting improvements in the security situation that are commensurate with the costs.

It is easy to understand why the Obama administration and allied governments are reluctant to describe Afghanistan (or any intervention for that matter) as a war of choice given sacrifices demanded of soldiers and society. In the case of Afghanistan, doing so could make it even more difficult to sustain public support for an increasingly unpopular war. Yet the prolonged policy review (the second of Obama’s brief tenure) during the fall of 2009 was another implicit acknowledgement that Afghanistan had become a war of choice; the president’s December 1, 2009, address, which discussed (and dismissed) courses of action other than the favored policy of committing an additional 30,000 American troops to the conflict, was an explicit recognition that alternatives existed.

It is only a matter of time before concepts of wars of necessity and choice attach themselves to the debate over what to do about Iran and its nuclear program. Ideally, diplomacy would succeed, and Iran would accept limits on its nuclear program along with verification commitments in exchange for a reduction in its political and economic isolation and possibly assurances relating to its energy needs and security. Such an approach may well not prove negotiable and, if not, at some point one of the options that will come to the fore (certainly in Israel, possibly in the United States) will be launching a preventive attack on Iran’s nuclear facilities. For either Israel or the United States, such an attack would constitute a war of choice, mostly because other options are available, including deterrence of and defense against an Iranian nuclear threat. Steps could also be taken to reduce the chance that other states in the region would follow suit and start or accelerate uranium enrichment programs of their own.

Again, to term such an attack a war of choice and not necessity is not to oppose it. It is simply to say that it would have to pass the same absolute and relative tests that any potential war of choice must pass before it should be initiated. This rigorous process is precisely what policymakers (and citizens for that matter) should undertake before they embark on or support such a course. In this case one would have to judge what a military strike could accomplish, how Iran might retaliate and with what effect, the impact on Iran’s politics, and its ability to reconstitute a nuclear program. One would also have to assess the consequences of the alternative policy, i.e., living with an Iranian nuclear weapon or near-weapon. Only in the



aftermath of such assessments could the wisdom of a war of choice be determined.

Iran will undoubtedly not be the last case in which the debate over wars of necessity and wars of choice will arise. Indeed, these concepts are sure to resurface whenever a president considers using force. And given the range of threats facing the United States around the world, this situation has the potential to occur frequently. The distinction between wars of necessity and wars of choice, with us since at least the days of Maimonides more than eight centuries ago, will remain an important one well into the future.

#### About Richard Haass

Dr. Richard Haass is president of the Council on Foreign Relations, the preeminent independent, nonpartisan organization in the United States dedicated to the study of and dissemination of ideas on American foreign policy. Until June 2003, Dr. Richard Haass was director of policy planning for the Department of State as well as U.S. coordinator for policy toward the future of Afghanistan and U.S. envoy to the Northern Ireland peace process. Previously, Dr. Haass was vice president and director of foreign policy studies at the Brookings Institution. He was also special assistant to President George H. W. Bush and senior director for Near East and South Asian affairs on the staff of the National Security Council from 1989 to 1993. Dr. Haass is the author or editor of eleven books on American foreign policy, including *War of Necessity, War of Choice: A Memoir of Two Iraq Wars* (Simon and Schuster, 2009) and one book on management. A Rhodes Scholar, he holds a BA from Oberlin College and both the Master and Doctor of Philosophy degrees from Oxford University. He has received honorary doctorates from Hamilton College, Franklin & Marshall College, Georgetown University, and Oberlin College.

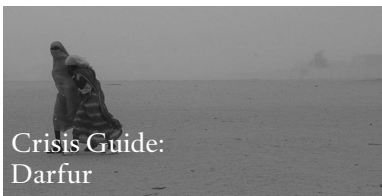
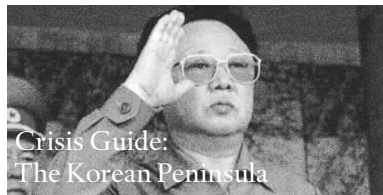


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## SPECIAL FEATURE:

# APSIA: Your Future in International Relations

LEIGH SLOAN

Executive Director of APSIA

Those interested in pursuing a career with an international focus are increasingly finding that, to be competitive candidates in today's job market (beyond entry-level jobs), a graduate degree is a necessary credential. The number of graduate programs in international affairs has expanded significantly over the past 20 years, causing many prospective students to feel overwhelmed by the choices. Even if you do not expect to apply to graduate school for a few years, it is never too early to begin researching options and evaluating how graduate school will fit into your career development plans.

The Association of Professional Schools of International Affairs (APSIA), [www.apsia.org](http://www.apsia.org), is a great place to start your search. APSIA was established in the mid-1970s by the handful of international affairs graduate schools that existed in the United States. In 1989, just prior to the fall of the Berlin Wall, APSIA officially incorporated with 13 member schools in the United States. Twenty years later, APSIA now consists of over 60 full and affiliate member schools and programs that span the globe. The increase in schools that qualify for APSIA membership indicates the relevance of and necessity for dedicated international affairs programs to train professionals with the skills and knowledge to navigate the intricacies of today's globalized systems. APSIA is dedicated to promoting the highest standards in professional international affairs education and brings together key administrators of its member schools to share best practices and strengthen networks with colleagues from around the world.

APSIA member schools are characterized by their dedication to the study of international affairs, academic rigor, and commitment to professional development. Programs are generally two years in length and provide a core foundation in the international political system, international economics, and policy analysis. Programs also often require students to

specialize in a functional topic (such as national security, international development, or international trade), and to emphasize a geographic region (e.g., Asia, Europe or the Middle East). Faculty members include both scholars and practitioners with distinguished careers in the field. This combination ensures that students receive both the theoretical underpinnings and practical knowledge necessary to address the world's most demanding and complex issues.

Of course, the ultimate goal of a professional graduate education is to launch a career that is stimulating and rewarding. APSIA member schools have a broad portfolio of resources geared toward ensuring the success of its graduates. Traditionally, graduates of these programs expected to work in the public sector. Today, graduates from APSIA's member programs are divided almost equally in the public, private and non-profit sectors. APSIA schools have dedicated career offices that provide a variety of services ranging from professional development seminars to assisting students with identifying internships and post-graduation employment. Students are generally expected to complete an internship during the summer between their first and second years -- opportunities that often allow students to put into practice what they had been learning during their first year courses and explore career options. APSIA schools maintain extensive networks of contacts. Students can access these contacts to connect with a vast array of government offices, corporations, and NGOs working around the world.

There are many factors to consider as you research which graduate schools might be the right fit for you. Reflecting on your timing is a good place to start. The average age of a student attending an APSIA school is 26. Most students apply after having worked full time for at least a year or two years after earning an undergraduate degree. Some APSIA programs accept very few students coming straight from an undergraduate program, while others accept a higher percentage. If you do want to continue immediately to a graduate program, you should closely examine your non-academic experience and your motivation. If you have substantive work experience during your undergraduate years (part-time work, internships, summer jobs, leadership positions in extracurricular activities) – and you have a clear sense of what you would like to do post-graduate school – you could make a convincing argument for directly continuing your studies. However, you should never go to graduate school as a “default” decision or to defer reality – i.e., because you don't really know what else to do yet. Trying to find employment after graduate school without prior substantive work experience will put you at a disadvantage vis-à-vis your fellow graduates with a few years of full time, relevant work experience.

While all APSIA schools provide a solid international affairs education, each school also has its unique specialties and vary in the core curriculum required. Knowing the functional and regional areas you would like to specialize in will help initially narrow down your list of possible schools. You will also want to consider whether you prefer a public policy school with an international affairs program (e.g. Harvard's Kennedy School of Government or Princeton's Woodrow Wilson School) versus a more traditional international affairs school (e.g. Georgetown University's School of Foreign Service). First, examine the core curriculum required of the program as the number and quantitative nature of these courses

can vary widely among the schools. Next, determine if the school offers the combination of functional and regional areas of study you would like to pursue. If they satisfy your initial requirements, next, look through the courses offered to see if the program truly does offer enough courses in your area of interest to provide a strong knowledge base in those areas. In addition, examine the faculty to identify potential academic advisers for your area of interest.

Graduate school is the optimal time to really explore a variety of career paths and learn about options you may not previously have considered. In today's public sector, almost every government department or agency has at least one internationally focused office. Private sector opportunities might include working in the finance industry, political risk analysis, the growing field of corporate social responsibility, or clean energy technologies. Over the past 20 years, we have witnessed an explosion of non-profit organizations that manage programs around the world focused on democratization, civil society development, economic development, post-conflict reconstruction, and climate change. As you research schools, ask the career office about alumni success in finding employment with the kinds of organizations for which you would be interested in working. A strong alumni network within your field is greatly beneficial as you conduct your job search or simply try to learn whether you might be interested in pursuing a particular path.

The APsIA website, [www.apsia.org](http://www.apsia.org), contains a profile page on each of its members that provides a quick overview of each member's program. It is good to note that many of the non-U.S. schools now offer degrees that can be completed in English. In addition, the APsIA website also provides some recommendations for exploring career options in the international affairs realm. Finally, prospective students are also always welcome to contact APsIA directly for additional information at [apsia@apsia.org](mailto:apsia@apsia.org).

## Biography

Leigh Morris Sloane serves as the Executive Director of the Association of Professional Schools of International Affairs (APsIA). In this role, she manages programs and services and develops new initiatives for APsIA's 60 full and affiliate member schools. From 2006-2008, Ms. Sloane was the Executive Director of the Civic Education Project (CEP), where she worked with the Board of Directors to develop new programs with universities in the Middle East. Previously, Ms. Sloane was the Assistant Director for the Congress and US Foreign Policy Program at the Council on Foreign Relations (CFR). At CFR, she organized roundtable discussions for senior congressional staff with leading foreign policy experts. From 1998-1999, Ms. Sloane worked for Ambassador Robert D. Blackwill at the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University, initially as a Foreign Policy Analyst for Europe and later as Program Officer to establish the Middle East Initiative. In addition, Ms. Sloane has served as the Assistant Director for West European Studies at The Ohio State University.

Ms. Sloane began her career with a focus on Eastern Europe. She spent nearly two years living in Hungary in the early 1990s, first as a university student at the Budapest University of Economics and later as an English instructor at Veszprém University. From 1994-1996, she served as Development Assistant for the American University in Bulgaria in its Washington, DC office and at its campus in Blagoevgrad.

Ms. Sloane earned a Master's degree from the London School of Economics in History and Theory of International Relations and a Bachelor's degree from Georgetown University's School of Foreign Service.

Additionally, she is a Term Member at the Council on Foreign Relations and a Truman Security Fellow with the Truman National Security Project.

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# Baha'i Identity in Islamic Iran

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## Abstract

The Iranian Revolution of 1979 introduced a new Islamic framework for the Iranian nation-state. Though most Iranians have identified as Shi'i Muslims since the mid-16th century, Iran has historically been home to a number of other religious minorities, including Jews, Zoroastrians, Christians, Hindus and Baha'is. Therefore small communities have been able to flourish amidst the Muslim majority. However, after the 1979 Revolution, the status of religious minorities in Iran came into question. The Baha'is present an interesting case study because the religion itself was founded in Iran, making Baha'ism, in some sense, an Iranian national religion. Yet despite the nativity of Bah'aism to Iran, the Islamic Republic has subjected Baha'is to particularly severe discrimination rooted in a non-recognition of the legitimacy of their faith. This paper presents an in-depth analysis of Baha'i identity in relation to the Iranian state, with a specific focus on the time periods immediately preceding and following the 1979 Revolution, and sheds light on the nature of the relationship between religion and the state.

## Introduction

The Islamic Revolution of 1979 introduced a new religious framework for the Iranian nation-state. "The majority of Iran's population subscribed to Shi'i Islam since the Safavid Dynasty of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, but at this point the state institutionalized the religion while more deliberately excluding others." For example, the new government gave religious clerics power over the electoral process, and in addition, passed a new constitution based entirely on Islamic scripture. The establishment of a theocratic government begs the question of how religious minorities, particularly the Baha'is, have related to this new Iranian identity. Baha'ism originated in Iran, yet its adherents have been persecuted by all modern Iranian regimes, more so than other religious minorities. The simple explanation for this reality would be that they do not belong to the *ahl al-dhimma*, or protected populations of the Islamic world, due to significant ideological disparities between

Islam and the Baha'i faith. Examination of Iranian national identity suggests that there has never been a time in Iran's modern history in which the nation developed an identity completely devoid of Islam. In fact, the Baha'is have faced continuous oppression in their country of origin because they are perceived as a threat to the national identity of the Iranian state.

This paper will present an in-depth analysis of nationalism in Iran as it relates to the Baha'i community. It will begin with a conceptual overview of nationalism as a modern intellectual concept, addressing questions such as what constitutes a national identity and the role of religion in nationalism. This will be followed by a brief religious history of Iran focusing specifically on the relationship of Iranian Shi'ism to the Baha'i faith. The paper will continue with a detailed account of religious identity in modern Iran. The constitutional revolution of the early 20th century, followed by rule of the Pahlavi dynasty, introduced a period of mass secularization in official Iranian culture that was intended to minimize the influence of religion and therefore ease the tenuous position of the Baha'is in Iran. However, I will demonstrate that through official policy and popular culture, Islam remained a significant part of Iranian national identity, even throughout this modernizing period. Finally, I will show that the position of the Baha'is today is worse than it was during the twentieth century due to the 1979 Islamic Revolution, which institutionalized oppression of religious minorities. These arguments reveal that despite their origins in Iran, the Baha'is have been unable to fully identify with Iranian nationality.

### Nationalism in Theory and Practice

Nationalism is a relatively modern concept of political organization that, according to Benedict Anderson, can be traced back to the 18th century. He defines it as an "imagined political community [that is] both limited and sovereign" – imagined because a member of a given national community will never meet most of its other members, communal because the nation always has a common element of solidarity, limited because the nation is perceived to have finite boundaries, and sovereign because its borders are internationally recognized.<sup>1</sup> Scholars often debate the various factors that constitute one's national identity, but Ernest Renan suggests that the most important criterion in defining nationhood is the desire for a nation to be together, or the mutual recognition amongst a group of people that they all wish to associate under a single collective identity.<sup>2</sup>

This is particularly true for the Iranian nation, which has persistently differentiated itself from other Muslims because of its Shi'i heritage. According to Anthony Smith, religious identity is based on the cultural elements of values, symbols, myths and traditions.<sup>3</sup> These

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1. Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities* (London: Verso, 1983), 16-17.

2. Ernest Renan. "Qu'est-ce qu'une nation?" (What is a Nation?), in *Nationalism*, eds. John Hutchinson & Anthony D. Smith (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), 17.

3. Anthony Smith, *National Identity* (Reno: University of Nevada Press, 1991), 6.

are generally found within national cultures as well, and it is therefore logical that religious and national identities would coincide. In 1501, Twelver Shi'ism became the official state religion of Iran under the Safavid Dynasty, whose rulers claimed to be the representatives of the Mahdi, or Shi'ite messiah.<sup>4</sup> This physical conception of the messiah is one of the primary differences between the Sunni and Shi'ite sects of Islam. Iran's unique religious identity is evident in many of its national practices, including, for example, religious ceremonies commemorating the deaths of Shi'i Imams.<sup>5</sup>

### Baha'ism

The emergence of the Baha'i faith thus represented a distinct departure from the traditional religious heritage and national identity of most Iranians. The religion's roots actually lie in an earlier Iranian faith known as Babism, which emerged in 1844. Its leader, Sayyed Ali Mohammed, was a Shi'i Muslim who claimed to be a new prophet while simultaneously attacking the Islamic clergy.<sup>6</sup> These and other ideological deviations from Islam explain why Babism, and later the Baha'i faith, were deemed threats to Islamic civilization. First, the teachings of Sayyed Ali Mohammed, or the "Bab", were said to supersede those of the Quran, the foundational text of Islam. In addition, he preached that cycles of better revelations would take place in the future. Whereas Muslims view Muhammad as the final prophet, Babism purported that humankind would mature and more prophets would come.<sup>7</sup> The Bab also permitted a number of practices that were forbidden in Islam, such as contact between the sexes and usury.<sup>8</sup> The most controversial development, however, was the Bab's attempt to revive pre-Islamic cultural features such as the solar calendar and the Zoroastrian theory of elements.<sup>9</sup> The Bab himself was subsequently executed, but many of his followers joined the Baha'i faith. Babism had almost completely disappeared before the Baha'is revived its progressive ideas and reformulated them into a more universal, pacifist religion that discouraged participation in politics in the early twentieth century.<sup>10</sup> Early Babis likely suspected that a more passive religion would be less prone to persecution.

### Religious Identity in Modern Iran

It is clear that from its inception, Baha'ism clashed with the Muslim character of

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4. Morris M. Mottale, *Iran: The Political Sociology of the Islamic Revolution* (Tel Aviv: The Dayan Center for Middle Eastern and African Studies, 1987), 4.

5. Smith, 7.

6. Nikkie R. Keddie, *Iran: Religion, Politics, and Society* (London: Frank Cass and Company Limited, 1980), 16.

7. *Ibid.*, 20.

8. *Ibid.*, 19, 95.

9. *Ibid.*, 18.

10. Keddie, 22.

Iran, both practically and ideologically. However, revolutionary changes of the 20th century, including the growth of nationalist politics and efforts towards constitutional reform and Westernization, offered nominal hope that the Iranians would adopt a more tolerant attitude toward the Baha'is and other religious minorities. In his text *The Modernization of Iran: 1921-1941*, Amin Banani writes that the Constitutional Revolution of 1906 "represents the height of Iranian admiration for and imitation of the West." Drawing inspiration from American and European politics, Iranian nationalists devised a constitution, which they also supplemented with a bill of rights.<sup>11</sup> The revolutionaries, largely men from the merchant class, attempted a perfect fusion of Islamic and Western ideas, trying to model the Iranian regime off of Western concepts of governance while simultaneously preserving the shari'ah (Islamic law) and maintaining the approval of the ulama (Muslim clergy). Article I of the Iranian constitution states, "The official religion of Iran is Islam of the true sect of Ja'fariah Ithna 'Ashariah [Twelver Orthodox Shi'ah]. The Shah must protect and profess this faith."<sup>12</sup> The text makes it quite clear that Islam was to remain a vital part of Iranian national identity, despite the idealist, liberal goals of the revolutionaries. A closer look at the intellectual foundations of the revolution reveals how deeply the Iranian masses identified with their Muslim faith.

The secular revolutionaries of early 20th century Iran were largely anti-religion in principle and wished to take specific action that would curtail religious life in Iran. However, they continued to use Islamic terms in their rhetoric and ally with the ulama. Many of them feared persecution, as expulsion, excommunication, and death were common punishments for heterodoxy. In addition, the mosque continued to serve as the primary source of education for Iran's middle and lower classes. Thus, one had to go through the Muslim clergy in order to connect to the masses; religion offered a language that most understood.<sup>13</sup> The modernizers tried to show that the goals of reform and the objectives of Islam were not mutually exclusive, even though they theoretically opposed the inclusion of religion at all. More specifically, they emphasized the importance of distinguishing themselves from the West, rejected the imperialist encroachment of Western powers, and attempted to revive the glories of earlier Islamic culture.<sup>14</sup> Such a suspect alliance between the revolutionaries and the ulama demonstrates the strength of Islam in Iranians' self-identity. The secular tendencies of the revolutionaries would expectedly drive them away from using religious terms in their writings, but they understood the religiosity of the masses and concluded that they must adjust their documents accordingly.

These rhetorical accommodations are evident in the works of Iranian intellectuals such as Sayyed Jamal ed Din Afghani (1839-1897) and Mirza Aqa Khan Kermani.<sup>15</sup> In his *Refutation of the Materialists*, Afghani defends Islam but in such a way that it reflects

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11. Amin Banani, *The Modernization of Iran: 1921-1941* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1961), 17.

12. *Ibid.*, 17.

13. Keddie, 27.

14. *Ibid.*, 28.

15. Majid Fakhry, *A History of Islamic Philosophy* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1970), 370-371.

similarity to secularism. He not only suggests that Islam promotes the development of science and rational thought, but also claims that Islam provides a political method to achieve social cohesion. This outlook contradicts other portions of his text, which reveal his explicit personal preference for secular governance. He states that “religions, whatever names they are given, all resemble each other. No agreement and no reconciliation are possible between religion and philosophy.” On one hand he defends the merits of Islam and highlights its contributions to society, but on the other he denigrates the status of Islam and asserts that it is wholly opposed to the secular principles of philosophy. He then attempts to justify these divergent views by hinting that the Islam of his time is not the Islam to which he refers in his text. In other words, contemporary Islam had morphed significantly since its inception and would require great reform if it were to return to its original form.<sup>16</sup> Afghani must then resort to the only mutual source of enmity between the secular reformists and the ulama – political mobilization against the West. It is this commonality that allows Afghani and others to solidify the union between two unlikely allies.

Mirza Aqa Khan Kermani, a nationalist poet and prose writer, also couches his true beliefs in Islamic language in an attempt to court the ulama and greater Iranian public. Originally a Babi, he later became an anti-religious reformist who used literature to publicly condemn Naser ed Din Shah.<sup>17</sup> His writings are imbued with consistent allusions to pre-Islamic Iran, glorifying the ancient Persian religion of Zoroastrianism and referring to the Arabs as barbarians.<sup>18</sup> Yet he criticizes the Shah specifically for his lack of faith in Islam. In his poem “Nameye Bastan” he writes:

Did the Shah possess spiritual perception he would have made me  
independent of the world,/ And had he any portion in the faith of Islam,  
he would have made me celebrated throughout the world for my good  
deed./ But since the essence of unbelief was in his blood, his wrath was  
kindled at the unification of Islam./ A farthing is better than such a king,  
who has neither law, nor faith, nor religion!

Ultimately Kermani, Afghani, and their co-revolutionaries wanted to overthrow the Shah and needed the cooperation of the clergy and the masses to succeed. But while a secular revolution might have occurred at the elite level, the majority of Iranians remained a religiously-oriented people.

The possibility remained that the revolutionaries would initially use religious rhetoric to engage the public but later persuade them to adopt secular principles. This seemed to be the case when Reza Shah Pahlavi came to power in 1926. A military officer with strong authoritarian tendencies, he also sought to bring secular reform to Iran. He encountered initial successes in the legal and judicial fields when in 1928 the Majlis, Iran’s legislative body, adopted a new civil code. In addition, Reza Shah created a state hierarchy of

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16. Ibid., 30.

17. Keddie, 35.

18. Ibid., 36.

judges, effectively reducing the judicial power of the ulama to religious matters only.<sup>19</sup> The Shah also tried to directly impose Westernization on the Iranian people, passing a law in 1928 requiring all men to dress in European fashion and another in 1936 banning the wearing of the veil. Public segregation of men and women was also forbidden.<sup>20</sup>

But according to Nikkie Keddie, former Professor of Iranian history at the University of California, Los Angeles, these top-down changes failed. “Iranian Muslims of the traditional and traditionally oriented classes – especially the bazaar, the villagers, and recent migrants from village to town – tend to identify Islam with the ‘way things have always been,’ or tradition.” She also refers to Islam as a “tenacious” religion because it is known for instilling in its believers a strong sense of loyalty and observance.<sup>21</sup> As a result, veiling, Islamic family law and custom, and other family practices remained steadfast in Iran regardless of governmental efforts to stifle Islamic culture. The civil code was changed so that both sides needed to agree to marriage, but parents in the lower and middle classes continued to choose spouses for their children in the interest of family alliances.<sup>22</sup> Family law and other practices found in everyday life derive from the Quran and are consequently difficult to change. However, the upper classes exposed to Western education constituted an exception and began to conform to Western practices. For example, polygamy, permitted by Quranic law, remained legal in Iran, but many in the upper classes abandoned the practice, likely because of the stigma placed upon it in the West. In addition, women’s choice in marriage became a widespread trend, but again, only in the upper classes.<sup>23</sup>

Cultural practices among the rural and urban classes also remained largely Islamic in nature. Most continued to make regular pilgrimages to the shrines of imams in large cities such as Mashad, Qom, Rayy, and Shiraz, or to those of their descendants in the countryside. This is a common form of social interaction for Iranians as well as a respected religious tradition. Also, ceremonies were held for the major religious holidays, which usually commemorate the deaths of imams. The ten days of mourning for the martyrdom of Ali’s son, Hosain, are extremely symbolic for Iranians. They are usually filled with processions and emotional religious plays known as *taziyehs*, which center upon the events leading up to Hosain’s death. These were temporarily suppressed by Reza Shah but later officially revived following the Iran-Iraq War.<sup>24</sup> These examples provide further evidence that Iranians predominantly viewed themselves as Muslims; religious heritage outweighed any governmental attempts to arbitrarily suppress Iranians’ religious identity. They also shed light on the important distinction between the elite and the masses. The existence of top-down measures to instigate cultural change does not in any way indicate that they are, in fact, successful. The case of Iran proves that strength of popular identity can indeed trump government policy.

19. William L. Cleveland, *A History of the Modern Middle East* (Boulder: Westview Press, 2004), 187.

20. *Ibid.*, 188.

21. Keddie, 104.

22. Banani, 81.

23. Keddie, 105.

24. *Ibid.*, 109.

The greatest ambiguity within Iran's secular revolution was found in the national education system. In 19th century Iran, there was no formal system of education; it was left the exclusive responsibility of the clergy. The *akhund*, or clergyman, was given absolute freedom in constructing the curriculum, as there were no national or institutional requirements. Girls were excluded from this system, but the boys remained in the *maktab*, or classroom, for much of their childhood, learning Shi'a catechism, Arabic, and the Quran. No formal institutions existed for secondary-level education.<sup>25</sup> However, in 1910, the new constitutional regime established the Ministry of Education, Waqf, and Fine Arts – Iran's first attempt to create a unified, national administration for education. The Ministry mandated elementary education, publication of national textbooks, and professional training for teachers, which were all Western innovations. Even more, the Ministry was required to send a certain number of students to Europe each year to study. It founded libraries, museums, and historical and scientific institutions with the intent to bring Western ideas to the Iranian masses.<sup>26</sup>

Despite these measures, the influence of the Muslim clergy remained pervasive in the education system. Islam continued to be taught in schools, and no non-Muslim student could request to receive instruction in their own religion at state schools. Thus, Jews, Christian, Baha'is and all other religious minorities were subjected to Islamic education if they attended state schools. All books considered harmful to the Muslim religion were banned. The government attempted to put state textbooks in *maktabs*, but this measure failed due to clerical authority.<sup>27</sup> Thus, while the constitutional regime attempted to secularize Iran by incorporating Western ideas into state education, they instead created a dualistic curriculum, teaching secular concepts while at the same time maintaining its Islamic orientation. This likely produced the opposite of national intentions. By allowing Islamic instruction to continue in schools, the government gave *de facto* support to the idea that Islam is an inherent part of Iranian national identity, making it even harder for religious minorities to identify with their nation. Later, under Reza Shah, more Western subjects such as geography, arithmetic, and natural science were added to the curriculum, but Arabic and religious studies were never eliminated.<sup>28</sup>

#### Baha'is in Iran

The crystallization of Muslim identity in the Iranian national framework during the 20th century was complemented by extensive persecution of the Baha'is. In fact, Iranian literature, both religious and national, identifies Baha'ism as foreign element of society – one that is distinctly not part of the Iranian community. Baha'ullah (1817-1892), the founder of the Baha'i faith, once said, "Pride is not for he who loves his country, but for he who loves the [whole] world."<sup>29</sup> This strong emphasis on globalism is often used in Iranian literature to

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25. Banani, 86-87.

26. Banani, 90.

27. *Ibid.*, 91.

28. *Ibid.*, 92.

29. Peter Smith, *The Babi and Baha'i Religions* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 57.

accuse the Baha'is of being disloyal to Iran and unpatriotic. They are also repeatedly accused of being spies and agents of foreign powers and enemies of Islam.<sup>30</sup> Muslim cleric Seyyid Muhammad Baqir Najaffi wrote an 800-page text entitled "The Baha'is," which he claimed to be a revelation of the truth about the religion. In one chapter he espouses the lack of patriotism among Iranian Baha'is. He argues that teaching the "unity of mankind" is in reality an effort to destroy one's love of country and to condition the Baha'is to "serve interests of foreign powers."<sup>31</sup>

Prominent Iranian academics and officials contributed to the institutionalization of anti-Baha'i sentiment. Firaydun Adamiyat, a well-known Iranian historian of the latter 20th century, wrote of Baha'i entanglement with foreign powers:

If the Babi and the Baha'i religions had not acquired a political coloration, and if the hands of the foreigners had not watered its roots, they would certainly have been buried in the books and crannies of this vast land, like the thousands of other sects that spring up every now and then in this or that corner of Iran. Then, they would not have caused all this brouhaha.<sup>32</sup>

This selection not only identifies the Baha'is specifically as a menacing group within Iranian society, but also conveys a general lack of tolerance for small minority groups. His attitude is one of condescension, belittling the Baha'is as an insignificant sect within society and implying that Muslims are the true citizens of Iran, with little room for diversity. Even worse, they are the agents of foreign powers. Asadullah Alam, Prime Minister of Iran from 1962 to 1964, wrote in his diary:

Today I went to the celebration of the birthday of the Imam of the Age at Gulistan Palace. Usually I do not attend the religious ceremonies of the Court, as I have no time. But this feast day I always attend, to distinguish myself from the Baha'is. These fatherlandless Baha'is have infiltrated all walks of public life. It is thought that half the cabinet is Baha'i, causing a lot of dissatisfaction among the people. General Ayadi, the Shah's personal physician, is known to be Baha'i, which hurts the Shahanshah a lot.<sup>33</sup>

The Minister's remarks reveal several common themes found within Iranian discourse on the Baha'is. First, he refers to the Baha'is as a "fatherlandless" people, making it quite clear that they are not a welcome part of the native Iranian nation. In addition, he expresses a widespread perception that the Baha'is do the bidding of foreigners by reaching positions of power within the government. Ironically, the Baha'is were able to attain so many bureaucratic positions because of their religious heterodoxy; recognized minorities in Iran – namely, Jews, Christians, and Zoroastrians – were forbidden from holding positions in

30. Fereyduun Vahman, "Iranian Nationalism and Baha'i Globalism in Iranian Polemic Literature" in *Baha'i and Globalisation*, edited by Margit Warburg, Annika Hvithamar, and Morten Warmind (Aarhus: Aarhus University Press, 2005), 107-109.

31. *Ibid.*, 111.

32. Firaydun Adamiyat quoted in H.E. Chehabi, "Anatomy of Prejudice: Reflections on secular anti-Baha'ism in Iran" in *The Baha'is of Iran: Socio-historical studies*, edited by Dominic Parviz Brookshaw and Seena B. Fazel (New York: Routledge, 2008), 188.

33. Chehabi, 188.



government.<sup>34</sup> The Baha'is were thus derided for both their origin and their activities within the public sphere.

Amongst the Iranian elite existed an obvious anti-Baha'i tendency, but it was not restricted to the upper classes. The popular classes were also home to anti-Baha'i activity. The 1940s witnessed the establishment of many organizations dedicated exclusively to confronting the Baha'is and their public institutions.<sup>35</sup> The Anjuman-i Tablighat-i Islami was one of the most active anti-Baha'i organizations of its time. It not only propagated the Islamic faith, but also published material with the explicit purpose of humiliating the Baha'is. In one 1945 report, the organization published letters written by Baha'is who had converted to Islam within the preceding year that expressed personal remorse and professed the inherent superiority of Islam. One man solemnly wrote:

After recognizing the truth and contacting a number of enlightened Muslims regarding the falsehood and worthlessness of the lost and straying sect, I now proclaim my hatred and intense aversion for it. I recognize the Islamic religion and the sacred law of Shi'ism as being the sole path of truth and the only religion ...<sup>36</sup>

Another active organization, Jami'ayi Ta'limat Islami, concluded that religious education was the most effective way to achieve religious and social reform. It actively sought to establish religious schools in areas known to have prominent Baha'i educational institutions. The Baha'is therefore encountered bigotry from the ranks above and from their social equals, making it virtually impossible to partake in Iranian nationhood. They were sidelined on official, religious, and social levels, and this prejudice became most evident in the management of Baha'i schools throughout the 20th century.

Baha'ullah considered education crucial to the development of human beings. He believed that every child has potential and thus it was of "primary importance" that all children receive an education.<sup>37</sup> In pre-modern Iran, there was no formal system of education. Because children were generally taught in the maktab, the only option was an Islamic one, and in the late 19th century, the Baha'is decided to establish their own schools based on a more modern, Western approach. Baha'i children were often forbidden from attending schools in the maktab, and those who were permitted were not satisfied with the limited curricula of the maktab. Baha'i leaders encouraged the teaching of sciences and the arts, and followers consequently sought alternative modes of instruction.<sup>38</sup> The first Baha'i school opened in Tehran in 1897 and was recognized by the Iranian government two years later. Others soon opened where there were large Baha'i communities.<sup>39</sup> Despite their initial successes, however, Baha'i schools inevitably became the target of persecution, particularly

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34. Ibid., 190.

35. Chehabi, 204.

36. Ibid., 206.

37. Moojan Momen, "Baha'i Schools in Iran" in *The Baha'is of Iran: Socio-historical studies*, edited by Dominic Parviz Brookshaw and Seena B. Fazel (New York: Routledge, 2008), 94.

38. Momen, 97.

39. Ibid., 98-99.

from the Muslim clergy. Though private schools were allowed in Iran, local officials often denied the Baha'is proper certification under pressure from local Islamic leaders. The schools tried to make accommodations by abiding by governmental standards for curricula and agreeing to eliminate instruction in the Baha'i faith. Such measures did not prove successful, however, as the attacks on Baha'i schools continued. In 1911, the Baha'is were forced to set up barricades in order to prevent a mob from invading one of their schools in Najafabad and in 1921, a religiously motivated mob burned down a school in the town of Sangsar.<sup>40</sup> Ironically, the Baha'i schools were often considered some of the best in the country, and many prominent Muslims sent their children there. Unfortunately, this was not enough to stop the ongoing persecution.<sup>41</sup>

Discrimination against the Baha'i schools peaked during the rule of Reza Shah Pahlavi, who instituted a standard system of education throughout the country and subsequently began to encroach upon the autonomy of private and foreign schools.<sup>42</sup> In 1928, he forced all private schools to adhere to the educational standards set forth by the Ministry of Education.<sup>43</sup> This measure mandated that all students, regardless of their religious background, be forced to receive an Islamic education. He then directed his attention exclusively towards the Baha'i schools. On December 6, 1934 all Baha'i schools were closed in observance of their holy day commemorating the death of the Bab. Upon returning to class, the Tarbiyat School for Boys in Tehran received notice from the government that it was no longer permitted to operate, and within the next year the government proceeded to close every Baha'i school in the country. In 1940, Reza Shah converted all private schools into public institutions, including those operated by foreign missionaries, and all curricula, textbooks, and examinations were placed under the control of the Ministry of Education. The gradual nationalization of education in Iran effectively eliminated any prospects for diversity within the nation's schools. A brief period of educational tolerance was quickly replaced with a singular, Islamic structure for all Iranians; the Baha'is and other religious minorities were barred from conducting their own religious instruction. In one particular instance, a state school in Kashan even prevented the Baha'is from enrolling once their private school was shut down. They remained without access to education for a year until the local Jewish school allowed them to enroll.<sup>44</sup> By mandating that the Baha'is receive instruction in Islam and occasionally barring them from receiving an education at all, the government isolated them from the national discourse.

### Bahai's in Post-Revolutionary Iran

Though the Bahai's faced a tremendous amount of suffering throughout Pahlavi

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40. *Ibid.*, 104.

41. *Ibid.*, 109.

42. Momen, 114-115.

43. Banani, 97.

44. Momen, 116.

rule, they had not yet experienced arguably the most oppressive period of their short history. The 1979 Islamic Revolution introduced an unprecedented degree of unity between government and religion, which bred an increased amount of religious discrimination. The revolution emerged from growing discontentment with Pahlavi rulers. Throughout its rule, the monarchy continued to expand its hold on national affairs by expanding the army and increasing bureaucratic authority. This was accompanied by mounting suppression of the clergy and marginalization of the majles, which ultimately became a functionally insignificant institution.<sup>45</sup> Even more, by the 1970s, the Shah accepted an unprecedented amount of support from foreign powers, particularly the United States. These factors, combined with growing economic concerns, produced a revolutionary movement in Iran.

An ensuing rise in religious discourse provided an alternative to the secular Pahlavi regime and convinced the Iranian population that Islam could solve the nation's political problems. In his article "Activist Shi'ism in Iran, Iraq, and Lebanon," Abdulaziz Sachedina writes that the Shah's modernization program "tended to alienate the new generation from their comprehensive cultural roots through educational and cultural policies which diluted the Iranian religious identity..."<sup>46</sup> As a result, many thought that reversing this trend would also reverse the declining prosperity of Iran, and conservative religious discourse reinforced this belief. According to Shi'i doctrine, Islam provides an all-encompassing framework through which political, religious, and social decisions can be made. Moreover, a Muslim government should implement the shariah (Islamic law), encourage social and economic development, and protect Islam from existential threats, both internal and external.<sup>47</sup> Thus, the Ayatollah Khomeini and his Islamic political ideology easily replaced the Shah's failing government. Khomeini's mission in Iran was quite similar to those of other fundamentalist movements, which first call for internal reforms. For Islam, this required a return to the original teachings found in the Quran and the Sunna. Furthermore, fundamentalist movements call for resistance to alien intrusion, which was undoubtedly a significant part of Khomeini's revolutionary agenda.<sup>48</sup> He attributed societal decline to the absence of Islamic rule and pervasion of foreign elements. In his writings on Islamic government he states, "In order to attain the unity and freedom of the Muslim peoples, we must overthrow the oppressive governments installed by the imperialists and bring into existence an Islamic government of justice that will be in the service of the people."<sup>49</sup>

It is this revolutionary fervor that invited the proliferation of state-sanctioned religious persecution. The Ayatollah Khomeini capitalized upon existing anti-Baha'i sentiment to advance his own political objectives, focusing on two particular themes. First,

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45. Mehran Kamrava, *The Modern Middle East: A Political History since the First World War* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005), 141.

46. Abdulaziz A. Sachedina, "Activist Shi'ism in Iran, Iraq, and Lebanon" in *Fundamentalisms Observed* edited by Martin E. Marty and Scott Appleby (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1991), 418.

47. Mehran Kamrava, *Iran's Intellectual Revolution* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 94-95.

48. Sachedina, 405.

49. *Islam and Revolution: Writings and Declarations of Imam Khomeini (1941-1980)* translated and annotated by Hamid Algar (North Haledon: Mizan Press, 1981), 49.

Khomeini highlighted the large numbers of Baha'is in the administrative and military hierarchies of the Pahlavi regime, which encouraged Iranians to further isolate Baha'is from society. Second, he constantly reminded the public that the leader of the Baha'i movement was buried in Haifa to whet the anti-Semitic and anti-Zionist feelings of the Iranian masses.<sup>50</sup> Direct repressive policies reflected these ideological pronouncements. The Khomeini regime removed many Baha'is from their work positions, and arrested and executed much of the religious leadership. On August 21, 1980, all nine members of the Baha'i National Spiritual Assembly of Iran were arrested and soon disappeared. New members were elected, and on December 13, 1981, eight of them were arrested and executed two weeks later. By the end of 1984, the regime had killed 177 Baha'is in total.<sup>51</sup> Also, in 1979 Khomeini's Revolutionary Guards destroyed the House of the Bab, one of the holiest Baha'i shrines.<sup>52</sup> Other actions against the Baha'is included kidnapping and imprisonment, mob attacks, forced recantation of the Baha'i faith, barring Baha'i professors from teaching, forbidding Baha'i students from enrolling in universities, and dismissing Baha'i students and teachers from schools.<sup>53</sup> While Iranian officials consistently denied government sponsorship of such activity, persecution continued through at least the late 1990s. On May 2, 1984, Said Esraghi, an Iranian-born Baha'i whose parents were executed by the regime, testified before the U.S. House of Representative Subcommittee on Human Rights and International Organizations. He recounted:

Before he went to prison my Dad's retirement benefit was cut because he was Baha'i. The judge even told my sister Roya that he would let her continue her education at the university. She had been thrown out of the University of Shiraz because she was a Baha'i. Of course, my family did not want to deny their belief. During the time they were in prison, they were constantly asked to deny their faith, and of course they didn't.<sup>54</sup>

Today Baha'is still suffer institutional oppression in Iran. Their marriage, divorce, and inheritance rights remain unrecognized. Baha'is are still denied entrance to universities, while their property is also regularly confiscated. It is remarkable that a small Baha'i population remains in Iran in spite of persistent maltreatment, though it is much smaller than it was at the beginning of the twentieth century.<sup>55</sup>

Nevertheless, there are sizable Baha'i communities in the diaspora due to the migration of Iranians. Some of them left to pursue economic opportunities or to become

50. Baha'ullah was exiled to Syria and spent the last years of his life in Haifa. He was also buried in the city, which is why it was later established as the headquarters of the Baha'i faith. Today, the city of Haifa is located in Israel, which is officially a Jewish state; Mottale, 12.

51. Eliz Sanasarian, *Religious Minorities in Iran* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 116.

52. *Ibid.*, 118.

53. *Ibid.*, 119.

54. Committee on Foreign Affairs of the House of Representatives. Hearing Before the Subcommittee on Human Rights and International Organizations: Religious Persecution of the Baha'is in Iran (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1984), 72-73.

55. Roger Smith, 89,175.

Baha'i teachers in other places, but quite a few also left explicitly to escape persecution. In her book *Olya's Story: A Survivor's Dramatic Account of the Persecution of Baha'is in Revolutionary Iran*, author Olya Roohizadegan recalls her interactions with other Baha'i women in Iranian jails with whom she had suffered and established close relationships. Their only hope was to escape Iran and raise awareness so that "international pressure on Iran might force the authorities to free the Baha'is."<sup>56</sup>

Prominent communities of Baha'is exist in Haifa, Beirut, Istanbul, and Egypt. Some of the largest diaspora populations are found in India and Russian Turkestan where they were free from persecution and were thus able to promote their faith and profess their identity freely.<sup>57</sup> Baha'i communities also flourished in several of India's commercial centers, including Bombay, Calcutta, and Madras.<sup>58</sup>

Today, Iranian Baha'i leadership encourages the population to emigrate abroad. The universal nature of their faith provided support to move abroad in the face of opposition at home, and it is not unreasonable to conclude that the Baha'is prioritized the preservation of a strong religious community over nationalist commitments to their homeland. It is impossible to determine whether this detachment is a direct result of the seclusion the Baha'is encountered throughout their history, but it does speak to the way in which the Baha'is conceive of their own identity. From the time of the constitutional revolution, throughout the Pahlavi dynasty, and continuing through the post-revolutionary period in the late twentieth century, Muslim Iranians defined themselves first as being a part of a religious community. They did recognize the unique Persian heritage of the Iranian nation-state, but they always placed Islamic values before nationalist ones and often viewed them as one in the same. Baha'is were thus excluded from Iranian identity because there was – and remains – a contradiction inherent in the concept of a distinctly national Iranian heritage. The position of the Baha'is invites larger questions about the role of religion in the nation-state. In the event that a state adopts an official religion, are religious minorities effectively excluded from the national collectivity? In the case of Iran, Persian identity was consistently weak relative to Muslim identity, suggesting that states must inevitably choose which should take precedence, national or religious identity.

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56. Olya Roohizadegan, *Olya's Story: A Survivor's Dramatic Account of the Persecution of Baha'is in Revolutionary Iran* (Oxford: Oneworld Publications, 1993), 190-191.

57. Peter Smith, 90.

58. Peter Smith, 91.

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### About Alexandra Leavy

Alexandra is a senior in the College of Arts & Sciences, majoring in Political Science and Modern Middle East Studies. Always passionate about Middle East politics, Alexandra has pursued her interest both inside and outside of the classroom. She studied abroad in Jerusalem during the fall semester of her junior year and has chosen to write her senior thesis on education policy in Israel. On campus, she has served as the President of both the Penn Israel Coalition and Pi Sigma Alpha, the Political Science Honor Society. Alexandra also completed several internships in Washington, DC - in Congress, at the Democratic National Committee, and most recently at the American Israel Public Affairs Committee. Alexandra looks forward to attending law school in the future.



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# Resistance and Popular Front: The Push for a National Communist Party in Italy and France

PETER CERETTI

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## Abstract

This paper examines the factors underlying the emergence of a national Communist party in France rather than Italy immediately following World War II using secondary sources and electoral data. It features a comparison of the Partito Comunista Italiano (PCI) and the Parti communiste français (PCF) that utilizes Mill's Method of Difference to identify the Popular Front and Resistance experiences in Italy and France as potentially causal independent variables. Unlike the PCF, the PCI was not a national party in the early postwar period due to the geographic concentration of its base. Because of the early liberation of southern Italy and the Nazi occupation of the North until late in the war, the PCI was only able to fully penetrate the central Red Belt, where it enjoyed strong support after the war, as a result of the Resistance. By tracing the development of the PCF from the interwar period onward, it is argued that the sequence of an electoral Popular Front in the mid-1930s followed by a nationally pervasive Resistance movement allowed the party to recruit French braccianti and other classes across the country, thereby laying the foundation for broader support after Liberation. The PCI, in contrast, was declared illegal in 1926 and never participated in a Popular Front electoral coalition before the war. This fact not only delayed the recruitment of the Italian braccianti and other classes, but may also have conditioned a detrimentally close relationship between the PCI and the Socialists that hurt the entire Italian Left after Liberation. The findings of this paper could have implications for the formation of present day national parties, as participation in broad electoral coalitions like the Popular Front may give parties with a limited appeal the opportunity to attract voters from new socioeconomic groups and geographic regions.

## Introduction

In 1944, Palmiro Togliatti, Secretary of the Italian Communist party, proposed a plan for a radical transformation of his organization. “The new party we have in mind,” he writes, “must be a national Italian party, that is, a party which poses and resolves the problem of the emancipation of labor in the framework of our national life and liberty, making its own all the progressive traditions of the nation.”<sup>1</sup> Indeed, with the close of World War II, both the Partito Comunista Italiano (PCI) and its French counterpart, the Parti communiste français (PCF) enjoyed unprecedented influence and popularity as mass parties in their respective nations. Yet, despite Togliatti’s proposal, in the roughly decade-long period between the parties’ adoption of Popular Front tactics and the rebirth of democratic party systems in Italy and France, only the PCF was able to transform itself into a truly national party. This paper offers a hypothesis that may partly explain the failure of the PCI to reach national party status through a comparative analysis of the Italian Communist Party and its French counterpart.

Despite their many similarities during the early postwar period, two fundamental differences between the PCF and PCI may have been influential in regard to the question of national party status. First, while the PCF gained a good deal of support as a result of its participation in the anti-Fascist Popular Front coalition with the Radicals and the Socialists (the Section française de l’Internationale ouvrière or SFIO) beginning in 1936, the PCI could not exploit the electoral opportunity that the Popular Front represented. Since its suppression by the Italian State under Fascism in 1926, the PCI had become a clandestine organization headquartered in France and was therefore unable to court mass support in the same manner that the PCF did in 1936.<sup>2</sup>

Second, though both the PCI and PCF reaped significant benefits from their association with the Resistance movements in their respective countries, because of the unique patterns of occupation in Italy, the PCI failed to make significant gains in southern Italy and some parts of the North. Specifically, the German occupation of the North, the presence of Mussolini’s Italian Social Republic (the Repubblica Sociale Italiana, or RSI) in the Northeast, and the Allied invasion of the South prevented the PCI from taking part in a truly national Resistance movement.

A final extension to this argument asserts that its inability to participate in elections during the Popular Front years also hurt the PCI by creating a detrimental relationship with the Socialists. I maintain that a lack of electoral competition with the Partito Socialista Italiano (PSI, also the Partito Socialista Italiano di Unità Proletaria or PSIUP) conditioned a pattern of interaction that held back both the PCI and the collective Italian Left in the years immediately following the war. More precisely, the lack of an electoral stage for the Popular Front before World War II allowed the PCI to assume a dominant role in its relationship with the PSI, ultimately drawing the Socialists detrimentally close to their larger counterpart on the Left.

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1. Sidney Tarrow, *Peasant Communism in Southern Italy* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1967), 122.

2. Philip M. Williams, *Crisis and Compromise: Politics in the Fourth Republic* (Hamden: Archon Books, 1964), 72.

## National Parties?

Before examining the factors that may have contributed to the growth of a national party in the case of the PCF but not the PCI, a definition of a national party is necessary. For the purposes of this paper, a national party should have a competitive vote share in comparison to the other parties in its system. It should also have a relatively high level of membership. A national party should be identified with the national interest; in other words, it should be a “patriotic” party, not a fringe group. Finally, a national party should be reasonably well-distributed throughout its country and should not represent the interests of only a limited geographic area.

Given these criteria, it is difficult to dispute that the PCF had become a national party by the birth of the Fourth Republic in 1946. In the three national elections held between October 21, 1945 and November 10, 1946, the PCF won more votes than any other party twice. Overall, the PCF won more votes than any other party in all but two national elections in the Fourth Republic, consistently polling at or above 20% before 1958.<sup>3</sup> At the peak of its enrollment in the early postwar years, the PCF’s membership figures were equally impressive. Party membership climbed from about 500,000 in 1945 to over a million in 1946 before the PCF’s exclusion from government in 1947.<sup>4</sup> The PCF also enjoyed a legacy of heroism for its valor during the Resistance years, thereby associating the so-called *parti des fusillés* with the national interest in the eyes of many.<sup>5</sup> Lastly, the Communist vote was reasonably well distributed throughout the country. The PCF drew support in the North between Paris and Belgium, along the northern edge of the Massif Central, and along the Mediterranean—regions that included both rural and industrial areas.<sup>6</sup> In fact, the PCF was the only Fourth Republic party to win a minimum of 5% of voters in every *département*. During the same period, it also won more than 30% of votes in more *départements* (31) than any other party.<sup>7</sup>

If the PCF meets all of the stated criteria defining a national party in the early postwar period, where then, does the PCI fall short? The PCI certainly had considerable electoral strength immediately following the war. In the elections for the 1946 Constituent Assembly in Italy, the PCI won 4,356,686 votes for 19% of the popular vote. Two years later, the joint PCI-PSI coalition also polled at 31% for 8,137,000 votes in the 1948 national elections.<sup>8</sup> Furthermore, though official party figures appear to be somewhat inflated, the fact

3. Williams, *Crisis and Compromise*, 502.

4. Mario Einaudi, Jean-Marie Domenach, and Aldo Garosci, *Communism in Western Europe* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1951), 72. Williams, *Crisis and Compromise*, 76.

5. Einaudi et al., *Communism in Western Europe*, 76.

6. Williams, *Crisis and Compromise*, 79.

7. Dorothy Pickles, *France: The Fourth Republic* (Westport: Greenwood Press Publishers, 1976), 57.

8. Maria Virginia Rizzo, *Nostri primi 50 anni cronache della Repubblica italiana dal 1946 al 1996 attraverso le elezioni politiche: simboli, risultati, immagini* (Gorle, Bergamo: Editrice CEL, 1996), 10, 17.

Donald L. M Blackmer, *Unity in Diversity: Italian Communism and the Communist World* (Cambridge: M.I.T. Press, 1968), 17. Einaudi et al., *Communism in Western Europe*, 214.

that PCI membership ballooned from 400,000 in 1944 to 2,245,000 in 1947 demonstrates at least the extended reach of the party during its years in government.<sup>9</sup> If PCI membership diverges from the analogous PCF levels, however, the Resistance legacy of the PCI was quite similar to that of the French party, lending the Italian Communists the same newfound legitimacy that the PCF enjoyed in France.

Considering only the first four criteria, the PCI would seem to fit the proposed national party model reasonably well. In the early postwar years, however, the PCI lacked one critical dimension common to all national parties: a geographically balanced base of electoral support. While 1946 national electoral figures show that the PCI did meet Pickles' 5% baseline of PCF support in each group of Italian province,<sup>10</sup> the Italian Communist vote was concentrated in a handful of central regions known as the Red Belt. Moreover, unlike the PCF, the PCI won 30% of votes or more in only 4 groups of province, all of them clustered within the Red Belt. These vote shares contrast sharply with those of the Christian Democrats, who won 30% of votes or more in 26 groups of province distributed throughout the country.<sup>11</sup> Additionally, although the PCI would make significant progress in the Mezzogiorno in the following decade, during the same 1946 elections, the Communist vote in the North was still twice as strong as that in the South.<sup>12</sup>

Tarrow also notes that an acute intraregional fragmentation further divided the PCI vote in every part of the country. PCI support was uniformly strong in the Center, but strongest in the suburbs and countryside. Above the Po, it was very weak in the rural areas but strong in the cities.<sup>13</sup> In the South, PCI support was uniformly weak, but generally stronger than in the rural North, and concentrated in medium-sized peasant cities. This sort of inconsistency coupled with the PCI's inability to win 30% of votes or more in any but a handful of province suggests that the PCI was not a uniformly popular, geographically pervasive national party. According to this evidence, the hypothesis that the PCI was indeed a national party as defined by the criteria laid out at the beginning of this section can be rejected. This conclusion begs the question, however, as to why the distribution of the Communist vote was so heterogeneous.

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9. Tarrow, *Peasant Communism in Southern Italy*, 138. A number of factors likely account for inflated PCI membership figures in the early postwar years. These include the extremely-low price of a tessera, or membership card, the generally high Italian propensity for party membership (perhaps acquired under Fascism due to the importance of the party card to one's livelihood), and a postwar recruiting push that sought a broader base than ever before (Einaudi et al., *Communism in Western Europe 200-1*; Tarrow, *Peasant Communism in Southern Italy*, 149).

10. PCI vote shares are drawn from data furnished by the Istituto Carlo Cattaneo which were compiled from official ISTAT figures. This source breaks down the results of the June 2, 1946 elections to the Constituent Assembly into groups of province, rather than single province or entire regions. Thus, percentage scores represent party vote shares in constituencies ranging from 1 to 5 province in size. Province grouped together tend to be adjacent to one another and within the same region. The comparison with PCF vote shares in the French départements is admittedly imperfect (see "1946 - Elezioni Assemblea Costituente, 2 giugno (per circoscrizione)," chart, Istituto Cattaneo, <http://www.cattaneo.org/index.asp?l1=archivi&l2=adele&l3=politiche> (accessed November 29, 2009)).

11. "1946 - Elezioni Assemblea Costituente, 2 giugno (per circoscrizione)."

12. Tarrow, *Peasant Communism in Southern Italy*, 173, 163.

13. *Ibid.* 177, 185.

## The PCF and PCI: Similarities

To illuminate why the PCI vote was heterogeneous, I employ Mill's Method of Difference to show that the few divergences between the otherwise-similar PCF and PCI may explain the ascent to national party status of the former and the relative regionalism of the latter in the early postwar years. This qualitative methodology consists of a comparison of two generally similar cases with different scores on a common dependent variable. By identifying the few differences between the cases selected, it is hoped that one may also isolate the potentially causal independent variables that account for the difference in overall outcome. Before a treatment of the salient differences between the PCI and PCF, however, I include a discussion of their similar aspects. The objective of this section is to demonstrate that PCI and PCF do in fact represent similar cases in nearly all respects. This brief comparison is based on the three broad variables of party history, organizational structure, and sources of strength.

### Party History

The histories of the PCI and PCF are indeed very similar, due primarily to the parties' unwavering adherence to the directives of the Comintern. Their common trajectory can be defined in terms of a pattern of shifts in party line adopted by all European Communist parties to some extent. In order to examine the earliest phase of this trajectory, it is appropriate to take the foundation of the PCF and PCI as a point of departure.

In December 1920, the French Communists broke away from the SFIO by voting to adopt Lenin's conditions for joining the Third International. About a month later, a similar split occurred at the PSI's annual congress at Livorno, giving birth to the PCd'I (Partito Comunista d'Italia, later, the PCI).<sup>14</sup> During this early period, both parties enjoyed a moment of relative autonomy before the beginning of Comintern intervention.

Shortly thereafter, the Bolshevization years of 1924-7 turned both parties into intransigent, lean, and disciplined forces at the order of the International. Both parties purged deviant internal factions and became distinctly working-class in nature. The PCI and PCF were also forced to adopt the rigid organizational model based on the workplace cell that was handed down from Moscow.

It is noteworthy that after 1925, the PCI was forced to operate in semi-legality, as Mussolini's Partito Nazionale Fascista (PNF) had already begun to consolidate its power following the March on Rome in October 1922. Though the PCI attempted to maintain solidarity with the other opposition parties, the implementation of Bolshevization complicated the party leadership's pursuit of a conciliatory policy. Many of the PCI's leaders were arrested in 1926, when all opposition deputies were "relieved" of their parliamentary

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 14. Ronald Tiersky, *French Communism, 1920 - 1972* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1974), 27-8.  
 Einaudi et al., *Communism in Western Europe*, 165-6.  
 Tannahill, *Communist Parties of Western Europe*, 19.

duties by the PNF government and the Communist Party was declared illegal.<sup>15</sup> The PCI would subsequently continue to operate clandestinely in Italy with variable efficacy while much of its directorate was relocated to France.

After the period of Bolshevization, the Comintern altered party line once again in 1928, imposing on the PCI and PCF the revolutionary rhetoric of “class-against-class” tactics.<sup>16</sup> With this shift, the PCI and PCF were instructed to cease their collaboration with the Socialists. Social Democrats, Socialists, and Fascists alike were vilified as “social fascists.”<sup>17</sup> Unsurprisingly, these tactics hurt the Communists’ already-diminished popularity and significantly decreased party membership in France.

International developments motivated the Comintern to reverse its policy once again in 1934. Following the rise of Hitler in Germany, the Comintern drafted a plan for the formation of a Popular Front alliance between Communist parties and all other democratic groups against the threat of Fascism. The Popular Front policy, for which Togliatti actively campaigned at the VII Comintern Congress, was officially handed down to the PCI and PCF in 1935.<sup>18</sup> This policy led to the formation of the Popular Front coalition in France that won a watershed 59% of the popular vote for the Left in the 1936 elections.<sup>19</sup> The Italian Communists, for their part, began to collaborate with other exiled anti-Fascist parties and ceased their policy of vociferous hostility to the Socialists.<sup>20</sup>

As war loomed closer, Soviet maneuvering further complicated the French situation. The Popular Front coalition soon broke up, and only the PCF opposed the annexation of the Sudetenland. As the party’s newfound popularity began to rapidly dissipate, the signing of the Nazi-Soviet Pact in 1939 forced the PCF to reverse its anti-Fascist line and advocate an unpopular policy of defeatism. Consequently, the party was dissolved and many of its leaders were arrested in September 1939.<sup>21</sup> This put the Italian party in a difficult situation, as members of the resolutely anti-Fascist PCI directorate were being hosted by the PCF in exile. The moment of ambivalence would not last long, however, as both now-clandestine parties could resume their anti-Fascist activities in earnest after June 22, 1941, when the Germans invaded Russia.<sup>22</sup>

The successes and the hardships of the Resistance years that followed did much to build the patriotic reputations of the parties in question. Both the PCI and PCF played decisive roles in their respective coalitions for liberation, the Front national (FN) in

15. Einaudi et al., *Communism in Western Europe*, 167.

Blackmer, *Unity in Diversity*, 7.

16. Tannahill, *Communist Parties of Western Europe*, 35.

17. Tiersky, *French Communism*, 46-7.

18. Tannahill, *Communist Parties of Western Europe*, 38.

19. Williams, *Crisis and Compromise*, 72.

Adam Przeworski and John Sprague, *Paper Stones: A History of Electoral Socialism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986), 30.

20. Einaudi et al., *Communism in Western Europe*, 210.

21. *Ibid.* 73.

22. *Ibid.* 75.

France and Comitato di Liberazione Nazionale (CLN) in Italy.<sup>23</sup> Through their superior organization, the Communist parties also established contact with new social classes and placed party members in key political positions as a result of the Resistance. All of these factors, combined with each party's decision to disband its military wing at the end of the war, made the exclusion of the Communists from postwar provisional governments impossible.<sup>24</sup> Additionally, the dissolution of the Comintern freed the hands of both parties, and from 1944 to 1947, a period of government participation and mass party competition ensued.

### Organization

In addition to their analogous histories, the PCI and PCF were also similar in terms organizational structure. Both parties utilized a strategy of encadrement meant to maximize their social appeal and maintain the indoctrination of members. Party programs included youth groups, women's groups, intellectual societies, friendship societies, and the like.<sup>25</sup> The parties also employed a vertical organizational model, grouping members into cells based in individual workplaces, sections in a particular industry or group of workplaces, and federations comprised of the sections of a given district.<sup>26</sup> Each stratum of the party's structure was only permitted contact with the units above and below it, ensuring absolute obedience to the instructions of the party directorate.<sup>27</sup>

The PCI and PCF also had considerable influence in the major syndicalist movements in their respective countries. As a result of the fusion of the Communist Confédération general du travail unitaire (CGTU) and its larger parent, the Confédération general du travail (CGT), during the Popular Front years, the PCF practically subjugated the CGT after the war. Though the CGT lost many non-Communist members after 1947, domination of this organization was a critical aspect of the PCF's strategy for reaching the working class.<sup>28</sup> In Italy, the PCI succeeded in consolidating the support of Socialist and Communist workers while compromising with Catholics to form the united Confederazione Generale Italiano del Lavoro (CGIL) at the end of the war. Though the CGIL directorate included representatives of its Socialist, Communist, and Catholic components, the PCI dominated the organization by staunchly advocating the cause of labor in its party platform, maintaining a majority of membership in the CGIL, and politically outmaneuvering Socialist and Catholic syndicalist leaders within the organization.<sup>29</sup>

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23. Tarrow, *Peasant Communism in Southern Italy*, 106.

Giorgio Galli and Alfonso Prandi, *Patterns of Political Participation in Italy* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1970), 6-8.

24. Williams, *Crisis and Compromise*, 19-20.

25. Einaudi et al., *Communism in Western Europe*, 201-3, 90-3.

Tarrow, *Peasant Communism in Southern Italy*, 154.

26. Tarrow, *Peasant Communism in Southern Italy*, 186.

Einaudi et al., *Communism in Western Europe*, 84-6.

27. Williams, *Crisis and Compromise*, 75.

28. Einaudi et al., *Communism in Western Europe*, 74.

Williams, *Crisis and Compromise*, 24.

29. Einaudi et al., *Communism in Western Europe*, 206-8.

### Sources of Strength

Finally, both the French and Italian Communist parties shared similar sources of strength. As demonstrated in the previous section, both the PCI and PCF attracted mass electoral support, respectively polling at between 19 and 31 percent and 20 and 22 percent in national elections before 1951, either independently or as part of a combined list.<sup>30</sup> Also, the PCI achieved membership upwards of 2,000,000 in 1947, while the PCF claimed to have reached 1,000,000 members in 1946.<sup>31</sup>

Increases in both membership and vote shares reflect the decision taken by both parties to court a larger, more diversified base. During the Bolshevization years, both the PCI and PCF were primarily oriented toward the interests of the industrial proletariat. By the Popular Front years and after the end of World War II, however, both parties entered the sphere of mass party politics, broadening their recruiting efforts to include new social groups. Among those courted were peasant farmers and sharecroppers, the agricultural proletariat, moderates of Socialist persuasion, members of the middle class, and bourgeoisie not usually associated with the proletariat. In Italy, the PCI even went so far as to recruit illiterates and Catholics.<sup>32</sup>

### PCF and PCI: Critical Differences

The evidence presented in the previous section shows the similarity of the PCF and PCI in many respects. Despite the striking resemblance between the parties, I maintain that two critical differences between the PCI and PCF are at least in part responsible for the emergence of a national Communist party in France but not in Italy. The first is linked to the fact that the PCI was forced to operate from abroad from 1926 until the deposition of Mussolini in 1943. The suppression of the PCI precluded the Italian Communists from participating in the Popular Front in an electoral capacity. Significantly, this ability vastly expanded the popularity of the PCF before and shortly after 1936.

The second difference lies in the nature of the Resistance in Italy. Undoubtedly, both the PCI and PCF reaped considerable benefits from their participation in the Liberation of France and Italy. Nevertheless, the Italian Communist partigiani could truly make headway only in the Center and parts of the North of Italy, as the South had been already been liberated by the Allies when the PCI began full-scale Resistance activities. Conversely, the North was firmly occupied by the Germans until late in the war, and the Northeast

30. Blackmer, *Unity in Diversity*, 214.  
Williams, *Crisis and Compromise*, 502.

31. Tarrow, *Peasant Communism in Southern Italy*, 138.  
Einaudi et al., *Communism in Western Europe*, 72.

32. Einaudi et al., *Communism in Western Europe*, 200.  
Blackmer, *Unity in Diversity*, 14.

Tarrow, *Peasant Communism in Southern Italy*, 149.



comprised the heartland of Mussolini's RSI. The French Resistance, it seems, allowed the PCF to penetrate more deeply than the corresponding Italian movement permitted the PCI to do across the border.

### Popular Front

In reference to the first independent variable, it is important to note that while both parties adopted the same pre-war political strategies at the order of the Comintern, the Popular Front experiences of the PCI and PCF were in practice fundamentally different. The Popular Front allowed the PCF to participate in a successful electoral alliance with the Radicals and Socialists before World War II, while the PCI had no such chance.

As early as 1934, both the PCI and PCF had entered into "pacts of unity of action" with their Socialist counterparts and the other democratic parties of their respective nations.<sup>33</sup> What was essentially the same pact, however, would have markedly different results for the French and Italian parties. Though the Popular Front strategy did lead to cooperation between the PCI and PSI in terms of organizing the opposition, the two never entered into an electoral alliance before World War II. While the PCF and the SFIO developed a relationship of competitive collaboration, the PCI and PSI remained distinct yet closely linked in terms of policy, with the Communists perennially dominating the agenda from the beginning of the Popular Front onwards.

Following the "pacts of unitary action," under which Togliatti and PCF Secretary Maurice Thorez had assumed conciliatory postures in regard to the other anti-Fascist parties, the Popular Front strategy was officially approved by the Comintern at its VII Congress in August 1935.<sup>34</sup> As Secretary General Dimitrov decreed, European Communist parties should align themselves with the anti-Fascist elements of the petty bourgeoisie and some sections of the bourgeoisie proper on both the social and political level.<sup>35</sup> This entailed supporting the demands of these classes, recruiting them as potential members and sympathizers, and forming alliances with their political parties.<sup>36</sup>

The Popular Front did not represent a fundamental reassessment of ultimate goals; rather, it was seen as a means for achieving the first of two stages in the struggle for Socialism.<sup>37</sup> This strategy would be used to promote a progressive, democratic, anti-Fascist government which would then pave the way for the Socialist Revolution and the Dictatorship of the Proletariat. Though the Popular Front was originally intended to be a temporary instrument (as demonstrated by its suspension during the Nazi-Soviet pact) it would eventually become the basis for both PCI and PCF strategy in the postwar years.<sup>38</sup>

For the PCF, the Popular Front strategy meant an astonishing increase in votes and membership. As a result of its union with the SFIO and the Radicals for the 1936 elections,

33. Einaudi et al., *Communism in Western Europe*, 170.

34. *Ibid.* 71.

35. Grant Amyot, *Italian Communist Party the crisis of the popular front strategy* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1981), 36.

36. *Ibid.* 36.

37. *Ibid.* 36-7, 45.

38. *Ibid.* 36-7, 45.

the PCF increased its representation in parliament by over five-hundred percent thanks to mutual withdrawals from its new allies. The French Communists also greatly benefited in terms of vote share, increasing their total number of votes to 1,504,404 from just 796,630 in 1932.<sup>39</sup> During the Popular Front years, party membership increased dramatically too, rising from 50,000 in 1934 to 350,000 in 1938.<sup>40</sup> Despite the fact that, for the first time, the PCF chose not to participate in the governments of the Popular Front, headed by both the SFIO and the Radicals, the PCF appeared to be a “French party, participating in the national defense and sharing in the heritage of the French Revolution, as a party in the parliamentary sense.”<sup>41</sup>

Although the PCI also adopted Popular Front tactics in principle, by 1934, the party had been removed from the Italian legislature for eight years. The PCI had prepared itself for illegal activity as early as the 1920s by setting up a foreign center in Paris, creating a communications network, and establishing a secret center within Italy which was periodically destroyed and rebuilt until 1932, at which point it was deemed too dangerous and costly to maintain. Thus, only the most ardent Communists within Italy could be counted on to agitate on the party’s behalf, and many of these either defected or were arrested.<sup>42</sup> Long periods without communication between the Paris center and the Italian Communists in Italy ensued, and the directorate’s political action was often indistinguishable from the line of the Comintern.<sup>43</sup>

The crucial point is that the PCI did not have contact with the Italian masses and could not recruit voters from other parties or new classes. Though the PCI could participate in the Popular Front in a political sense, it was incapable of doing so in a social sense. Within Fascist Italy, the PCI was unable to reach even many of its own former-supporters, let alone bourgeois sympathizers or potential converts. Therefore, despite the fact that the Popular Front strategy would become entrenched in postwar party policy as Amyot asserts, the PCI did not make as much progress as the PCF in terms of reaching blue-collar loyal to other parties, agricultural workers, and members of new classes on a national level during the Popular Front years. This likely left the PCI with less of an electoral base to build upon after the war.

### Resistance Movements

The second key difference between the PCI and the PCF is linked to the nature of the Resistance movements in Italy and France. While the opportunity to participate in a successful Popular Front electoral coalition brought the PCF a surge in mass support, the national pervasiveness of the French Resistance also helped to spread Communist roots to

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39. Tiersky, *French Communism*, 58.

40. Einaudi et al., *Communism in Western Europe*, 71.

41. *Ibid.* 71.

42. Tarrow, *Peasant Communism in Southern Italy*, 104-5.

Einaudi et al., *Communism in Western Europe*, 173.

43. Tarrow, *Peasant Communism in Southern Italy*, 105.

Einaudi et al., *Communism in Western Europe*, 169.

corners of the country where previous support and/or a strong industrial base did not exist. The PCI's role in the Liberation of Italy, on the other hand, was limited by a course of events that resulted in Nazi occupation and the presence of Mussolini's RSI in the North, while the Allies controlled the South by 1943. In their portion of the country, the Americans and British propped up the Monarchy and the Badoglio government. Notably, the most effective PCI resistance was mounted in the Center of the country, especially in the Red Belt regions, where the Communist party made the greatest inroads with the agricultural proletariat. Nevertheless, the relative ineffectiveness of Communist partigiano activity in the North and South prevented the PCI from permeating the countryside of these regions in a similarly meaningful way.

An account of the expansionary gains made as a result of the PCF's role in the French Resistance may help to explain how the party became national in scope. Williams argues that through participation in the seemingly legitimate Front national, the PCF gained the trust and respect of many patriotic conservatives who were not used to working with the Communists.<sup>44</sup> Furthermore, in the industrial centers, the PCF made significant gains within the anti-Fascist trade unions through the Resistance, as many union leaders had sided with Vichy, and those who remained were not strong enough to effectively resist the PCF.<sup>45</sup> The PCF also succeeded in seizing a daily newspaper in every département, and was able to place its leaders on all the Committees of Liberation.<sup>46</sup> Additionally, by acting through the maquis, the PCF could install its own politicians in the liberated rural areas. Consequently, though the PCF was not generally strong in the rural départements before the war, many of these constituencies were more likely to vote Communist after Liberation as a result of PCF administration.<sup>47</sup>

The PCI, on the other hand, also made some substantive progress through the Resistance in Italy, though these advances were once again confined mostly to the Central regions of the Red Belt. Allum notes that the majority of the Resistance struggle went on in the North and Central parts of the country above of the Arno, rather than in the early-liberated South. Furthermore, a large proportion of the CLN personnel active in southern Italy was of Christian Democratic or conservative persuasion and not of the Communist partigiano sort that was predominant in the Center.<sup>48</sup> Overall, the Resistance fighters represented an important minority group in the struggle for Italian Liberation after the 1943 deposition of Mussolini. The majority of the Italian peasantry did not have contact with the CLN, and thus could not be mobilized by its PCI elements.<sup>49</sup>

According to Garosci, the PCI's chief function in the Resistance movement was stimulating and organizing revolt among the working classes. A series of strikes and acts

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44. Williams, *Crisis and Compromise*, 44.

45. *Ibid.* 44.

46. Einaudi et al., *Communism in Western Europe*, 76.

47. Williams, *Crisis and Compromise*, 79.

48. P. A. Allum, *Italy - Republic Without Government?* ed. Max Beloff (New York: WW. Norton & Company, 1973), 68.

49. *Ibid.* 68.

of sabotage in the Northern industrial cities attests to the party's success in this capacity.<sup>50</sup> However, the Communist militants still faced the iron grip of Nazi occupation in the North, and greater competition from alternative Resistance movements, like the Catholic partigiani or Giustizia e Liberazione, than in the Center. Thus, because of factors beyond the scope of the PCI's control, the party was largely unable to expand its base through the Resistance into parts of the country where it had previously been weak.

### Competing Hypotheses

Can the difference in national party status in the early postwar years truly be explained by the different Popular Front and Resistance experiences of the PCI and the PCF? In order to test the strength of this hypothesis, two other competing hypotheses should be considered. The first states that the PCI faced a strong Christian Democratic opposition whereas the PCF was met by a lesser competitor in the *Mouvement républicain populaire* (MRP). The second is that differences in national levels of industrialization and urbanization explain the differences in distribution of Communist strength in France and Italy. I assert that a careful consideration of these factors shows that neither sufficiently explains the difference in national stature of the PCI and PCF.

One classic explanation of the inability of the PCI to become a national party states that the strength of the *Democrazia Cristiana* (DC) served as a bulwark against Communist advances, especially in the South and the Northeast, while the French MRP was not nearly as strong as its Italian counterpart. One might accurately assert that the elevated status granted to the Church under Fascism and the entrenched recruiting network of Catholic parishes impeded PCI strength in the most religiously devout regions of the country. Tarrow and Allum argue, for instance, that the integration of Catholics into the Fascist regime afforded the Church a position of greater leadership in daily life, a position that was, in a sense, transformed into a recruiting network at war's end.<sup>51</sup> Yet, Tarrow also notes that in the two decades after Liberation, the PCI and DC often made progress in many of the same Southern constituencies. Essentially, both the PCI and DC were engaged in a competitive yet "symbiotic relationship," making progress in the same parts of the South at the same time.<sup>52</sup> This seemingly paradoxical finding hardly supports the assertion that Christian Democratic strength was the key factor impeding the PCI in the most Catholic regions.

Additionally, the assertion that the PCF did not face Christian Democratic opposition as strong as that of its Italian counterpart is unsubstantiated. Though the MRP lost much of its support beginning in the late 1940s, in the first years of the postwar period, it was still a competitive mass party capable of beating even the PCF at the polls. While the

.....  
50. Einaudi et al., *Communism in Western Europe*, 178.

51. Allum, *Republic Without Government*, 15.

Tarrow, *Peasant Communism in Southern Italy*, 170.

52. Tarrow, *Peasant Communism in Southern Italy*, 180.

MRP was temporarily bolstered in the early postwar years by the support of conservative voters who had left the disgraced Right parties, it was nonetheless able to attract impressive, if variable, levels of support. The party received about 4,780,000 votes in the October 1945 elections (second to the PCF in total votes); a high of 5,589,000 in June 1946, winning more votes than any other party; and then 4,989,000 votes in November 1946 (once again, second only to the PCF).<sup>53</sup> As these figures clearly show, the argument that the PCF had no solid Christian Democratic opposition can be rejected as historically unfounded.

The second competing hypothesis—that generally higher levels of industrialization and urbanization in France might account for the wider distribution of PCF support—can also be rejected. Admittedly, both the PCI and PCF did have a decidedly industrial working-class appeal and strong ties to the syndicalist movements in their respective countries. It is true also that both parties drew much of their support from the urban proletariat. Following this line of thinking, one might infer that since much of Italy (especially the South) was predominantly agrarian, the PCI must have been weak in all but the most industrialized parts of the country, where its votes should have been concentrated.

Yet, this logic would also imply that Communist support should have been almost exclusively limited to the non-agricultural proletariat, which it clearly was not in either Italy or France. In the French case, the urbanization/industrialization hypothesis may explain the staunch PCF support in the region of Paris and the industrial North and Southeast of France, but it cannot account for the strong Communist vote on the northern edge of the Massif Central, in the rural South along the Mediterranean coast, or in the Languedoc countryside, for instance. Williams notes that in the South, even fairly wealthy farmers voted for the PCF in many constituencies.<sup>54</sup>

Turning to the Italian case, the industrialization/urbanization hypothesis is equally unconvincing. First, as explained in Section II, the Communist vote was strongest in Central Italy, generally weak in the South, and strong in the Northern cities—but weaker in the northern countryside than in the South on average. By contrast, in the Mezzogiorno, the PCI vote was weak in the largest industrialized cities, strongest in medium sized cities with mixed economies, and practically nonexistent in the poorest villages. Controlling for other factors, Tarrow finds no clear correlation between industrialization alone and the PCI vote in either the North or South. Furthermore, in the Center, the hub of PCI support, the party's strength was also most closely correlated with medium-sized cities of mixed industrial and agricultural activity.<sup>55</sup> Taking into consideration all of the factors listed above, on the Italian peninsula as in France, the hypothesis that urbanization and industrialization determine the geographic distribution of Communist strength seemingly holds little explanatory power.

## A Combined Approach

53. Williams, *Crisis and Compromise*, 104, 502.

54. *Ibid.* 79.

55. Tarrow, *Peasant Communism in Southern Italy*, 171-92.

Taken at face value, the uneven distribution of PCI strength, even in the Red Belt where the party was strongest, may seem puzzling. This finding becomes clearer in light of considerations regarding the ability of the PCI to reach a salient socioeconomic group present to some extent in each part of the country: the *braccianti*, or the landless agricultural proletariat. Essentially, PCI support was strongest in the areas where many *braccianti* were present—that is, in the industrial suburbs of the large cities of Northern Italy, in the mixed-economy, mid-size cities of the Center, and in the countryside and mid-sized cities of the South.<sup>56</sup>

Indeed, one of the crucial features underlying the success of the Popular Front strategy was its emphasis on broadening the base of Communist supporters to include agricultural workers. Tarrow notes that by the 1960s, while the PCI had still failed to capture the small working classes in southern Italy on a major scale, as much as a quarter of party membership in the South was comprised of *braccianti*.<sup>57</sup> Similarly, Bartolini finds that in countries like Italy and France, where a large proportion of the working class was employed in agriculture (in other words, where the working class was largely composed of *braccianti*), the most successful Communist movements were “dualistic” ones that engaged both industrial and agricultural workers.<sup>58</sup> Thus, one might ask how my account of the difference in national party status between the PCI and PCF addresses the role of the *braccianti*.

The combined approach of recruiting the *braccianti* in addition to the industrial working classes constituted a crucial step in extending Communist party strength from the traditional bastions of the industrial proletariat into the rural areas. Bartolini describes the success of the PCF in expanding its vote share in the rural mayatage areas and the backwards periphery of the Massif Central by courting the votes of French *braccianti*, sharecroppers, and peasant farmers.<sup>59</sup> As Tarrow’s figures demonstrate, the recruitment of the *braccianti* in Italy was also crucial to the PCI’s growth in the South in the decades after World War II. I assert that the PCI’s inability to expand into the agricultural North and South before the war is linked to its failure to gain the support of *braccianti* and peasant farmers during the interwar period.

The PCI was precluded from gathering the votes of the *braccianti* and peasant farmers before World War II precisely because it was expelled from Italy in 1926, in the midst of the Bolshevization years, and therefore could not enjoy electoral success as part of an Italian Popular Front coalition. While the PCF could begin to entice the French *braccianti* as early as the mid-1930s through the Popular Front electoral coalition, the PCI could not truly begin to appeal to both the *braccianti* and the urban workers together until its Resistance fighters infiltrated the Italian peninsula en masse beginning in 1943. For this reason, the PCI’s

.....  
56. *Ibid.* 177, 185-92.

57. *Ibid.* 205-7

58. Stefano Bartolini, *The Political Mobilization of the European Left, 1860-1980 The Class Cleavage* (Cambridge Studies in Comparative Politics) (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 520-1.

59. *Ibid.* 518.

success in recruiting the braccianti was largely limited to the central swath of the country where its fighters were most effective.

### Rise of a National Party

In light of the extended treatment of the Popular Front strategy, the Resistance experience, and the Communist recruitment of agricultural workers detailed above, one may wonder how these elements fit together to explain the rise of the PCF to the role of a national party in the early postwar years. Admittedly, the story of the PCF's transition to national party status is slightly more complicated than previously acknowledged. Therefore, I propose the following summary of this process, hypothesizing a potentially-causal relationship between the proposed independent variables treated in Section IV and the final outcome.

In the early Bolshevization years, beginning in 1924, the PCF started to recruit a solid, homogeneous industrial working-class base. Abrupt and complete changes in party line and expulsion of party deviants forged a lean and ideologically committed party to which Bolshevik organizational principles were applied. The result was a party that would be able to survive almost any crisis. Due to the strict discipline of Bolshevization, party membership dipped predictably from over 100,000 at its inception to about 50,000 by 1927.<sup>60</sup> The so-called Social Fascism years of 1928 to 1934, during which the Communists stridently denounced the Socialists, increased the PCF's isolation and decreased its vote share. Membership also fell to around 25,000 by 1932.<sup>61</sup>

Conversely, the Popular Front years suddenly brought the party newfound popularity and success. Industrial workers were won from the Socialists, gains were made among union members with the fusion of the CGT and CGTU, and the broad nature of the new alliance strategy allowed the PCF to recruit braccianti for the first time. The publicity gained through the party's success in 1936 also helped the PCF to enter a phase of mass party politics and to spread the party's popularity to places other than the traditional industrial strongholds. In 1936, membership was as high as 329,000 and by 1938, the same figure topped 350,000.<sup>62</sup>

The party was then banned when it turned defeatist in response to the Nazi-Soviet pact of 1939. Many of its newfound supporters left the PCF, yet due to their socialization within the party, this group would likely be sympathetic to future Communist appeals. Membership dropped as low as 100,000, and the ideological purity and discipline of the Bolshevized working-class supporters became crucial, keeping the party alive and intact despite its clandestine nature and massive unpopularity.<sup>63</sup>

After the invasion of Russia in June 1941, the PCF was able to fully dedicate itself

.....  
60. Einaudi et al., *Communism in Western Europe*, 72.

61. *Ibid.* 71.

62. *Ibid.* 72.

63. *Ibid.* 73.

to the Resistance. The party re-conquered much of the base it had presumably lost through defeatism and spread its roots in many unlikely places, especially the rural départements, through its participation in Front national. Consequently, the PCF emerged from the war with over 500,000 members, the least-regionalized base of support of any French party, and a role as a party of government that would last until 1947.

In keeping with this analysis, I find that both the Popular Front electoral victory of 1936 and the Resistance legacy were necessary, but not sufficient, for the creation of a truly national party. First, the PCF gained mass support and launched a broad alliance with the braccianti and peasants through the Popular Front. Yet, these gains would have been negated by the defeatism of 1939 without the rebirth of the Resistance experience. The Resistance allowed the party to reclaim and then build on the base it had forged during the Popular Front years and to spread its roots into the rural départements. Thus, only the combination in sequence of an electoral Popular Front with the Resistance yielded a national party.

### The PCI, the PSIUP and the Italian Left

The final facet of my argument consists of an extension to my assertions regarding the PCI's inability to participate in Popular Front electoral coalition before the war. Not only did the party's lack of such an experience affect the PCI's ability to employ a combined recruiting approach and reach a national base, but the Italian version of the Popular Front may have also caused the PCI to develop an unhealthy relationship with the Socialists. This dynamic would have far-reaching consequences beginning as early as the mid-1930s.

Aldo Garosci argues that following the thawing of PCI-PSI relations in 1934, PSI Secretary Pietro Nenni showed himself to be quite amenable to the PCI's political program. From the inception of Popular Front onwards, Nenni never deviated from a line consistent with PCI policy. Though he briefly lost party leadership over his position on the Nazi-Soviet pact in 1939, Nenni regained control of the PSIUP and continued to steer it leftward after the war.<sup>64</sup> Indeed, the PCI directorate hoped to manipulate the Socialists, using them as a means of winning-over moderate and middle-class supporters to the Left.<sup>65</sup> Paradoxically, however, the close but distinct relationship between the PCI and the PSIUP may have actually hurt the PCI in 1946, when the PSIUP won about 20% of the popular vote, while the PCI only took about 19%. Garosci argues that the PSIUP outperformed the Communists by offering those alienated by the rigidity of the PCI a less authoritarian substitute on the Left.<sup>66</sup>

Perhaps embarrassed by the greater Socialist vote share, Togliatti maneuvered to bring the Socialists closer still. Ironically, if this development helped the PCI, it also hurt the collective Italian Left as a whole. Unable to accept the virtual hegemony of the PCI, the Social Democratic wing of the PSIUP led by Giuseppe Saragat seceded from the party in

.....  
64. *Ibid.* 210-1.

65. *Ibid.* 210-1.

66. *Ibid.* 211-2.



1947.<sup>67</sup> Thus, in the national elections of 1948, when the PCI and PSI finally concluded a Popular Front alliance, the total Left achieved only 31% of the vote while the Christian Democrats alone won over 48%. Besides a massive influx of covert assistance from the United States and a concerted push from the Vatican in favor of the DC, the 7% of votes cast for the Social Democrats and not for the Popular Front of the PCI-PSIUP certainly helped to ensure a Centrist victory.<sup>68</sup>

I argue that the PCI's superior organization helped to condition this pathological Communist-Socialist relationship. The Popular Front collaboration established between the PCI and PSI beginning in 1934 was essentially a relationship between two underground organizations, one clearly stronger and better organized than the other.<sup>69</sup> For example, in comparison to the Socialist and Liberal Resistance groups like *Giustizia e Liberazione*, the PCI certainly took a leading role in organizing subversive activities within Italy, mainly because of its greater preparation, longer period of planning for underground activities, and its vast resources furnished by the Comintern.<sup>70</sup> Had the PCI and PSI run together in an election during the Popular Front years, the Socialists might have gained leverage over their Communist allies with a high vote share or a leading role in a coalition government. Yet a partnership based solely on resources and organizational strength was bound to favor the Communists, setting the tone for PCI-PSIUP relations in the postwar years.

This situation contrasts sharply with the French case. Despite their Pact of Unitary Action and several attempts to fuse the parties, one can trace the development of a competitive rift between the PCF and SFIO to the Popular Front years. Tiersky notes that the PCF's decision to not participate in the Popular Front government led by Léon Blum in 1936 was a first step in a process of dissociation between the Communists and the Socialists.<sup>71</sup> Ten years later, the SFIO wavered between alignment with the PCF and the MRP, first voting with the PCF on a draft constitution in the spring of 1946, then, after the rejection of the draft constitution at referendum, swinging right to threaten an alliance with the MRP. This vacillation left the French Socialists stuck between two stronger parties on either flank, rewarding the PCF with votes from the left wing of the party, while its right wing bled off to the MRP.<sup>72</sup> Interestingly, the competitive distinction between the PCF and its nominal ally, the SFIO, may have actually helped the PCF at the polls after World War II, while the gradual subjugation of the PSI by the PCI ultimately damaged first the electoral hopes of the PCI, then those of the general Italian Left as well.

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67. *Ibid.* 211-2.

68. Rizzo, *I nostri primi 50 anni*, 47.

69. Galli and Prandi, *Patterns of Political Participation in Italy*, 16.

70. Einaudi et al, *Communism in Western Europe*, 173.

71. Donald L. Blackmer and Sidney Tarrow, eds, *Communism in Italy and France* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1975), 424.

72. Williams, *Crisis and Compromise*, 22-4.

## Conclusion

Through the arguments advanced in the last eight sections of this paper, I have demonstrated how the different Popular Front and Resistance experiences of the PCF and PCI may have rendered the French party a national one in the years immediately following World War II while the Italian party remained geographically confined to traditional strongholds of support. This conception rejects competing hypotheses that attribute the divergent outcomes of the PCF and PCI to Christian Democratic opposition or industrialization and urbanization.

Furthermore, my argument accounts for the role of the braccianti and the agricultural proletariat in forging a national party and proposes a mechanism by which the PCF may have grown into one. The model presented in Section VII highlights the significance of a combined agricultural-industrial approach for Communist parties. It also elaborates a plausible sequence of events whereby Bolshevization, followed by Popular Front tactics and then the Resistance, led to the creation of a strong and competitive postwar party in France. Finally, the previous section demonstrates how the lack of an electoral Popular Front before World War II may have affected the fortunes of the Italian Left after the war.

If convincing, this account could have implications for the power of party organizational strategy and the significance of electoral politics in altering political opportunity structures. As in the case of the PCF in 1936, small and disciplined modern-day parties may be able to court voters from new socioeconomic groups outside of their traditional strongholds through participation in broad electoral coalitions like the Popular Front. Though Palmiro Togliatti may not have lived to see the advent of a truly national Italian Communist party, his role in elaborating and promoting the Popular Front strategy in 1934 was definitive for the Communist parties of Western Europe. This alliance would ultimately help to create a national Communist party in France and serve as the strategic model for European Communism for years to come.

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# Economic Sanctions: An Effective Tool for Influencing International Behavior in the Twenty-First Century

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## Abstract

The use of economic sanctions as a persuasive tool of international relations has become increasingly frequent in the last several decades. This paper presents scenarios in which sanctions have and would be used, discusses theoretical approaches to how they should be used, and examines historical cases to elucidate what situations render them most successful. It establishes economic sanctions as a relevant and vital tool for contemporary international relations that can be tailored to a wide variety of situations and objectives. Finally, this study offers two policy recommendations to strengthen the implementation of sanctions in the twenty-first century.

## Introduction

Although the idea of sanctions is an age-old concept, its utilization has spiked significantly in the past decade. Its place in American history is certainly nothing new. In fact, some scholars have deemed economic sanctions “as American as apple pie.”<sup>1</sup> This paper argues that sanctions are most effective when: (1) they do not seek drastic change in the opponent’s government and policy, (2) a nation or a group of nations seeks to demonstrate willpower and exhibit disapproval for violations of international law, (3) there is already an organized and structured internal opposition present in the target country, and (4) the sanctioning nation economically dwarfs the potential target nation or when the target nation’s economy heavily depends on an outside source. On the whole, this paper will

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1. Solveig Singleton and Daniel T. Griswald, eds. *Economic Casualties: How U.S. Foreign Policy Undermines Trade, Growth, and Liberty*. Washington D.C.: The Cato Institute, 1999, p ix.

demonstrate that sanctions can in fact be significant foreign policy tools. It will accomplish this through the discussion of more tangential issues, such as sanctions theory versus sanctions practice, multilateralism versus unilateralism, and a gradual versus comprehensive approach to implementation. Before concluding, this paper will also outline some policy recommendations for further ensuring the effective use of sanctions.

### Economic Sanctions Philosophy and Practice

President Thomas Jefferson first stated how economic sanctions might be effective in 1807. Jefferson withheld 1,500 American ships, 20,000 seamen, and \$60,000,000 worth of cargo to deny Great Britain trading benefits. Great Britain was at war with France and had constricted the passage of all ships seeking trade with the French-controlled Europe such that they could only pass through British ports. Disagreeing with this order, Jefferson hoped that his self-imposed embargo would show Britain that there were “more peaceable means of repressing injustice, by making it the interest of the aggressor to do what is just.”<sup>2</sup> Indeed, Jefferson already pinpointed the primary role and purpose of sanctions. Often misconstrued, the goal of sanctions is not to solely destroy the infrastructure and economy of the target nation. Instead, the art of sanctions statecraft lies in applying a variety of available measures forceful enough to persuade targeted leaders to move toward political compliance.<sup>3</sup> As a result, the role of sanctions becomes more of a psychological game between a sanctioning and target nation.

With this in mind, one may ask which situations merit sanction use, and how nations should go about implementing such measures. The world recognizes several forms of international interactions when a nation disagrees with or condemns the actions of another. These interactions may range from diplomatic communication through talks or summits, to sanctions, and to the most extreme option of open warfare. Though each sanctions case is unique and dealt with individually, some distinct patterns have emerged in the history of sanctions in international relations.

It is firstly important to delineate the significance of sanctions. Sanctions can help to avoid the costly, bloody, and time-consuming employment of armed forces. This does imply that an economic sanction is a weaker foreign policy tool. Many underestimate the degree of damage economic sanctions can incur on an economy. Nations can first choose to use sanctions as an effective tool to regulate international behavior before resorting to the use of force.<sup>4</sup> Even the nations that seem the most stable can suffer dramatic economic losses from sanctions. In addition to economic hardship, targeted countries may suffer substantial

2. Andrew A. Lipscomb and Albert Ellery Bergh, eds., *The Writings of Thomas Jefferson*, 20 vols. Washington: Thomas Jefferson Memorial Association, 1904-05, ix 53.

3. Hossein G. Askari, John Forrer, Hildy Teegen, and Jiawen Yang. *Economic Sanctions: Examining Their Philosophy and Efficacy*. Westport, Connecticut: Praeger, 2003, 77, 79.

4. Hossein G. Askari, John Forrer, Hildy Teegen, and Jiawen Yang. *Economic Sanctions: Examining Their Philosophy and Efficacy*. Westport, Connecticut: Praeger, 2003, 77, 79.



sanctions-inflicted human losses in the forms of innocent civilians. Governments can often avoid sanctions' punishing effects by using its power to create a "rally around the flag" effect or redistribute scarce resources to its supporters. In other words, leaders can simply pass the intended punishment of the sanctions over to its citizens and domestic enemies.<sup>5</sup>

For example, one can easily look to the sanctions imposed by the United Nations (UN) on Iraq after its invasion of Kuwait in 1990. To date, the sanctions on Iraq remain the "most comprehensive sanctions known."<sup>6</sup> Regardless of the sanctions' primary goals (which in 1990 was the removal of Saddam Hussein from leadership) and whether or not that goal was reached in a timely manner, it is indisputable that the sanctions imposed on Iraq substantially damaged the economy. Though the UN Security Council made exceptions on the importations of medicines, health supplies, and foodstuffs to help the humanitarian aid effort for both the Kuwaiti and Iraqi citizens, Iraq was able to divert these scarce resources away from its intended recipients.<sup>7</sup> Estimated civilian death tolls are over a million, of which a disproportionate number were children.<sup>8</sup> Importantly, this example shows how sanctions are a significant foreign policy tool and should be applied with restraint. Political scientists should consider the concept and nature of sanctions as a coercive policy instrument that can be used as the most effective and logical reaction to a potential target country in certain circumstances.<sup>9</sup>

There are generally three broad categories of economic sanctions: trade embargoes, financial boycotts, and the freezing of assets abroad.<sup>10</sup> Trade embargoes work best if the target country is economically dependent on an outside source as mentioned previously. Economic sanctions should target the sector of the economy that is weakest, which will vary from country to country and region to region.<sup>11</sup> Knowing the country's history both economically and politically will be important factors in deciding exactly what kind of sanctions best fit the circumstances.

One may learn about sanctions through two approaches - through history or scholarly theory. Political scholars build upon the lessons of history to better understand the nature and effects of sanctions for future situations. There are disadvantages to both methods: through history, one must always wait for the past to "play out" and then look back and analyze events, whereas in sanctions literature, the theories explored may not always work practically in the world. Also, the nature of sanctions (as with any interactions among countries) depends heavily on the target country, so no theory will always hold true. By examining important points from each approach, one can begin to understand in which situations sanctions are generally favorable responses and when they are not.

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5. David Cortright and George A. Lopez, eds. *Economic Sanctions: Panacea or Peacebuilding in a Post-Cold War World?* Boulder: Westview P, 1995, 34.

6. David Cortright and George A. Lopez. *The Sanctions Decade*. Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 2000, 37.

7. *Ibid.*, 46.

8. *Ibid.*, 47.

9. Cortright and Lopez, eds. *Economic Sanctions: Panacea or Peacebuilding in a Post-Cold War World?*, 19.

10. *Ibid.*, 189.

11. Askari, 28, 29.

## Theory Review

### A) Gradual vs. Comprehensive Approach

One tension between sanctions literature and sanctions practice is whether sanctions should be imposed incrementally with a gradual increase of pressure or in an immediate and comprehensive manner. Studies show when sanctions are imposed incrementally/gradually, the target country is allowed time to adjust and build immunity against them, leading to sanction evasion.<sup>12</sup> Likewise, some studies have concluded that the chances of success will improve if sanctions are imposed comprehensively.<sup>13</sup> However, sanctions practitioners, such as the United Nations, appear to hold a different view. They have argued for a more “flexible” strategy opposed to one that suggests “massive retaliation.”<sup>14</sup> This preference for a more graduated response is backed by early scholarly literature, such as Thomas Schelling’s *Arms and Influence*, in which the idea of “persuasive coercion” calls for the “incremental application of force linked with the threat of inflicting more pain in the future.”<sup>15</sup> The escalatory nature of this policy leaves the opponent with a sense of impending and unbearable doom and is often supported by those who seek a more peaceful conflict resolution. However, it is necessary to highlight that if the case at hand poses a real and imminent threat to peace or a heavy violation of human rights, it may require a “hard and fast” approach after all.

### B) Unilateralism vs. Multilateralism

Whether to impose sanctions unilaterally or multilaterally is another key issue. Ideally, multilateral sanctions or a joint effort are preferable. However, sanctions need not always be multilateral to be effective. Unilateral sanctions should take precedent in certain cases. For example, if the targeted country is heavily dependent on only one country, unilateral sanctions imposed by that one nation can be more efficient by expediting the process and decision-making. Furthermore, as discussed above, sanctions work best when coupled with swiftness.<sup>16</sup> Multilateral sanctions imply that several leaders will be discussing plans for actions together, which can lead to cumbersome group voting and decision-making. Still, for success, it is vital for unilateral sanctions to ensure compliance. In light of this, a country should appeal to the United Nations if it intends to employ unilateral sanctions. Other countries do not necessarily need to partake in the actual implementation of measures, but if they at least agree to abide by the sanction’s rules (especially if the policy involves a trade embargo), the policy has a much higher chance of succeeding in a timely manner.

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12. Cortright and Lopez. *The Sanctions Decade*, 26, 27.

13. *Ibid.*, 27.

14. *Ibid.*, 27.

15. Thomas C. Schelling, *Arms and Influence* (The Henry L. Stimson Lectures Series). New York: Yale UP, 1967. Print, 71.

16. Wallensteen, 5.

If the enforcing country meets resistance from poorer, third world countries that cannot economically afford compliance with sanctions regulations, it may have to offer incentives or negotiate other alternatives. Likewise, if a country or private business knowingly violates regulations, action must be taken to discontinue the offending activity. By enforcing its own policies, the sanctioning nation is covering all its bases. This is often costly but necessary for a successful sanctions regime.

Naturally, the tradeoff for success covers a very broad range of subjects. The major problem with many sanctions is that too often the target nation finds ways to mitigate the effects of sanctions either by illegally trading with sanction-violating firms/nations or by redirecting resources to their domestic supporters and punishing their adversaries.<sup>17</sup> If relevant countries are able to cooperate, the target country can be sufficiently isolated and goals can be achieved. On the other hand, the poor implementation and lack of reinforcement translates into the loss of the sanctioning country's credibility. A continued effort from the enforcing nation is necessary or the target country will hold out for the storm to pass. Additionally, international support for the sanctions may wane, further reducing the sanctioning nation's credibility.

## Methodology

I will determine which situations merit the use of sanctions by studying historical cases. I will contrast the sanctions that were deemed "successful" and compare the outcomes to scholars' predictions. As stated before, the purpose of economic sanctions is not to completely decimate the opponent's society or economy, but to inflict enough damage (or at least the threat of at least the possibility of such damage) to extort a policy change in the target country and end the unacceptable activity.<sup>18</sup> In other words, the goal is that the leader of the sanctioned nation will determine that the costs of coping with the sanctions outweigh the benefits of his behaviors.

## Cases of U.S. Economic Sanctions

### A) Cuba: Possible Alternatives and Avoiding a Sanction's Impact

Sanctions are an effective method for demonstrating resolve and showing disdain for actions that are unacceptable to the international community.<sup>19</sup> This reveals to the world that a country takes an issue seriously enough to the point where it is willing to apply sanctions that will not only harm the target nation but possibly also the enforcing nation's own domestic business as well. Usually, the success of sanctions on one particular regime depends on economic prosperity of the country or countries imposing the sanctions, as well

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17. Cortright and Lopez. *The Sanctions Decade*. 23.

18. Cortright and Lopez, eds. *Economic Sanctions: Panacea or Peacebuilding in a Post-Cold War World?*, 33.

19. Askari, 101.

as the ease and speed with which the target country can adjust from that dependency as sanctions are imposed.<sup>20</sup> Likewise, implementing sanctions are ideal when the economic costs of a sanction are high for the target country, but low for the sanctioning nation or nations. Even if the target country is dependent on an outside source that does not include any of the sanctioning nations, it will still feel the sanctions' harshness as long as the outside source supports the sanction.<sup>21</sup> However, sanctioning nations must be forward-thinking to predict the target country's next moves. Future policies could dampen the sanction's effects by making use of alternatives. For example, when the United States imposed sanctions on Cuba in 1989 during the time of Fidel Castro's rise to power, nearly three-quarters of Cuba's trade was with the United States alone.<sup>22</sup> In response, Cuba virtually diverted all of that trade to countries of the former Soviet bloc.

### B) Haiti and South Africa: Internal Opposition

If a strong, organized political opposition is already present to ally with the sanctioning nation and put pressure on the target government, the chance for sanctions to succeed are much higher. The "internal opposition" is at its strongest and the rally around the flag effect is weakest when light sanctions are imposed and even more are threatened in the future.<sup>23</sup> The internal opposition effect is particularly robust when the political opposition includes portions of society that generate a significant amount of gross domestic product or have significant political power.<sup>24</sup> For example, the opposition to the Cedras government in Haiti in 1993-94 was weak compared to opposition to government in South Africa from 1993-1998. Therefore, sanctions had less of a chance of eliciting an internal opposition effect and thus were less likely to compel the Haitian government to comply with sanctions demands.<sup>25</sup> Furthermore, in addition to weak political opposition in Haiti, much of the Haitian economic elite supported the militaristic government. The internal opposition effect also implies that sanctions are more likely to be effective in societies with some degree of democratic freedom than in societies located in totalitarian states.<sup>26</sup> On the other side of the spectrum, if there is no internal opposition or if the two countries have had friendly relations in the past, sanctions may only be appropriate when diplomatic negotiations fail. These "friendly" sanctions, as opposed to "non-friendly" sanctions may be successful because countries are more willing to compromise their agendas when they are confronted by friends, or in this case, allies.<sup>27</sup>

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20. Cortright, and Lopez, eds. *Economic Sanctions: Panacea or Peacebuilding in a Post-Cold War World?*, 19.

21. Peter Wallensteen and Carina Staibano, eds. *International Sanctions*. London: Frank Cass, 2005, 50.

22. Donald L. Losman. *International Economic Sanctions*. 37.

23. Cortright and Lopez. *The Sanctions Decade*, 42.

24. Cortright and Lopez, eds. *Economic Sanctions: Panacea or Peacebuilding in a Post-Cold War World?*, 34.

25. Cortright and Lopez. *The Sanctions Decade*, 21.

26. Kimberly Ann Elliot, "The Sanctions Glass: Half Full or Completely Empty?" *International Security*. Vol 23, No. 1 (Summer 1998).

27. Cortright and Lopez, eds. *Economic Sanctions: Panacea or Peacebuilding in a Post-Cold War World?*, 35.

### C) Yugoslavia: Human Rights Violators

Many of the sanctions sponsored by the United Nations throughout the last decade were implemented because the international community demanded the cessation of human rights violations and the build-up of nuclear weaponry. One case study is the former Yugoslavia in 1992, when the Security Council denounced the policy of the purported ethnic cleansing and other inhumane methods used to instigate genocide in Bosnia and Herzegovina.<sup>28</sup> Faced with even tighter sanctions a year later, along with an already deteriorating economy, Serbian President Slobodan Milosevic changed his position from supporting the Bosnian Serbs to opposing them. The Bosnian Serbs had already rejected both the Vance-Owen peace plan and the Contact Group plan. Eventually, the United States was able to help negotiate a treaty in November 1995 that officially ended the armed conflict in former Yugoslavia.<sup>29</sup> Known as the Dayton Accords, the signing of the peace agreement suggests that in this case, sanctions were successful. They were able to change the behavior of a government leader, lending to a trickledown effect that halted the ethnic killing.

Sanctions are often compared with the analogy of the carrot and the stick. Sanctions are considered a form of persuasion and a tool for encouraging targeted regimes to reevaluate their policy options.<sup>30</sup> Sanctions would increase the cost of defiance but would also offer benefits for cooperation. When one views sanctions with this kind of “bargaining” angle, the carrot and stick analogy works well. However, this analogy is straightforward and seems too simple. When evaluating strategies of implementation, it is necessary to break down elements of the whole for the sake of study. One must take into account the complexities of international relations and myriad events whirling about while the sanctioning nation is interacting with the targeted nation. Issues like credibility and resolve, though not as official as formal speeches or the physical movement of supplies, play a significant role in the outcome of sanctions. When planning for the implementation of effective sanctions, officials must take into account each individual case by dissecting the country’s current economic health and its overall status in the international community.<sup>31</sup>

## Policy Suggestions

### A) Multilateralism

There are better ways for world organizations to organize, plan, and execute sanctions, specifically multilateral ones. A new United Nations committee dedicated solely to the research, upkeep, and maintenance of its sanctions will better serve the organization for a number of reasons. The use of sanctions has dramatically increased during the past decade.

28. Richard N. Haass, *Economic Sanctions and American Diplomacy*. New York City: Council on Foreign Relations, Inc., 1998, 182.

29. Milica Delevic, “Economic Sanctions as a Foreign Policy Tool: The Case of Yugoslavia.” *The International Journal for Peace Studies* 3.1 (1998). Web. <[http://www.gmu.edu/programs/icar/ijps/vol3\\_1/cover3\\_1.htm](http://www.gmu.edu/programs/icar/ijps/vol3_1/cover3_1.htm)>.

30. *Ibid.*

31. Peter Wallensteen and Carina Staibano, eds. *International Sanctions*. London: Frank Cass, 2005, 6, 7.

Out of the 647 Security Council resolutions in the first forty-five years of its existence, more than 602 were in the last ten years.<sup>32</sup> The new committee can be designed to be more inclusive and balance the powers of the Security Council. The task of imposing, enforcing, and monitoring sanctions is large and complex enough to justify the creation of a group that is wholly focused on carrying out these functions properly.

If the committee is indeed inclusive, the next big question will revolve around voting procedure, i.e., how inclusive they should be and how each nation will be represented. The United Nations declares that all nations are equal, but the veto power of the five veto nations in the Security Council demonstrates how certain nations are given preferential treatment.<sup>33</sup> Yet if there are no veto powers in the new committee and every country has one vote, the smaller, more numerous countries may have a tyranny of majority. This scenario is avoidable if one follows the example of America's House of Representatives voting procedure, which votes proportionally to the member country's economic size and influence on the greater international world. Another method can be to vary votes in accordance to the nature of each sanctions crisis and the relationship each member nation has to the potential target country. The committee can create rules where certain acts are defined as unacceptable to the international community, allowing it to automatically warrant sanctions. It will also serve as an advanced warning to leaders of rogue states who may be considering such behavior.

#### B) "Opportunistic" Use of Sanctions

Sanctions are ideal in cases where the sanctioning nation is economically much larger, more powerful, and more developed than the target country. This adds credibility to the sanctioning nation before sanctions begin and can alone deter the target and future targets. Additionally, swift and forceful action during the implementation of a sanction is more likely to succeed in cases where economies differ in size because the targeted country will feel the force of the sanction more immediately. In successful cases, the average sender's economy was 187 times larger than that of the average target.<sup>34</sup>

Moreover, sanctions aiming to decrease military potential and capacity have a higher chance of attaining success than those that aim to completely cripple the opponent's military power. However, sanctions may still be of some use in these cases if employed more effectively than in the cases considered. Significantly, sanctions are not meant to extract a change in the leadership of a regime, such as the extradition of a leader. Likewise, sanctions are rarely appropriate when a country seeks drastic changes in policy.<sup>35</sup> Sanctions are more or less a bargaining tool, where the enforcing nation presents two options to the target nation: compliance or non-compliance, the former of which will translate into economic hardship, while the latter will result in a peaceful agreement that is upheld by both sides of the issue.

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32. Ibid, pg. 1.

33. Kim R. Holmes "The UN Charter: Then and Now." U.S. Department of State. 21 Nov. 2003. 13 Apr. 2007 <<http://www.state.gov/p/io/rls/rm/2003/26960.htm>>.

34. Cortright and Lopez, eds. *Economic Sanctions: Panacea or Peacebuilding in a Post-Cold War World?*, 53.

35. Wallensteen, 9.

## Conclusion

Sanctions are a vital and effective tool in international relations in the twenty-first century. By conducting comprehensive analysis and research on the effectiveness of sanctions, one can pinpoint which characteristics are catalysts to success. Of course, the road to successful sanctions is never easy and involves case-specific policies. This paper, in interest of length, certainly does not address each and every aspect of what can affect sanctions. However, it has addressed basic guidelines of how to impose them and defined ideal situations in which sanctions have a higher chance of succeeding. This explains why some circumstances are unlikely to result in a successful sanction while others may develop into successful ones. Importantly, this paper demonstrates that the world should treat sanctions with seriousness and restraint. Leaders from all nations must recognize sanctions as not simply a foreign policy tool that lies between diplomatic speeches and military deployment, but as a very relevant strategy to maintain peace and civility in our world.

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# BIOLOGICAL WEAPONS AND THE FUTURE OF BIOSECURITY: Recommendations for Prevention and Nonproliferation

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## Abstract

With the rise of non-state actors, such as transnational terrorist organizations, in the international theater, the threat of a biological weapons (BW) attack is more pressing than ever. Although many improvements have been made in the last decade to secure laboratories and integrate the international scientific community, the pathogens used to create BW are extremely complex and pose unique problems to international biosecurity. In this research paper I will examine the state of biosecurity and present a three-pronged approach to dealing with the growing biothreat. I will propose measures to monitor and secure pathogens, improve intelligence, and deter the scientific community from illegally selling pathogens or BW technology, thereby preventing the proliferation of BW materials and improving international biosecurity.

## Introduction

Biological weapons are perhaps the most complex of the so-called “weapons of mass destruction”. They consist of living microorganisms capable of infecting a host, spreading and causing widespread casualties. Regardless, after the United States unilaterally abandoned its biological weapons (BW) development program in 1969 and the international community banned BW at the Biological and Toxic Weapons Convention in 1972, discussion of BW and their enormous latent danger fell to the wayside. Additionally, the importance of BW is downplayed because there has never been a state-sponsored biological attack, and the

instance of non-state actors using BW is very low. However, the end of the Cold War and its relative bipolar stability led to a rise in ethnic, religious and sectarian conflicts, and fortified the role of non-state actors in the international playing field. The United States can no longer afford to ignore the discussion of BW. In this paper I will examine how preventative policies impact biosecurity and recommend measures that the U.S. government should adopt to lessen the proliferation of deadly pathogens.

I will begin my examination of BW threat by discussing theories of leading scholars in international security and BW analysis. Considering the quantity of written works on the threat, nonproliferation and control of nuclear weapons, the body of BW literature as it relates to international relations theory is quite small. However, scholars and bioweaponers such as Milton Leitenberg, Malcolm Dando, Mark Wheelis, Lajos Rózsa, R. William Johnstone, Brian Rappert, Caitríona McLeish, Dr. Daniel Lucey and Dr William Patrick are important contributors to the BW and bioterror debate that I have consulted extensively in my research.<sup>1</sup> In terms of in-depth theory, I will pay special attention to William R. Clark's critical approach to biothreat and fear mongering, as well as Gregory Koblenz's recommendations for improved international biosecurity.<sup>2</sup> After consulting the works of the aforementioned prominent voices in the field of bioweaponry and international security, I will proceed to examine the threat of BW and make recommendations.

In introducing the threat of a BW attack on U.S. soil, I will answer three questions pertaining to the likelihood of an attack. First, who would be likely to use a BW against the U.S.? Second, what is the relative ease or difficulty of obtaining a BW? And third, how well equipped is the U.S. to deal with a biological attack? After answering the following questions, I will propose joint policy recommendations to the U.S. Department of Defense, Department of Justice, Health and Human Services and Homeland Security.

I am examining bioterror because, even though an attack may be unlikely, the world theater has changed dramatically with the rise of non-state actors and the unfathomable is quickly becoming a viable possibility. It is the responsibility of any powerful nation, especially the United States, to assess threats and prepare for the worst possible outcome using finite resources. BW have been overshadowed for years by nuclear weapons and I would like to reintroduce them to the mainstream defense strategy debate. I intend to explore why

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1. Milton Leitenberg, "Deaths in Wars and Conflicts Between 1945 and 2000," Cornell University Peace Studies Program, no. 29 (June 2006);

Mark Wheelis, Lajos Rózsa, and Malcom Dando, *Deadly Cultures: Biological Weapons since 1945*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2006);

R. William Johnstone, *Bioterror: Anthrax, Influenza, and the Future of Public Health Security* (Westport: Praeger Security International, 2008);

Brian Rappert and Caitríona McLeish, *A Web of Prevention: Biological Weapons, Life Sciences and the Governance of Research* (London: Earthscan, 2007);

Dr. Daniel Lucey, Center for Biological Counterterrorism and Emerging Diseases <<http://bepast.org/>>;

William C. Patrick III, "The Threat of Biological Warfare" Washington Roundtable on Science and Public Policy (2001).

2. William R. Clark, *Bracing for Armageddon? The Science and Politics of Bioterrorism in America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008); Gregory D. Koblenz, *Living Weapons: Biological Warfare and International Security* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2009).

the threat is so grave (and therefore why more attention should be paid to it) and the most constructive ways to prevent the proliferation of dangerous pathogens.

While assessing the threat of a BW attack and recommending policy changes for U.S. defense strategy, I will consult a variety of sources. I will primarily rely upon the body of works written on biological warfare since September 11, 2001, specifically books and scholarly journal articles. I will also consult websites of relevant organizations, such as the Center for Disease Control and Prevention, the Biological Threat Reduction Program, the Center for Biologic Counterterrorism and Emerging Diseases and the Center for Biosecurity. I will consult primary sources, such as international legislation and conference records, as well as conduct personal interviews with members of the U.S. Department of Defense.

### Thinking the Unthinkable: An Exploration of Two Leading Theories

There is relatively little theoretical literature addressing biological weapons. However, political and natural scientists have thoroughly explored the practical and technical aspects of BW. The resulting research varies greatly in approaches to regulation, deterrence, nonproliferation and response. Of the plethora of approaches, I will focus on two opposing views of BW threat. William R. Clark, of Johns Hopkins University of Medicine, and Gregory Koblentz, of George Mason University, propose antithetical views on the threat level and nonproliferation of BW that illuminate two extremes of the BW debate.

William R. Clark does not deny that BW have the potential to wreak catastrophic damage on society; however, he argues that the more than fifty billion dollars the U.S. government has spent on preventative biological warfare measures since September 11, 2001 are unwarranted considering the unlikelihood of an attack.<sup>3</sup> He claims the hysteria and panic produced by the threat of bioterrorism are more damaging than the actual spread of any pathogen.<sup>4</sup> Clark calls Mother Nature the “ultimate bioterrorist.”<sup>5</sup> He proposes that the US spend more time, money and energy improving its ability to deal with the public health crises produced by non-weaponized, naturally occurring pathogens, like the H5N1 Avian Flu, Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) or H1N1 Swine Flu.<sup>6</sup> He also believes that more effort should be made to prepare for other threats that will certainly come to fruition, such as earthquakes and other natural disasters.<sup>7</sup>

The plausibility of these differing conclusions depends on several factors. For Clark’s hypothesis to prove true, the likelihood of a BW attack must be evidentially decreasing and the certainty of other types of crisis increasing, thereby justifying the transfer of funds and resources away from biodefense. Evidence that non-state actors have little

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3. Clark, *Bracing for Armageddon*, VII.

4. *Ibid.*, 19.

5. *Ibid.*, 71.

6. *Ibid.*, 19.

7. *Ibid.*, VIII.

motivation to pursue a complicated attack with BW would also support his claim. This could be the case when there are easier alternatives for causing chaos and destruction available. A car bomb, for example, is inexpensive, effective and not scientifically challenging to execute. Clark would further be validated by facts and figures showing how global climate change will produce more natural disasters which are more imminent and pressing than a bioterrorist attack. Additionally, in the case of a BW attack, there could be a greater need for resources to deal with the resulting hysteria than the actual attack itself, as was the case during the 2001 anthrax scare. Although only five people actually died from the weaponized anthrax sent through the US postal service, the country was paralyzed by fear, anthrax reports dominated all the major media outlets, a Senate building shut down for months for decontamination, some postal facilities closed for years, copycat crimes with fake anthrax sprang up in various parts of the country and the social, political and economic disruptions were extensive.<sup>8</sup> All of the aforementioned evidence would support Clark's theory that resources and funds should be transferred away from BW deterrence and towards public health, safety and reaction capabilities.

Conversely, several other factors could cast doubt on Clark's theory. If evidence states that the threat of a BW attack has actually grown in recent years, it will not make sense to transfer funds away from deterrence and non-proliferation. For example, terrorists could shift their methods and find a bioterror attack more appealing. More pathogens in circulation, lenient security restrictions on pathogen export and import, and increased interest in a widespread attack are all possible reasons for terrorist organizations to look to BW alternatives. In disproving Clark's theory, there would have to be evidence not only that BW are a rising threat, but also that the potential damage from pathogens is significant beyond just the hysteria.

In his recent book and articles, Gregory D. Koblentz has attempted to prove that BW present a real, unique threat to international security. He goes so far as to argue, "the proliferation of biological weapons (BW) to states or terrorists is one of the most pressing security issues of the twenty-first century."<sup>9</sup> Although BW have long been outlawed, pathogens capable of being weaponized have proliferated throughout the world.<sup>10</sup> BW consistently favor the offense, and technological developments in offensive strategies occur more frequently than in defensive strategies.<sup>11</sup> He argues that in order to prevent a BW attack on US soil or abroad, individual states and the international community must further empower international biological weapons control (BWC) oversight through organizations and agreements, improve verification of state compliance and intelligence coordination and expand deterrence methods. Koblentz argues that the threat of a BW attack, however unlikely, cannot be ignored and preventative measures must be taken to assuage the risk.

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8. *Ibid.*, 33.

9. Gregory Koblentz, "Pathogens as Weapons: The International Security Implications of Biological Warfare," *International Security*, 28, no. 3 (2003/4): 84-122.

10. *Ibid.*, 15.

11. *Ibid.*, 28.

Koblentz's arguments about the urgency of preventing BW proliferation could be supported with several types of evidence. For instance, the numbers of pathogens in circulation has grown since BW were outlawed. Developments in the life sciences have made it significantly easier to generate and weaponize pathogens.<sup>12</sup> Also, the motivation for terrorist organizations to wage asymmetrical warfare against the United States has grown significantly since the end of the Cold War.<sup>13</sup> Additionally, BW could appeal to terrorists because increases in population density and local and international travel make BW increasingly more powerful. The aforementioned evidence would support Koblentz's case that the threat of a BW attack is indeed serious. Prevention of such an attack requires changes in policy, specifically with regards to deterrence and nonproliferation.

In order to cast doubt on Koblentz's interpretation of the BW threat, one would have to produce evidence that international control and oversight of pathogens have improved in recent years. Additionally, international organizations would have to have successfully regulated state's individual BW control and imports and exports of pathogens and scientific information. Therefore, the threat of a BW attack would not be so dire and a reformulation of biodefense strategy would be unnecessary.

While both William R. Clark and Gregory Koblentz make important observations and policy recommendations, the facts better support Koblentz's assessment of biothreat and consequent policy recommendations. Clark first argues that fear mongering has overblown the likelihood of a BW attack and subsequently recommends that resources are better used as a response to an attack, pandemic or natural disaster. Koblentz believes that improving biosecurity is gravely important and makes preventative recommendations, aimed at stopping an attack before it begins. Following Koblentz's assessment, I agree that despite the facts that a state-to-state BW attack has never occurred and the instance of BW attacks within states is very low, it is still important to pursue a heavy campaign of regulation, deterrence and non-proliferation to avoid an attack within the U.S. I believe it is the obligation of the U.S. government to foresee the unthinkable and plan for the unlikely, especially in this increasingly uncertain time in the international theater. However, that is not to say that nothing can be drawn from Clark's conclusions. Clark's point about the dangers of mass hysteria is well taken. However, instead of detracting from Koblentz's conclusions he merely furthers the argument that more resources should be dedicated to preventative measures. Biosecurity varies dependently on measures taken to prevent a BW attack before it begins. In terms of biosecurity, Clark uses reverse causation when he argues resources are best used ex post facto. Building off of Koblentz's recommendations, as well as those of many others, the next section will be dedicated to adopting a comprehensive strategy for improving biosecurity and preventing a BW attack on U.S. soil.

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12. Ibid., 16.

13. Ibid., 13.

## Preparing of the Worst: An Empirical Analysis

Biological weapons pose an ever-evolving threat to the United States and international security. They could take the form of toxins, such as anthrax or ricin, hemorrhagic fever viruses, influenzas or any number of crop and livestock diseases. According to Gregory Koblentz, there are four characteristics of BW that make them more complex than traditional weapons. First, they strongly favor the attacker. Second, when used in conjunction with conventional military operations, they can compound the impact of force. Third, they serve poorly as strategic deterrents. Fourth, the constraints on the use and development of BW are difficult to establish and porous.<sup>14</sup> In addition to constituting a highly complex threat, BW are also much closer to development than originally thought. The documents and hard drive of Khalid Shaikh Mohammed, an important operational planner for Al Qaeda captured in 2003, revealed that Al Qaeda had already recruited a microbiologist, acquired the necessary materials for botulinum toxin and developed a production plan for weaponized anthrax.<sup>15</sup> Due to advances in the life sciences, biotechnology and dispersal methods are developing quickly. The threat of a BW attack is complex, more imminent than originally thought, and constantly evolving. The proceeding evidence demands immediate action.

Though the likely perpetrators are constantly developing ways to obtain BW and exploit vulnerabilities within laboratories, they are difficult to identify and even harder to monitor. Nonetheless, the United States has many compelling incentives to limit the proliferation of BW, for international security and its own. I will provide some background information on the nature of BW threat and then propose several measures to monitor and secure pathogens, improve intelligence, and deter the scientific community from illegally selling pathogens or BW technology, thereby preventing the proliferation of BW materials.

Who would be likely to use a BW against the U.S.? The end of the Cold War marked an important change in the international playing field. With the end of the relative bipolar stability established by the U.S. and the U.S.S.R., the U.S. faced few "A list" threats.<sup>16</sup> The world saw a rise in sectarian, ethnic and religious conflicts. Non-state actors, such as terrorist and criminal organizations, gained power in the international arena. Due to the international community's joint condemnation of BW in 1972, a bioterrorist attack will most likely emanate not from states but from these newly empowered, non-state actors. BW are an attractive, unorthodox way for terrorist groups to wage asymmetric warfare against more powerful states, like the United States.

What is the relative ease or difficulty of obtaining a BW? There are several routes terrorists could pursue for obtaining a BW. Unlike nuclear weapons, the pathogens that cause epidemics are present in nature and can be derived from benign microbes. Pathogens

14. Gregory Koblentz, *Living Weapons: Biological Warfare and International Security*, 21.

15. Jonathan B. Tucker, *Biosecurity: Limiting Terrorist Access to Deadly Pathogens* (Washington DC: The United States Institute of Peace, 2003), 11.

16. Joseph S. Nye, "Redefining the National Interest," *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 78, No. 4 (July/August 1999).

are dual-use, meaning although they can serve as weapons, they can also be used positively for research. In addition to being weaponized, pathogens can also be used for public health, immunological, agricultural and environmental research. Therefore, they are found in varying types of facilities. Additionally, they are diverse, can reproduce and are hard to detect.<sup>17</sup> It is therefore a difficult task to discover a missing pathogen. However, the knowledge and expertise required to convert pathogens into a concentrated, weaponized form is extensive. That said, if terrorist organizations do not have the capability to develop BW on their own, they could illegally or under false pretenses purchase the information and technology from rogue experts or states, recruit scientists to join them or steal pathogens from laboratories. How well equipped is the U.S. to deal with a biological attack? The September 11th attacks demonstrated America's vulnerability to a massive terrorist attack. It also illustrated the terrorists' determination to pursue nontraditional warfare tactics. A BW attack would be harmful not only because of the spread of illness, but also because of the difficulty of discerning the attacker and the confusion and panic that could ensue. In considering how well prepared the United States is for an attack, Jessica Bell, the Science Project Officer of the Biological Threat Reduction Program, states:

It's difficult to respond to an attack that hides as if it's a natural affliction... With the U.S.'s Strategic National Stockpile, the U.S. is better prepared than many countries, but even with this strategy the U.S. will have a slow response to a bioterror attack because the intent, target, attacker are widely unknown, hard to attribute, and the effect and symptoms are difficult to differentiate between a natural occurrence and a bioterror attack.<sup>18</sup>

It is difficult for the U.S. to be prepared for a naturally-occurring instance or an attack. However, the U.S. can take a variety of preventative measures to stop an attack before it begins.

The aforementioned evidence and background information supports Koblenz's argument that biothreat is high and action must be taken. There are newly empowered, likely perpetrators with ample motivation and many avenues of obtaining BW, including buying or stealing technology, scientists or pathogens. Because of the massive gaps in laboratory security, these options are made even more feasible. A BW attack would be especially appealing to terrorists because of its chaotic, unorthodox, asymmetric nature.

### Policy Recommendations

The first step to stronger biosecurity is developing a highly detailed international database in which every state registers its Biosafety Level (BSL) 3 and 4 laboratories and which pathogens they house. Barry Kellman, of the International Weapons Control Center,

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17. Tucker, Biosecurity, 11.

18. Jessica Bell, interview by author, Washington DC, November 15, 2009.



has called for a “pathogen census.”<sup>19</sup> Although biological materials are much more difficult to track than fissile materials, for example, it is imperative to have up-to-date accounts of pathogen location and information. This involves taking exhaustive steps to monitor and control bacterium, pathogens and toxins. It also includes tracking and licensing their transfer, import and export, as well as registering and licensing facilities. Jez Littlewood of the Canadian Centre of Intelligence and Security Studies argues licensing measures taken for equipment, materials, and technology “should be seen as an essential part of the measures that each country adopts as part of its web of prevention.”<sup>20</sup> Additionally, foreign laboratories should follow uniform guidelines to standardize culture collection as well as thoroughly screen laboratory personnel. A better monitoring system of pathogen control could help with the detection of stolen or lost pathogens, and prevent dangerous BW material from falling into the wrong hands.

The United States has had two biosecurity wakeup calls in the past two decades, which have led to an overhaul in monitoring policy. In 1995 Larry Wayne Harris, a professional microbiologist and neo-Nazi sympathizer, ordered freeze-dried *Yersina Pestis*, or the plague bacterium. He purchased the bacterium from the private company American Type Culture Collection (ATCC) with nothing more than a forged letterhead. After several suspicious phone calls, the police followed up on Harris, confiscated the plague bacterium, but could only charge Harris with mail fraud since ordering deadly cultures of pathogens through the mail was perfectly legal.<sup>21</sup> In response to the Harris incident, Congress mandated that the Department of Health and Human Service undertake a campaign to monitor the transfer of pathogens and toxins. This concept, incorporated into the Anti-Terrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act of 1996, was meant to prevent terrorists and criminals from acquiring pathogens and toxins.

The second important event was the anthrax attack of September and October 2001, which, according to R. William Johnstone, “revealed significant gaps in our overall preparedness against bioterrorism, and [gave] a sense of urgency to biodefense efforts.”<sup>22</sup> On October 26, 2001 President Bush signed into action the USA PATRIOT Act. Section 817 criminalizes the knowing possession of any biological agent, toxin, or delivery system not “reasonably justified by a prophylactic, protective, bona fide research, or other peaceful purpose.”<sup>23</sup> Additionally spurred on by the anthrax attacks of 2001 was the Public Health Security and Bioterrorism Preparedness and Response Act, which included the section “Enhancing Controls on Dangerous Biological Agents and Toxins.”

As seen in the Anti-Terrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act of 1996 and the USA PATRIOT Act, the US has already made significant progress in pathogen monitoring.

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19. Barry Kellman, *Bioviolence: Preventing Biological Terror and Crime* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 111.

20. Jez Littlewood, “Export Control and the Non-Proliferation of Materials: National Boundaries in International Science?” in Brian Rappert and Cairtriona McLeish, *A Web of Prevention: Biological Weapons, Life Sciences and the Governance of Research* (London: Earthscan, 2007), 170.

21. Tucker, *Biosecurity*, 19.

22. Johnstone, *Bioterror*, 19.

23. 107th United States Congress, *USA Patriot Act* (Washington, DC: GPO, 2001) Sec. 817.

However, culture collection databases still have large gaps and some laboratories are not up to code and house undocumented pathogens or cannot determine the location of all their pathogens.<sup>24</sup> Many labs argue that heavy regulation causes an undue burden on their strained resources. Additionally, pathogens can be brought into the US from foreign laboratories with lax regulation. Without comprehensive monitoring of pathogens, it is extremely difficult to prevent bioterrorism. Therefore, it is crucial that the US devote more resources to assisting American and foreign laboratories secure and monitor their pathogens in order to develop stronger international biosecurity.

A second important step in improving biosecurity is better intelligence gathering by removing the walls of secrecy that shroud state BW programs. Traditional methods of intelligence gathering, such as imagery and signal intelligence, are futile in obtaining information about pathogens because of their composition. In 1999 John A. Lauder, the top CIA nonproliferation analyst, claimed, “biological weapons (BW) pose, arguably, the most daunting challenge for intelligence collectors and analysts.”<sup>25</sup> Therefore, it is important for states to be compelled to share information about their BW programs, biotechnology and research. Biological materials transparency, or “the free exchange of information, samples, and experts,”<sup>26</sup> could be accomplished through a dual system of sticks and carrots, punitive and incentive measures, within international agreements. The chances of a state-to-state BW attack are very low, but states have a communal interest in preventing BW materials from falling into the hands of terrorists. When states insist on continuing veiled weapons programs, their laboratories are more vulnerable to the kind of terrorist infiltration that could not just impact the host country but have far-reaching, global ramifications.

Decreasing secrecy promotes confidence and prevents leaders from acting on misperceptions.<sup>27</sup> Kellman claims, “secret bioscience programs raise suspicions and could promote a race for offensive capabilities under the cover of ‘defense.’”<sup>28</sup> With increased intelligence sharing, states undoubtedly run the risk that information might end up in the wrong hands. However, by improving laboratory security, screening personnel, monitoring pathogens and incentivizing scientists not to sell information and technology, this problem can be averted. The issue of intelligence sharing is further complicated by the dual-use dilemma of biological materials; there are peaceful and hostile biological research activities. Therefore, transparency and cooperative intelligence remove the damaging secrecy and promote accountability from states and scientists.

A final recommendation for improved biosecurity is greater integration of the international scientific community. At the end of the Cold War many former Soviet Union

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24. Kellman, *Bioviolence*, 111.

25. John A. Lauder, Special Assistant to the Director of Central Intelligence for Nonproliferation, to the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence, “Worldwide Biological Warfare Threat,” March 3, 1999, <http://www.chem-bio.com/resource/lauder030399.html>.

26. Iris Hunger, “More Transparency for a Secure Biodefense,” in Andreas Wenger and Reto Wollmer, eds. *Bioterrorism: Confronting a Complex Threat* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, Inc. 2007) 179-185.

27. Avner Cohen and Benjamin Frankel, “Opaque Proliferation,” *Journal of Strategic Studies*, Vol. 13 No. 3 (1990): 22, 34.

28. Kellman, *Bioviolence*, 143.

(FSU) scientists were left unemployed or experienced drastic pay cuts. Scientists who are not being properly recognized or compensated by their own governments might be inclined to illegally sell their materials or expertise. Due to the transnational nature of terrorist organizations, a weakness in biodefense in one state is a threat to all states. Therefore, it is in the interest of international biosecurity that marginalized scientists be integrated back into the scientific community.

Defense Department organizations, such as the Biological Threat Reduction Program (BTRP) under the Nunn-Lugar Cooperative Threat Reduction (CTR) Program, have been instrumental in updating security controls in FSU laboratories and reintegrating scientists into the scientific community. However, there are still many underpaid, under recognized scientists throughout the world. Many international initiatives have already been enacted to promote cooperation and foster a community of bioscientists, such as the World Federation for Culture Collections, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, the Global Health Security Action Group and the Australia Group. However, many members of the scientific community still face strong incentives to deal with terrorists. The United States should give economic and academic incentives to such scientists. Building secure regional centers, assisting foreign scientists to monitor and control pathogens, standardizing *modus operandi*, creating international vaccine stockpiles and sharing intelligence all help integrate the international scientific community.

It is time for the United States to devote more attention and resources to stopping proliferation of BW material and preventing a bioterrorist attack. The aforementioned three measures, pathogen monitoring, intelligence transparency and scientific community integration, will all improve international biosecurity, thereby making the United States less susceptible to an attack.

## Conclusion

Perhaps biological weapons do not get the attention they deserve because no one wants to acknowledge the havoc that a well-executed bioterrorist attack could wreak on society. Upon announcing the US's unilateral renunciation of its biological warfare program on November 25th, 1969, President Nixon warned, "biological weapons have massive, unpredictable and potentially uncontrollable consequences. They may produce global epidemics and impair the health of future generations."<sup>29</sup> Biological weapons are horrific and serve no purpose in a civilized society. However, the rise of terrorist organizations and other non-state actors has changed the makeup of international conflicts. Their penchant for unorthodox, unpredictable forms of asymmetrical warfare makes the threat of a bioterrorist attack serious.

BW present unique challenges to international security. Traditional arms control measures should not be wholly abandoned, but they are certainly not sufficient in and of

29. Wheelis, Róza, and Dando, *Deadly Cultures*, 35.

themselves. Many international biosecurity initiatives have been enacted, especially after September 11, 2001. However, many of them, like World Federation of Culture Collections, are no more than voluntary gentleman's agreements without teeth for verification or punitive action. The Biological Weapons Convention, similar in substance to the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty, has no equivalent of the International Atomic Energy Agency, thereby rendering the BWC essentially powerless to act.

Coping with a bioterrorist attack would be extremely difficult. Beyond the immediate public health concerns, there would be mass hysteria, the source of the attack would be difficult to determine, public areas would become hazardous, and there would generally be incredible social, economic and political disruption. Biosecurity is directly dependent on preventing proliferation. Therefore, it is important that the United States enact preventative measures to lessen the possibility of an attack. The aforementioned policy recommendations, including pathogen monitoring, intelligence transparency and scientific community integration, would help prevent the proliferation of BW material and dramatically improve biosecurity.

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#### About Cory Siskind

Cory Siskind is a senior at Tufts University from Piedmont, California. She majors in International Relations, with a focus in Foreign Policy, and minors in Latin American Studies.

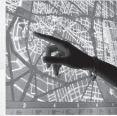
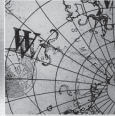
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# We're Not in Hollywood Anymore: The Effects of Climate Change on Migration

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## Abstract

This paper addresses the issue of persons displaced by climate change as a growing phenomenon of international relations. It defines what causes climate change and said migration to occur and describes the lack of protection for those affected by such processes. The paper also describes the problems associated with using terminology such as “refugee” or “migrant” for these persons, since both connote different perceptions and obligations in the international community. As such, the paper creates a new term, “environmentally displaced person,” to overcome these issues, thus eliminating controversies under international law. Finally, the paper calls for the international community to recognize the status of these persons and recommends action be taken to help them before climate change affects millions more.

## Introduction

In 2007, in response to the hotly-debated question of whether or not global climatic change exists, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) released a report affirming the fears of many environmentalists, politicians, scientists, and common persons: climate change is real, and a vast portion of it is anthropogenic.<sup>1</sup> Such a revelation sparked a new round of uncertainties about something that has often been heralded as an invention of Hollywood. Can climate change be prevented? Is it reversible? If not, who will be affected? What will happen to life on Earth?

Assuredly, changes in the world’s weather patterns will devastate particular areas of the globe, making some regions uninhabitable, forcing billions from their homes in search

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1. Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, “Climate Change 2007,” 37.

of refuge.<sup>2</sup> Conducted through an intense search of journalistic and academic sources, this investigation relied heavily upon ProQuest's Research Library, the University of Wisconsin's academic database search system, and a host of other multidisciplinary databases, eventually assembling over 150 relevant articles and books on the subject. From there, an intensive reading process narrowed down the list of pertinent works to fewer than 20, composed of academics, journalists, governmental investigators, and private institutions all seeking to answer the same questions: Will climate change cause humans to migrate? And if so, what should these people be called?

This study seeks to answer these two questions through an intensive review of the theories surrounding climate change. First, it demonstrates that the IPCC report and accounts of journalists and academics generally agree that climate change exacerbates the frequency and duration of natural disasters, devastating human habitats, and affecting migration. Second, this project explains the possible scenarios for how such a mass movement could occur, based on several models by Oli Brown and his research team at the International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD) and the IPCC. In particular, the models describe the regions of the world that will be most affected by dangerous climatic processes and will likely experience mass migration. Next, per the international legal definitions of what it means to be a "migrant" or a "refugee," this paper will establish that no safeguards exist to protect those displaced by climate change, posing serious international human rights risks. Finally, it concludes that the international community must mobilize support for the affected groups lest they perish after climatic disasters.

### Linking Climate Change and Migration

Prior to and immediately following the release of the report by the IPCC, scientists modeled the ways in which climate change could beget migration. Many found that there is indeed a causal link between the two phenomena.<sup>3</sup> Such a connection is the result of several events, beginning with the increased frequency of natural disasters. Already 211 million people are impacted annually by natural disasters. Current research indicates that climate change further increases the risk and severity of these natural disasters, which have occurred more and more frequently.<sup>4</sup> Estimates show that by the year 2015, the number of people affected by climate-related disasters will escalate to 375 million.<sup>5</sup> Individuals whose homes become uninhabitable after experiencing severe weather events must migrate to rebuild what remains of their pre-disaster lives.

While weather-related physical disasters are certainly significant in influencing the mass movement of vulnerable populations, there are several other ways in which climate

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2. Oli Brown, "Migration and Climate Change," Geneva: International Organization for Migration, 21.

3. Leo Lewis, "Water Shortages are Likely to be Trigger for Wars, Says UN Chief," *The Times* (London).

4. Rebecca Barber, "Protecting the Right to Housing..." 432; BBC News, "Oxfam warns of climate disasters."

5. BBC News, "Oxfam warns of climate disasters."



change produces such activity. First, changes in climatic patterns can lead to the loss of natural resources over time. Without natural resources, individuals can no longer receive sustenance from their homelands and are forced to migrate.<sup>6</sup> Extreme weather events disrupt the natural landscape, exacerbating such effects on already finite resources and limited energy.<sup>7</sup> For example, the arrival of torrential rains could cause floods in some of the largest cities or rural production centers in the world, ultimately destroying massive housing districts or crop yields.<sup>8</sup>

Many people have already begun migrating because of climate change, a trend that is only expected to continue as the condition of the atmosphere worsens.<sup>9</sup> Research suggests that these movement patterns indicate adaptation to climate change after the human habitat has reached its tipping point; when the environment has become unable to sustain the population living within it, individuals must abandon their lands in search of refuge.<sup>10</sup> One can already see evidence of said migration in Uganda, where inhabitants from the town of Karamoja have left their homes in search of better living conditions because of nearly three decades of droughts.<sup>11</sup> In short, a visible relationship exists between climate change and migration that is already impacting populations worldwide. Weather- and natural disaster-induced changes to local environments can cause two types of population movements in search of the resources necessary for survival: internal and external. The former involves populations moving to another part of their nation and the latter describes individuals moving across borders.<sup>12</sup>

### Drivers of Migration<sup>13</sup>

With the connection between climate change and migration rightly established, this section of the paper will describe the conditions that would compel such migration. There are three categories of events that drive population movements. The first is a gradual change in the landscape of the world, known as climate processes.<sup>14</sup> Examples of such processes are a rise in sea-level, desertification, food and water scarcity, and a host of other observable changes with long-term effects that are difficult to predict.<sup>15</sup> Climate processes may directly cause migration or simply encourage it, depending on its severity. For example, the sea-level

6. Leo Lewis, "Water Shortages ..." *The Times* (London).

7. Oli Brown, A. Hammill, and R. McLeman, "Climate Change as the 'New' Security Threat ...," 1-2.

8. Brown, "Migration and Climate Change," 16-7.

9. United Nations University, "United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change," 1.

10. *Ibid.*, 1.

11. African Press International, "Karamoja, a semi-arid region in northeast Uganda, is in crisis: a potent mix of the impact of climate change," 24 Feb. 2009.

12. Brown, "Migration and Climate Change," 7.

13. This term was adopted from Oli Brown's "Migration and Climate Change." For more information on said drivers, please refer to this article.

14. *Ibid.*, 17.

15. *Ibid.*

has risen so much in some coastal areas that they have become completely uninhabitable, forcing the sedentary population to migrate.<sup>16</sup> In a more indirect scenario, expanding desertification has transformed obtaining water from a simple task into a daily 16-mile journey in areas surrounding the Sahara Desert, causing some to question their permanent residencies in the region.<sup>17</sup>

The second driver of migration is known as a climate event, which often appears in the form of more dramatic weather patterns, such as floods, storms, hurricanes, and severe droughts.<sup>18</sup> These destructive events are more difficult to predict, often arriving suddenly and wreaking havoc that lasts for years.<sup>19</sup> In the year 2005, the United States and other parts of the Gulf Region endured Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, which left approximately two million people without shelter. Moreover, in the year 2000, some 256 million people were impacted by weather catastrophes, substantially higher than the average figure of 211 million cited earlier.<sup>20</sup> This driver, combined with its more passive counterpart, demonstrates the current danger and the reality of climate change, indicating that climatic change plays an integral role in the displacement of individuals.

There are other factors, often labeled non-climate drivers, which influence the degree of vulnerability people experience to climatic fluctuations.<sup>21</sup> Examples of these drivers of migration include government policy and planning for environmental disasters, population growth, and a community's resilience to natural disasters.<sup>22</sup> Government planning, in particular, plays a major role in influencing the impact a particular event will have on the affected population by dictating the efficacy of the human response to these largely man-made natural disasters.<sup>23</sup> The severity of a particularly destructive weather event correlates to the specific community's location and, more significantly, to the community's ability to survive the storm and to recover after it passes.<sup>24</sup> If a community can neither predict nor adapt to an oncoming environmental threat, it becomes more at risk for mortality or mass-displacement. Nevertheless, such vulnerability is not a constant factor – it can be altered based on the adaptive capacity of the community, described above.<sup>25</sup>

### Scenarios of Migration

Incorporating these motivating factors of migration, scientists have developed possible hypothetical scenarios for how large-scale population movements could occur. The

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16. Ibid.

17. Ibid.

18. Ibid., 18.

19. Ibid.

20. Ibid.

21. Ibid.

22. Ibid.

23. Ibid.

24. Ibid.

25. Ibid.

general consensus on climate change indicates that the phenomenon is a “threat multiplier,” meaning that the risk of natural disasters and other environmental “threats” will increase as a result of climate change. Within the next several decades, the frequency of individuals fleeing from their homes as a result of environmental change will increase.<sup>26</sup> As such, it is essential to explain the three ways in which climate change could lead to this mass-migration. Although some of these scenarios are more preferable than others, all of them predict the inevitable loss of human life.

The first hypothetical scenario, considered the least dire, is also the least likely. It assumes a host of future developments in technology and progress in overcoming the collective action problem.<sup>27</sup> In this version of environmental degradation, the world population would increase to nine billion persons as current birth trends continue, at which time population growth would become unsustainable. At this time, IPCC predictions indicate that several world regions would befall some natural disaster, causing the population to decline to seven billion.<sup>28</sup> Due to the devastation that would have occurred because of various climatic catastrophes, the world would fully appreciate the magnitude of the risk associated with climate change, shifting to a ‘green’ economy.<sup>29</sup> That is, the global economy would move away from material industry in favor of cleaner, more environmentally-sustainable technology. At the same time, cities would experience waves of increasing migration from rural areas as new jobs become available in the ‘green’ sector and as regional climate changes make farming untenable.<sup>30</sup>

The second scenario, worse than the first, predicts a world where similar fluctuations occur in the population level, but also predicts widespread environmental destruction. Once again, the population would peak at approximately nine billion individuals, only to decline to about seven billion after the planet exceeded its carrying capacity.<sup>31</sup> In this world, societies would come together economically and socially, but would make few attempts to counter the effects of climate change.<sup>32</sup> Such an ineffective response to atmospheric change would cause an increase in the average global temperature, melting ice caps while simultaneously drying up other regions, placing billions at risk of water shortage and starvation.<sup>33</sup> Due to the increased frequency of flooding, droughts, and other climatic processes, the world would become uninhabitable for millions, jeopardizing their survival.<sup>34</sup> Hundreds of millions of individuals would flee their homes in search of food and shelter, inundating countries with men, women, and children in need of humanitarian assistance. This migration pattern seems fairly consistent with current trends, given that

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26. For a discussion of this term, please see Oli Brown, et. al, “Climate Change as New Security Threat ...,” 18.

27. IPCC, “IPCC Special Report ...,” 4.

28. *Ibid.*, 4; Brown, “Migration and Climate Change,” 27.

29. IPCC, 4.

30. *Ibid.*

31. *Ibid.*, 5; Brown, “Migration and Climate Change,” 28.

32. Brown, “Migration and Climate Change,” 28.

33. *Ibid.*

34. *Ibid.*

some individuals have already begun moving within their nations' borders, as described earlier.

Worse yet, the third scenario describes a world that would resemble the status quo, should current environmental mismanagement continue. Yet again, this version predicts population growth and eventual population decline to roughly seven billion persons after the planet surpasses its carrying capacity. The difference, however, is that the population would stabilize only briefly prior to the onset of droughts, floods, and other extreme weather events.<sup>35</sup> Such occurrences would assuredly cause forced climatic migration as millions globally would abandon their homes in search of safe, habitable areas in which to resettle.<sup>36</sup>

However, there are a plethora of caveats to the aforementioned models. The impact of climate change is dependent upon a host of factors, including the quantity of future greenhouse gas emissions, the rate at which the future population grows, the atmospheric changes the world experiences, and the ability of national and local governments and constituencies to react to impending disasters.<sup>37</sup> Given that these variables could ultimately impact the degree to which the human race is affected by climate change, it is important for the reader to keep in mind that the aforementioned scenarios are based largely upon status quo trends, the combination of unique scientific investigations, and partly on the assumption of what would happen if no action were taken to tackle climate change.<sup>38</sup>

Further, note that these models, developed in the year 2000, predict what the world would be like in the year 2100, a difficult task even with modern technology. As such, the reader should read these scenarios as predictive hypotheses, not descriptive.

Finally, although study of migration suggests that changes to the environment have and will continue to influence migrant flow, its prediction is a complex process. First, there is no real starting point for measuring how many individuals will actually have to leave their homes. Rather, this estimate depends upon the development of climate change and the growth of carbon emissions. If the impact of climate change is strictly limited and only impacts particular areas, the number of migrants will be less than current estimates. Conversely, if the impact of climate change is more global in nature as general scientific consensus indicates, the number of possible migrants could meet or surpass current predictions, demonstrating the instability of migrant flow calculation.<sup>39</sup>

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35. *Ibid.*, 29.

36. *Ibid.*

37. Brown, "Migration and Climate Change," 27.

38. IPCC, 4-5.

39. To solve this issue, the author has consulted a variety of sources on the subject, finding several from individuals who are considered authorities in the field. One of the most thorough investigations is the basis of this investigation and can be found in: Brown, "Migration and Climate Change."

## At-Risk Populations

Climate change is a unique threat because it does not discriminate between nations and may affect every region of the world.<sup>40</sup> In fact, the number of individuals at-risk because of natural disasters caused by climate change has increased three-fold since the 1970s, including those experiencing some sort of flood, drought, hurricane, typhoon, or other natural disaster.<sup>41</sup> Despite this lack of national discrimination by climate change, the degree to which countries are and will be affected is determined by the extent to which a nation has developed.<sup>42</sup> Lesser-developed countries (LDCs) are more likely to suffer at the hands of climate change than more industrialized and modern societies with more developed physical and institutional infrastructures.<sup>43</sup>

The notion that LDCs are more at-risk to the effects of global climatic change than more modernized states raises the question of which LDCs will be most impacted. In 2007 during an African Union summit, the President of Uganda referred to climate change as “an act of aggression” by more industrialized states against LDCs, insisting upon receiving reparations from the former in order to offset the damage that the latter would experience.<sup>44</sup> This demand, though relatively blunt on the part of a national leader, indicates the common perception among many lesser-developed states: the developed world is responsible for the majority of climate change and the developing world must bear most of the cost.<sup>45</sup> Moreover, in his paper entitled “Climate Change as the New Security Threat: Implications for Africa,” Oli Brown of the IISD succinctly expresses that although the typical African only adds about one twentieth of greenhouse gas emissions of the normal American, Africa “... is likely to be the worst affected by the ‘excess consumption and carefree attitude of the rich.’”<sup>46</sup> For example, a report by the United Nations Environment Programme hinted that the intense desertification in Darfur has actually exacerbated existing conflict between farmers and herders.<sup>47</sup>

This vulnerability gap causes serious concerns for African nations, particularly when confronted with statistics that quantify such a discrepancy. For example, in examining the effects of sudden droughts and other environmental disasters, studies find that almost

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40. Barber, 432.

41. *Ibid.*, 433.

42. Brown, “Climate Change as a New Security Threat.”

43. *Ibid.*

44. A. Clark, ‘Climate change threatens security UK tells UN’, *Guardian*, 18 April 2007.

45. Brown, “Climate Change as a New Security Threat,” 1143.

46. *Ibid.*

47. *Ibid.*, 1143.

one million people are killed or displaced, representing 22% of the current population.<sup>48 49</sup> Africa's eastern portion sees similar results, with approximately two million people, or 14% of that area's population, being killed or forcibly removed from the region by a drought.<sup>50</sup> In general, these numbers confirm what many African leaders have already suspected: Africa is extremely vulnerable to the effects of climate change, possessing little funding and adaptive capacity to hedge against the threat of climatic processes.<sup>51</sup>

While Africa will assuredly experience environmental catastrophe should current trends continue, it is not the only region where millions may lose their lives. The same analysis of status quo severe weather patterns indicates that nearly two million persons are affected in South America each year by droughts, with millions more impacted by extreme temperatures, floods, and wind surges.<sup>52</sup> The picture is similar in the Asian continent, where over 32 million individuals experience hardship or death because of drought in the southern region alone, ignoring the tens of millions of other vulnerable persons residing in other areas.<sup>53</sup> Finally, regions of Europe and North America will also face severe droughts and other environmental hazards, forcing millions more out of their homes and in search of short- or long-term refuge.<sup>54</sup>

Although current evidence strongly supports the idea that the effects of climate change will be far-reaching, very few experts predict that migrants will leave their homes permanently. This decision, often quite difficult for families who have resided on particular lands for generations, is based on a cost-benefit analysis of environmental versus non-climatic factors. In particular, the two most salient factors in the decision-making process are economic feasibility and the perceived risk in maintaining one's residence in an environmentally-endangered area.<sup>55</sup> However, experts predict that hundreds of millions of residents of coastal cities, including Beijing, Shanghai, and New York, will be forced to leave their homes permanently as they are engulfed by rising sea levels.<sup>56</sup> Clearly, climate change holds a real potential for destroying the cities and homes of millions, approaching billions, all over the world.

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48. A note about droughts: the author of this investigation has chosen to rely mostly on data from people impacted by droughts because of the long-term nature of this type of disaster, making it more salient to the world post-environmental catastrophe. Other data, however, strongly suggests that millions more are currently affected by strong wind storms, floods, and other natural disasters. For more information see, Clionadh Raleigh and Lisa Jordan, "Climate Change, Migration and Conflict," World Bank Social Development Group, 10.

49. Ibid, 10. Note on the data: the data from which this data is adapted only records the number of people killed, affected, or made homeless because of natural disasters. It does not, however, record the number of people who must migrate because of natural disasters. For more information on this data, see <http://www.emdat.be/ExplanatoryNotes/explanotes.html>.

50. Ibid., 10.

51. Ibid., 8.

52. Ibid., 10.

53. Ibid.

54. Ibid., 8-10.

55. Brown, "Migration and Climate Change," 12.

56. The Lancet Commissions, "Managing the Health Effects of Climate Change," Vol. 373. London: UCL, 2009, 1698.

## The Politics of Labels<sup>57</sup>

With the threat of climate change and the possible scenarios for the displacement of millions from their homes established, this section of the paper contemplates the label these disaster-affected people should receive under international law. When discussing a subject as sensitive as definitions, it is important to consider the impacts of such terminology on the international community as a whole. Certain terms connote particular obligations under international law and, because of this, many countries attempt to avoid vocabulary that could legally bind them to accept displaced persons. As such, a comparison of the international legal definitions of 'migrant' and 'refugee' and an evaluation of how these terms function in standard operating procedures helps determine a possible alternative label.

A refugee, as defined by Article I of the United Nations Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees, is:

“A person who owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country; or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of his former habitual residence as a result of such events, is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to return to it.”<sup>58</sup>

The list of parties protected by the Convention implies that individuals displaced from their homes are excluded, leaving them very little protection under the International Refugee Law. This makes it difficult for those who lose their homes as a result of climate change to receive access to some of the most basic humanitarian necessities for refugees: monetary aid, food grants, reconstruction supplies, temporary schools, shelters, and medical clinics.<sup>59</sup>

Proponents of calling these forcibly-displaced persons 'refugees,' such as the International Organization for Migration (IOM), indicate that labeling them in this manner indicates greater urgency to the idea of forced-climatic movement, relying on a literal interpretation of the term. Environmental refugees must 'take refuge' from climate change-induced, catastrophic alterations in their environment.<sup>60</sup> Oli Brown's paper, "Climate Change and Migration," states that the problem with any other label is that it mitigates the grievances of 'standard' refugees, decreasing the importance of their suffering in the eyes of the international community.<sup>61</sup> Finally, sympathizers such as the IOM contend that the

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57. In this paper, the author has referred to many of those removed from their homes as "migrants" and even occasionally "refugees." These words serve purely to avoid redundancy and do not impose any particular political view on the label they should receive. In this and the following sections, the author will draw out what he believes to be the appropriate terminology for those who are forcibly removed from their homes due to climatic events.

58. United Nations, "Convention and Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees," Geneva: United Nations, 2007, 16.

59. Brown "Migration and Climate Change," 36.

60. *Ibid.*, 13

61. *Ibid.*

public understands and sympathizes with the term refugee because it is familiar to them from previous historical events. Therefore, the term may increase the political benefits for governments accepting individuals fleeing from climate disasters.<sup>62</sup>

However, the use of the term refugee does not necessarily coincide with how it is used in the definition established by the UN Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees. This document stipulates that the group must face clear persecution in their home countries on the basis of who they are or on personal traits such as political views or religious beliefs. As a result, it may prove difficult to expand the term to include those leaving their homes because of environmental concerns.<sup>63</sup> This represents a gray area not only in international refugee law, which has no definition for environmentally-displaced persons, but also in human rights law, where these individuals may be denied access to goods and services necessary to survive.<sup>64</sup>

Moreover, this definition does not include a person who only moves to another area within the borders of the same country, also known as an Internally Displaced Person (IDP).<sup>65</sup> A vast majority of the individuals who leave their homes as a result of climate change will relocate within their national borders to stay close to home. Therefore, the lack of protection for IDPs is alarming; it severely limits the number of individuals protected under international law exclusively to those who cross international borders.<sup>66</sup>

Additional problems exist in expanding the scope of the term 'refugee' to include those who were displaced by environmental factors. The definition established by the Convention indicates that a refugee may return to his or her country of origin once the threat of persecution has ended. Unfortunately, for a would-be "environmental refugee" this would be impossible in many cases, particularly when sea levels rise and completely submerge some areas.<sup>67</sup> As such, the use of the word 'refugee' misrepresents the issue at hand. This, combined with the potential backlash associated with expanding the definition to include more individuals, could change the opinion of the international community towards refugees in general, which would "... dilute the available international mechanism and goodwill to cater for existing refugees."<sup>68</sup>

Unmistakably, the issue of labeling these individuals is a sensitive subject for the international community, which has largely ignored those at risk for environmental displacement.<sup>69</sup> For many developed nations, the lack of willingness to accept environmentally-displaced persons falls into two general arguments. First, as Oli Brown explains, developed nations fear the impacts associated with mass migration to their

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62. Ibid.

63. United Nations, "Convention and Protocol ...," 16.

64. Brown "Migration and Climate Change," 36.

65. UNHCR, "Most Frequently Asked Questions about the Refugee Convention" Refugees. UNHCR, 2001, 16-7.

66. Brown, "Migration and Climate Change," 14.

67. Ibid.

68. Ibid.

69. Ibid., 14-5.



countries.<sup>70</sup> In particular, the mass movement of millions of persons to urban areas could strain already finite food and water resources, placing greater stress on the carrying capacity of other areas mostly unaffected by climate change.<sup>71</sup> This increased pressure could lead to political instability and ethnic conflict within the nations that receive climate migrants. This is especially likely as citizens develop nationalist attitudes against “immigrants” who have invaded their territories and have deprived them of access to food, water, and their standard of living.<sup>72</sup>

Second, many developed nations are under the impression that LDCs failed to adapt to climate change, blaming the victims because they, for lack of a better term, chose to ignore the very obvious signs of impending climate disaster.<sup>73</sup> However, the Lancet Commission’s report, entitled “Managing the Health Effects of Climate Change,” explains that LDCs have very little funding with which to prepare for a future crisis, leaving them particularly vulnerable to the ravaging effects of natural disasters.<sup>74</sup> As such, it is clear that there is political controversy surrounding the appropriate terminology used to label these individuals, with current proposals receiving a myriad of criticism.

Another term used to refer to these individuals is ‘migrant,’ which, according to Article 1 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Migrants:

“...should be understood as covering all cases where the decision to migrate is taken freely by the individual concerned, for reasons of ‘personal convenience’ and without intervention of an external compelling factor.”<sup>75</sup>

As evidenced by the language used in the definition, persons displaced by environmental processes would not meet the definition of a migrant because it requires that a person leave his place of residence without an outside influence. Even if the migrant has limited choices about where to migrate, he actively determines when he leaves and the specific location to which he moves.<sup>76</sup> Given these factors, the United Nations’ definition of ‘migrant’ automatically excludes anyone leaving their homes for environmental reasons, emphasizing the voluntary nature of the decision to relocate.

### An Alternative Label

In light of the problems surrounding the use of the terms ‘refugee’ and ‘migrant,’ it is essential that a different, less-politically controversial term be developed so that persons displaced by the climatic change may be protected under international law. Many people have already begun moving, opting for regions of the world that are considered less likely

70. Ibid., 15-6.

71. Ibid., 32.

72. Ibid., 33.

73. Ibid., 15.

74. The Lancet Commissions, 1706.

75. UNESCO, “Migration Glossary Migrant,” 3 Dec. 2009.

76. Ibid.

to be ravaged by climatic processes. One such country is New Zealand, renowned for its wonderful environmental record. The nation has seen increasing numbers of persons entering because of fears of the effects of climate change on their homelands.<sup>77</sup> The risk of natural disasters continues to increase while the status of affected persons remains unaddressed under international law, emphasizing the quickly-narrowing timeframe for enacting international environmental displacement law.<sup>78</sup>

As such, to solve this potential human rights issue, a new term, one that has been used in this investigation multiple times, 'environmentally-displaced person,' should be used to overcome the controversy surrounding alternative terms. This nomenclature overcomes several of the issues that arise when using other terminology. First, it overcomes the ambiguity of the term 'environmental refugee,' circumventing the concern that its political connotation could desensitize host nations and their citizens to those people traditionally classified as refugees. Second, this term emphasizes the permanence of the individuals' relocation, referring to them as 'displaced' instead of voluntary 'migrants.' Highlighting the forced environmental displacement of the individuals, rather than their voluntary migration, would demonstrate the gravity of the situation these people face, hopefully triggering an international humanitarian response.

Furthermore, this definition solves the dilemma associated with internally-displaced persons. So long as their original homes would become or have become uninhabitable due to climate change, they would be eligible for humanitarian assistance regardless of whether they crossed an international border. Unfortunately, the development of a new term to refer to persons displaced by climatic processes would not automatically change the attitude of the international community towards them. Already hesitant to provide them with aid, the international community will require much negotiation before the rights and the needs of these persons can be fulfilled.<sup>79</sup> Clearly, something must be done to correct this misunderstanding, or there will be little to no international humanitarian assistance for this specific group in the event that climate processes worsen.<sup>80</sup>

## Policy Recommendations

Unfortunately, the implementation of this phrase would not necessarily mobilize the international community to aid the persons who satisfy its definition because of the taboo associated with helping environmentally-displaced persons. Fear of the destruction of their domestic economies and a risk of violent conflict between mixing ethnic groups seems to paralyze any pragmatic action on the part of potential host nations. As such, several policies should be enacted in order to meet the needs of these displaced persons, many of

77. Shankar Vedantam, "Climate Fears Are Driving 'Ecomigration' Across Globe," *The Washington Post*, 23 Feb. 2009. 12 July 2009.

78. Tom Zeller, "Making the Case for Climate as a Migration Driver," *The New York Times*, 14 June 2009. 11 July 2009.

79. Brown, "Migration and Climate Change," 15-6.

80. *Ibid.*, 41.

who rely on international organizations to mandate such assistance.

First, even if it will not accept the new terminology, the international community must recognize the potential plight that environmentally-displaced persons face so as to place the issue on the world's agenda.<sup>81</sup> Second, although some developed nations see self-relocation because of climate change as a failure of adaptation, it is essential that they provide LDCs with the funding, technology, and any other necessary resources in order to attempt to counteract the effects of climate change.<sup>82</sup> Lastly, but perhaps most significantly, there must be more research conducted as to the potential effects of climate change, with both political and environmental scientists evaluating the possible actions that could be taken by migration and human rights organizations, leaders of developed nations, and other relevant groups to tackle this threat directly.<sup>83</sup> If no such action is taken, however, it is entirely possible that the world will witness Hollywood-caliber scenes: hundreds of millions of individuals fleeing their homes that have been ravaged by climate change, pleading for international assistance and massing along international borders.

## Conclusion

While scientific evidence verifies that climate change and global warming certainly exist and that as a result, many humans are at risk of environmental displacement, there is no consensus in the international community regarding how to protect these persons under international humanitarian law. The debate over which terms to use when referring to persons forcibly relocated by climate change emerges with semantic disagreements over current terms such as 'migrant' and 'refugee.' As such, the introduction of a new phrase, 'environmentally-displaced person,' would solve the concerns promulgated by the less-precise terminology. In particular, 'environmentally-displaced person' does not carry the political connotation that many associate with refugees who often flee from political persecution. Moreover, the creation of this term avoids the dilemma that springs up when discussing migrants, who often voluntarily make the choice as to when and where they migrate, even if their relocation options are limited.

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81. These recommendations are adapted from Brown Migration and CC and are consistent with the views of the author of this investigation. For more information, please see Ibid, 41-2.

82. Ibid., 41-2.

83. Ibid., 42.

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# The U.S. Naval Question in Southeast Asia

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## Abstract

In recent years, the growth of the Chinese military, particularly its People's Liberation Army Navy, has caused China's power projection capabilities to increasingly overlap with that of the United States. This is most noticeable in East and Southeast Asia. Grounded in the realist construct of international relations, this paper considers the Southeast Asian implications of continued Chinese naval development for the United States and offers policy recommendations on how the United States and its navy ought to respond to maintain its primacy in Southeast Asian waters: renewal and rebalancing of the Fleet, revitalized military-to-military relationships, and redistribution of the Fleet presence.

## Introduction

In a realist international system, anarchy pervades the world and each state is responsible for ensuring its existence. To thrive, each state seeks to maximize its power and security. Issues such as geopolitics and balance of power are important, especially when they concern the relationship between a superpower like the United States and a rising power like China. The 21st century may be called the "Asian Century" or the "Pacific Century." China is growing in economic strength and political power. The United States is the military hegemon in East Asia, but China's security preferences demand a region under its own control.

Since the advent of the international system in the 16th century, the world's most dominant state has always held a preponderance of naval power – Portugal, Spain, the Netherlands, England/Great Britain/United Kingdom, and, since World War II, the United States. Naval power, aside from increasing the chances of victory in a naval war, also ensures the security of commerce and trade across the oceans, keeping the sea lines of communication open. The increasingly globalized world today, both great states and small, depend upon U.S. naval magnanimity to keep sea lanes open for all ships.<sup>1</sup>

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1. See Brian C. Chao, "Of Navies and Power Transitions: Historical Lessons for the United States and China," bachelor's thesis, Dartmouth College, 2009; and George Modelski and William R. Thompson, *Seapower in Global Politics, 1494-1993* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1997).

In Southeast Asia, geography magnifies the importance of naval power; the region's states surround the South China Sea, which drains into the Strait of Malacca, an area that oil shipments to Japan, South Korea, China, and others frequently pass through. The strategic significance of Southeast Asia is thus naval. In early 2009, Chinese ships made international headlines on two separate occasions. China attempted to drive away U.S. intelligence-gathering vessels from the South China Sea, prompting the United States to send a warship to deter China. Richard Bernstein and Ross H. Munro had noted in 1997 that "China's buildup of naval, air, and amphibious forces will enable it to seize and hold control of almost the entire South China Sea" and warned that the "primary American objective in Asia must be to prevent China's size, power, and ambition from making it a regional hegemon."<sup>2</sup> The loss of U.S. primacy in Southeast Asia would mean the loss of control of one of the world's most important chokepoints and trade routes.

This paper explores how, given changes in the geostrategic situation, the United States can maintain the status quo in the years ahead, if not actually improve its advantage. I examine current U.S. and Chinese strategic positions, specifically naval strength, in Southeast Asia. I then analyze what the United States can do to further establish itself in the region, emphasizing a strategy that strengthens U.S. hegemony in order to deter future crisis in the Sino-American relationship. I undertake this task from the viewpoint of U.S. foreign policy and what will be in America's national interest. I define the U.S. national interest as the continuance or strengthening of the status quo, i.e., U.S. military superiority; Chinese inferiority in technology, skill, and power projection; and the maintenance of friendly regimes in Southeast Asia. I conduct my analysis through a realist lens because, as I argue in the next section, both the United States and China act strategically and practically; they pursue their respective foreign policies in realist fashion.

I present my paper in five sections: Theoretical Review, Historical Foreign Policies, Methodology, Current Force Postures, and Adjusting Force Posture. The theoretical review examines the competing theoretical lenses through which Sino-American relations can be viewed. Historical Foreign Policies shows that realism explains both U.S. China policy and Chinese foreign policy and that realism is the appropriate lens for analyzing U.S. and Chinese actions in Southeast Asia. Methodology briefly discusses how I conduct my analysis and reach my conclusions in the two sections to follow. Current Force Postures gives an overview of the politico-military situation in the region and Chinese naval developments. Adjusting Force Posture answers my question: "How can the United States maintain, if not improve, its current geostrategic position in Southeast Asia?" The section examines how U.S. naval posture can adapt to Chinese advances and bolster Washington's hand in Southeast Asia. Finally, I conclude with thoughts on how naval power and Southeast Asia fit into the overall Sino-American relationship.

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 2. Richard Bernstein and Ross H. Munro, "The Coming Conflict with America," *Foreign Affairs* 76, no. 2 (March/April 1997): 30-31.

## Theoretical Review

In this review, I describe the basic realist and constructivist theories. Each theory offers possible explanations for the nature of the Sino-American relationship: how it has developed, why it is in the general state that it is in today, and how it may further develop in the future. Realism centers on balance of power, geopolitics, and a state's desire for power and security. Constructivism, on the other hand, asserts that ideas and normative values better explain state behavior in the international system. Realism has been an influential theory in international relations for some time, with Hans Morgenthau and Kenneth Waltz serving as the two primary theorists on the subject. The basic assertion is that the international system is anarchic. Classical realism, as described by Morgenthau, posits that a state's goal is power, while Waltz's neorealism states that a state's goal is actually security.<sup>3</sup>

A central tenet of both classical realism and neorealism is the balance of power, which is the distribution of power among various states or groups of states in the international system.<sup>4</sup> States will join with each other and against other states to preserve power and security. If state A is more powerful than either state B or state C and a state B-state C alliance is about as powerful as state A, then state B and state C will form such an alliance to ensure mutual security. A balance of power establishes itself between state A and states B and C. Such considerations are relevant to a case study of Sino-American influence in Southeast Asia.

Constructivism is a relatively new theory challenging the more established doctrine of realism. Its proponents include Alexander Wendt, John R. Searle, and Friedrich V. Kratochwil. The focus of constructivism is on norms and ideas, and how they shape the anarchic world in which we live. Wendt writes on the power of social constructs in states, rejecting the assertion that values and cooperation do not have a link. He notes that Americans find five hundred British nuclear warheads less threatening than five North Korean ones.<sup>5</sup> Kratochwil explains the global economy through norms as well, writing that, "without the common acceptance of the convention of money, without the protection of property rights, and without the institutions of promising and contracting," the system would not work.<sup>6</sup> Shared norms play a role in determining foreign policy and are partly responsible for democratic peace theory, which argues that liberal democracies do not war with other liberal democracies.

Realism and constructivism thus offer two very different ways to look at the international system and state behavior therein. Realism focuses on practical concerns such as military power, while constructivism considers ideological issues and the norms that define people and states. The next section discusses which theory is more accurate, not only

3. Bruce Bueno de Mesquita, *Principles of International Politics: People's Power, Preferences, and Perceptions*, 3rd ed. (Washington: CQ Press, 2006), 127.

4. Brown and Ainley, 42-43.

5. Alexander Wendt, *Social Theory of International Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 251-55.

6. Friedrich V. Kratochwil, *Rules, Norms, and Decisions: On the Conditions of Practical and Legal Reasoning in International Relations and Domestic Affairs* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 47.



in explaining the international system as a whole, but also in explaining the behavior of the United States and China.

### Historical Foreign Policies

The previous section discussed two competing theories to explain international relations. I now apply them to U.S. and Chinese foreign relations. I first examine whether U.S. China policy has been realist or constructivist. I then do the same for the People's Republic of China (i.e., China post-1949). I then reach a conclusion on which theory, if either, is more suitable for examining U.S. and Chinese behavior in and with Southeast Asia.

As evidenced by U.S. Cold War policy's realist nature, U.S. China policy is surprisingly realist. The Eisenhower Administration dispatched the U.S. Navy to the Taiwan Strait to protect Taiwan in the Korean War, blocking Communist aspirations of invasion. For nearly thirty years after, the Republic of China and the United States maintained diplomatic relations and U.S. troops were regularly stationed in Taiwan. Taiwan remained a one-party dictatorship throughout this time, with the repression of political opponents, censorship, and other restrictions. A common enemy and containment strategy bound Washington and Taipei together, not common ideas or culture.

Throughout the 1950s and 1960s, Sino-American relations remained relatively stable. The United States continued to support Taipei, while barring Beijing from the United Nations. The situation began to change during the Vietnam War and the conflicts it spawned. The United States heavily involved itself against the Viet Cong, which China supplied with redirected U.S. food aid.<sup>7</sup> It was during this time period that Washington considered thawing its relationship with China in an attempt to ease pressure on the worsening crisis in Vietnam. In 1971, the People's Republic of China replaced the Republic of China at the United Nations. Deng Xiaoping opened China to market capitalism and established diplomatic relations with the United States in 1979. In more recent times, economic opportunities during the Clinton Administration and economic crisis during the Obama Administration have overshadowed the United States' talk of confronting China over its human rights record. The U.S. record on China is a pragmatic, realist one.

An examination of the literature and Beijing's current foreign policy suggests that China also acts in realist terms. From the beginning of its consolidation of power, China has acted strategically in its foreign policy. Michael Sheng notes that China's leaders were "flexible tacticians who were ready to make compromises and take detours to reach their ultimate goal."<sup>8</sup> This is evident from their policy toward the United Kingdom, especially on the status of Hong Kong. Kaufman notes that China was not in a position to challenge the British military guarding the colony without incurring great cost. Furthermore, China

7. *Ibid.*, 349.

8. Quoted in Victor S. Kaufman, *Confronting Communism: U.S. and British Policies toward China* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2001), 23.

wanted to consolidate control of the mainland (pockets of Nationalist forces remained in the southwest) and invade Taiwan.

In 1950, the Korean War began, drawing China into the conflict. Again, China acted not out of ideological affiliation, but rather, out of concern for stability. China did not want to suffer the consequences of a North Korean defeat, namely a refugee crisis and a possible government-in-exile crossing the Yalu River into Chinese territory. This would create domestic instability, undesirable to the Chinese Communist Party, which had just consolidated power on the mainland in the previous year.<sup>9</sup>

Present-day Chinese foreign policy toward North Korea concerns itself with much of the same issues. Chinese leaders do not know how much pressure to apply to Kim Jong Il because, while they do not want another nuclear power destabilizing Northeast Asia, they also do not wish to see the effects of an imploding regime.<sup>10</sup> A collapsed North Korea could result in South Korean and U.S. forces moving farther up the peninsula, closer to China. China protects North Korea not because it is an ideological ally, but because Pyongyang's collapse would bring about a refugee crisis and allow U.S. ally South Korea to move closer to the Chinese border.

Beijing's actions abroad, like America's actions with regard to China, are grounded in pragmatism and strategic thinking above ideology. Just as the United States does not support every democracy movement in the world, China is not working for a worldwide communist union. The two states are geopolitical competitors in the Asia-Pacific region, with overlapping areas of interest, a growing power rivalry, and a mutual desire to maximize power and security. It is therefore within the realist paradigm that this paper examines U.S. and Chinese policies and positions in Southeast Asia.

## Methodology

My methodology for the following two sections on current postures and U.S. force adjustments is based upon the historical analysis and theoretical discussion above. On the specific issue of military power, a very realist consideration, I privilege naval power because of its unique power projection capabilities and because the United States and China primarily exercise (or seek to exercise) regional power by naval means. For the next section on current U.S. and Chinese force postures, my realist and naval foci lead me to discuss only U.S. and Chinese naval postures, as opposed to ground or air postures. I briefly note the role of general defense alliances and agreements. For the last section on adjusting U.S. force postures, the recommendations are my own, unless noted otherwise. I also draw upon concurring authors to support my assertions. My recommendations focus on the U.S. Navy and address how the U.S. can maintain its military power and the balance of power – again, realist concerns.

9. Ning Lu, *The Dynamics of Foreign-Policy Decisionmaking in China*, 2nd ed. (Boulder: Westview Press, 2000), 185.

10. Michael E. Cox, "Managing Anarchy? Global Governance." GOVT 091-90: Structure of International Society, Connaught House, London School of Economics and Political Science, London, United Kingdom, November 27, 2007.

## Current U.S. and Chinese Force Postures

In this section, I explain the 2009 capabilities of the United States and of China, as well as their strategic assets in the region. This will provide the reader with a sense of what tools each actor possesses to shape Southeast Asian politics. As noted above, the key strategic significance of Southeast Asia is that the Strait of Malacca serves as the eastern gate to the Indian Ocean, the northern end of the region is the ever-volatile Taiwan Strait, and the much-disputed South China Sea is considered to have unexploited oil reserves. In addition to Malacca, the region has three other chokepoints: the Strait of Makassar, the Strait of Lombok, and the Sunda Strait.<sup>11</sup> Much of Asia's oil supply, including approximately one-half of China's foreign oil, is shipped through the Strait of Malacca.<sup>12</sup> I first describe the U.S. position in the region and then that of China.

Southeast Asia falls under the auspices of the U.S. Seventh Fleet, part of the larger U.S. Pacific Fleet. The Seventh Fleet's area of responsibility includes the Western Pacific Ocean, the Indian Ocean as far north as Kenya and as far west as Pakistan, and all waterways in between.<sup>13</sup> Forward-deployed, it is the largest numbered fleet in the U.S. Navy, headquartered at Yokosuka, Japan, with additional bases in Guam, and Sasebo, Japan. Additionally, there is a naval air facility in Atsugi, Japan. The Fleet consists of forty to fifty ships and two hundred aircraft, including one to two aircraft carriers, three to five Aegis guided-missile cruisers, five to ten destroyers and frigates, and four to five fast attack submarines. At any one time, approximately one-half of the Fleet is deployed at sea.<sup>14</sup>

The U.S. Navy and various Southeast Asian navies undertake joint exercises, most prominent of which is the annual Malabar exercises.<sup>15</sup> Malabar involves India and Japan, both of which have interests in the region. Singapore took part in the 2007 exercises as well, and serves as a foothold in the region for the United States, hosting the Navy Logistic Group West Pacific and naval vessels making port calls.<sup>16</sup> Until recently, the Philippines hosted a large U.S. military presence; currently, there are advisors assigned to the Philippine military advising on the Islamist insurgency in the south. Manila has a Visiting Forces Agreement with the United States, allowing for "cooperative military activities" with Washington.<sup>17</sup> Thailand and Singapore recently joined the Philippines as Major Non-North Atlantic Treaty Organization Allies, receiving generous aid packages for their commitment.<sup>18</sup>

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11. Richard Sokolsky, Angel Rabasa, and C. R. Neu, *The Role of Southeast Asia in U.S. Strategy toward China* (Santa Monica: RAND, 2000), 11.

12. Koong-lian Kao, interview by author, Millbrae, CA, September 2, 2007.

13. Commander, U.S. Seventh Fleet, "Forward Presence," United States Navy, <http://www.c7fnavy.mil/Pages/Forwardpresence.html> (accessed December 24, 2008).

14. *Ibid.*

15. Subir Bhaumik, "Five-Nation Naval Exercises Begin," BBC News, [http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south\\_asia/6977376.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south_asia/6977376.stm) (accessed December 24, 2008).

16. Sokolsky, Rabasa, and Neu, 33.

17. *Ibid.*, 34.

18. International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS), "China, America, and Southeast Asia," *Strategic Comments* 11, no. 1 (February 2005): 2.

These cooperative arrangements are attempts by Southeast Asian states to maintain the balance of power. Southeast Asian states do not desire Chinese hegemony in the region, which is complicated by Beijing's claims of sovereignty over the entire Spratly Islands group and the South China Sea. This puts China in opposition with Taiwan (which the Communist Beijing government does not recognize), the Philippines, Brunei, Malaysia, Vietnam, and Indonesia.<sup>19</sup> Michael T. Klare directly attributes military buildups by Southeast Asian states to China's strident claims in the South China Sea.<sup>20</sup>

It is more difficult to discern the Chinese naval position, due to the Chinese Communist Party's lack of transparency. Southeast Asia falls under the command of the South Sea Fleet, with headquarters at Zhanjiang, a second base at Guangzhou, and an expanding base at Sanya, the southernmost point of China. Figures for the South Sea Fleet itself are unavailable, but the IISS counts seventy-eight principal surface combatant vessels in the entire People's Liberation Army (PLA) Navy, along with sixty-five submarines, an increase of seven from 2007.<sup>21</sup> There are no aircraft carriers and the U.S. Department of Defense (DoD) estimates one could not be built before 2015.<sup>22</sup> The PLA Navy's relatively incremental quantitative buildup belies vastly-improved qualitative advances.<sup>23</sup>

The PLA Navy is building a class of attack submarines and a class of ballistic missile submarines.<sup>24</sup> Peter Howarth notes that the Chinese focus on submarine warfare is due to the unique undersea topography of the waters surrounding China. He writes that shallow waters are favorable to submarines and actually not amenable to blue-water navies.<sup>25</sup> Furthermore, the unique climate of the warm South China Sea waters dulls sonar beams with a "surface layer of warm water" and "varying layers of salinity" that "reflect or refract the sonar beams."<sup>26</sup> Anti-submarine warfare (ASW) detection systems are largely acoustic, meaning that the PLA Navy's diesel-powered submarines operate "in virtual silence over the full band of sonic frequencies."<sup>27</sup> They can even rest on shallow sea floors, turn off all machinery, and lie silently to evade detection. Detecting diesel submarines is thus exceedingly difficult.

Throughout the 20th century, Southeast Asian states did not view China kindly, given its tendency to intervene militarily in Southeast Asia's affairs.<sup>28</sup> Observing the Sanya naval base, *The Economist* notes: "To some, the large-scale facility suggested a menacing ambition. . . . The [South China Sea] would be the conduit for any projection of Chinese

19. Sokolsky, Rabasa, and Neu, 19-24.

20. Michael T. Klare, "The New Geography of Conflict," *Foreign Affairs* 80, no. 3 (May/June 2001): 59.

21. IISS, *The Military Balance, 2007* (Abingdon, United Kingdom: Routledge, 2007), 348; and IISS, *The Military Balance, 2009* (Abingdon, United Kingdom: Routledge, 2009), 383-85.

22. U.S. Department of Defense, *Military Power of the People's Republic of China*, prepared by the Office of the Secretary of Defense (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2008), 38.

23. William S. Murray, interview by author, Newport, RI, January 22, 2009.

24. Paul Burnell and Andy Denwood, "Perils of a New Pacific Arms Race," *BBC News*, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/asia-pacific/6937293.stm> (accessed December 24, 2008).

25. Peter Howarth, *China's Rising Sea Power: The PLA Navy's Submarine Challenge* (London: Routledge, 2006), 90.

26. *Ibid.*, 94.

27. *Ibid.*, 93.

28. Bernstein and Munro, 5.

naval power into South-East Asia and (as officials in Delhi fear) the Indian Ocean, as well as into the Pacific.<sup>29</sup> In 2003, however, China and ASEAN agreed on the Strategic Partnership for Peace and Security and the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation, providing various forms of dialogue on regional issues. Most importantly, the Strategic Partnership mandates that the Spratly Islands dispute be settled peacefully.<sup>30</sup> For the moment, then, Beijing and the ASEAN states maintain a cordial relationship emphasizing harmony.

This section has provided a brief overview of the U.S. and Chinese postures in Southeast Asia. In the face of the present U.S. hegemony, Beijing is attempting to ingratiate itself with its southern neighbors. This should not be surprising - it is not unusual for a rising power to gain influence in its surrounding area. However, no one knows how powerful China will become and whether its power will continue to increase once its economic engine stabilizes. In the meantime, it is only prudent for the United States to consider how to best maintain its strength in Southeast Asia.

### Adjusting U.S. Force Posture

In this section, I discuss what the United States can do to prepare itself for 21st-century China. This section will consider various methods by which Washington can maintain regional military dominance in such a manner that prevents China from challenging U.S. hegemony. The U.S. Navy should expand its fleet by building more vessels. It can also change the proportion that each type of ship occupies; rather than concentrate on expensive aircraft carriers, the U.S. Navy should diversify its fleet and consider other strategies that could utilize smaller ships more effectively. Finally, the United States ought to seriously consider bases and alliances to maintain a permanent presence in theater.

### Fleet Expansion

Fleet expansion may be necessary to maintain U.S. naval dominance. Given the uncertainty of the U.S. military's occupation with Iraq and Afghanistan, including how much and for how long men and matériel must be diverted to those regions, the Defense Department should consider a permanent expansion of force capabilities to offset the disproportionate emphasis on the Middle East. In a 2007 testimony before the Congress, then-Secretary of the Navy Donald C. Winter stated that the Navy would increase its fleet from 280 ships to 313 ships. This increase would seem substantial, were it not for the fact that this growth would take place over the span of thirty years (U.S. Congress 9).<sup>31</sup>

29. "Naval Gazing," *The Economist*, December 13, 2008.

30. IISS, "China," 1.

31. U.S. House of Representatives, Honorable Donald C. Winter, Secretary of the Navy, 110th Cong., 1st sess., 2007, 9.

## Fleet Rebalance

Building more ships is one solution, but it is not the only one. In addition to fleet expansion, the U.S. Navy should diversify its fleet instead of relying on aircraft carriers as a one-size-fits-all solution. Not every part of the world is the same. As the DoD has noted, China is building up its navy to secure regional security. It is building a navy and a missile system that can deter forces from entering the China Seas. I propose that the U.S. Navy rebalance its fleet composition to suit Southeast Asia's maritime environment. The region's warmer and shallower waters require a greater emphasis on submarine and ASW, as well as anti-surface warfare. The United States should have a greater proportion of smaller, quicker, lighter, and less-detectable vessels in the western Pacific, such as the submarines, destroyers, frigates, and littoral combat ships.<sup>32</sup>

The U.S. Navy in the western Pacific should have ships that are best equipped to operate there. Since the Zumwalt's cost could not be controlled, other vessels such as patrol missile hydrofoil craft (PHMs) should be considered. PHMs provide U.S. power projection much closer to coastlines and, when operating in groups, are highly effective in detecting submarines operating in littoral waters.<sup>33</sup> Littoral combat ships (LCSs), whose costs have risen as well, are another alternative.<sup>34</sup> Their flexibility as both blue-water and littoral craft, coupled with "affordability, size/accessibility, open architecture, interoperability, modularity, and . . . unmanned vehicle-friendliness" make LCSs ideal for adapting to regional naval requirements.<sup>35</sup> The Navy needs to tailor each fleet to focus on regional primacy, instead of providing one generic plan for each numbered fleet.

For the successful prosecution of ASW, the United States should take a multi-tool approach, using sonar, helicopters, and its 292 Orion and Viking ASW aircraft, all flown by the Navy. Strikingly, the United States has only nine mine countermeasures (MCM) ships and no minelayers at all.<sup>36</sup> The former is a defensive tool that searches for and destroys any mines threatening U.S. vessels; the latter is the offensive counterpart that lays mines against enemy vessels. Cluster bomb units (CBUs), first used in World War II, are another tool. As their name suggests, CBUs are dropped into the water en masse, and are designed to explode at certain depths and in unique ways upon contact with different surfaces. They can cause enough damage to diesel submarines in littoral waters to allow more advanced weaponry to target the crippled vessels.<sup>37</sup> The U.S. Navy's nuclear submarines are technically superior to diesel-powered ones and have a role to play in countering anti-access strategies.<sup>38</sup> To combat ballistic missiles, the United States should deploy its own Patriot surface-to-air missiles, as well as continue research on stealth ships and other technologies.

32. Joseph E. Skinner, "Swarm the Littorals!" Proceedings 127, no. 3 (March 2001): 91.

33. *Ibid.*

34. Otto Kreisher, "Checkered Past, Uncertain Future," Proceedings 135, no. 1 (January 2009): 38-43.

35. Robert J. Natter and R. Robinson Harris, "The Navy's 'Tipping Point,'" Proceedings 135, no. 1 (January 2009): 48-49.

36. IISS, *The Military Balance*, 2009, 34.

37. Joseph E. Skinner, "Use Cluster Bomb Units against Subs in the Littorals," Proceedings 129, no. 9 (September 2003): 89-90.

38. William Houley and James Stark, "Crisis of Confidence," Proceedings 135, no. 1 (January 2009): 30.

## Maintaining a Presence: Bases and Alliances

### Bases

It seems unlikely that the United States will obtain a naval base in Southeast Asia. The ideal position would be Singapore, which has hosted U.S. vessels at its Changi naval base.<sup>39</sup> If the United States establishes a base in Southeast Asia, at Singapore or anywhere else, then China's response should be anticipated. Would the heightened tension in the region be worth the trouble of having a naval base in the region itself, as opposed to the periphery? The United States already possesses naval supremacy, so perhaps such a blatant provocation may not be prudent.

The November 2007 dispute over U.S. naval port calls to Hong Kong highlights the real drawback of not having a base in Southeast Asia. Diego Garcia in the British Indian Ocean Territory is insufficient as a naval base and is, in any case, too far away. This puts Washington at a geostrategic disadvantage, meaning that a strong presence in Southeast Asia may require regular (though not necessarily frequent) patrols through the South China Sea. This is a military problem with a political solution.

There is the possibility of mobile sea bases, which the U.S. Navy has been researching with interest.<sup>40</sup> Land-based operations would transfer, when possible, to sea platforms such as carrier strike groups. Prepositioned ships allow other vessels to take on cargo and fuel, undertake repairs, and change personnel without having to put into port.<sup>41</sup> There is already a Marine prepositioning squadron in place at Guam.<sup>42</sup> Tenders are another option: these floating shipyards allow for more complicated repairs to ships and submarines away from homeport.<sup>43</sup> These options, however, raise the question of how Beijing would respond if it found U.S. mobile platforms in the South China Sea, part of which is its self-declared maritime territory.

### Alliances

The possibility of Australian cooperation raises the issue of regional alliances and assistance. The United States already benefits from military alliances and cooperation with states in the Asian region, which are wary of China's historical interventionism. Thailand, Singapore, and the Philippines already have military cooperation agreements with the U.S. The United States should maintain them as hedges against Chinese attempts to further their own relations with these states. Indeed, Beijing has already begun to ingratiate itself with the region with overtures of military assistance to and cooperation with the Philippines,

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39. Satu P. Limaye, "Minding the Gaps: The Bush Administration and U.S.-Southeast Asia Relations," *Contemporary Southeast Asia* 26, no. 1 (April 2004): 85.

40. Howarth, 63-64.

41. Vern Clark, "Sea Power 21: Projecting Decisive Joint Capabilities," *Proceedings* 128, no. 10 (October 2002): 32-41.

42. IISS, *The Military Balance*, 2009, 42.

43. Murray, interview.

Thailand, Malaysia, and Indonesia.<sup>44</sup> China is using multilateral exercises and port calls to strengthen regional states' confidence in Beijing.

America has opened up to Vietnam in the last decade and should exploit Hanoi's suspicion of Beijing, which has a historical motivation to interfere in Vietnamese affairs. Indonesia is consolidating power and trying to create stability, with piracy largely a local problem affecting small vessels. There is U.S.-Indonesian military cooperation, though on a small scale.<sup>45</sup> Jakarta is combating Islamist terrorism, as are Thailand and the Philippines, and the war on terrorism has provided an excellent reason for the United States to offer assistance. Washington has begun an effort not only to provide aid for counter-terrorist operations, but to cement both military and non-military relations in general.<sup>46</sup> The war on terrorism, while a legitimate exercise against Islamist extremists, conveniently serves to legitimize agreements on military cooperation that may have uses other than combating terrorism.

ASEAN is not a proper means of strengthening U.S.-Southeast Asian strategic cooperation. First, China is involved in the organization as a member of ASEAN+1 and ASEAN+3, so securing an agreement between the United States and Southeast Asia without China would quickly leak.<sup>47</sup> Second, member states' individual perspectives could hamper any U.S.-Southeast Asian agreement on matters such as U.S. forces' extraterritorial rights and U.S. aid. Third, these multiple perspectives will lead to different objectives among the ASEAN member states, complicating U.S.-ASEAN cooperation. Fourth, any military cooperation agreement between the United States and Southeast Asian states without Beijing's participation under ASEAN could only be interpreted as a direct threat against a rising China. Beijing chose to interpret the multilateral Malabar exercises that way.<sup>48</sup> It would be best for Washington to maintain its hub-and-spoke system of defense alliances instead of creating a multilateral organization. By negotiating with each state separately, the United States can address each state's specific concerns and interests.

Aside from ASEAN, alliances may not only boost the U.S. position in the region, but also might deter China from taking any rash or unpalatable actions towards the United States. Faced against a bloc of nations, Beijing will find it difficult to exercise pressure on the United States in Southeast Asia when the region's states support America. Washington may be the most powerful in this balance, but it need not be alone. I mentioned above the possibility of greater cooperation with Australia, as well as the Malabar exercises conducted jointly with India, Japan, and Singapore. These partners are all potential allies in strengthening America's hand in Southeast Asia.

Australia, Japan, and India, all strategically located in relation to the South China Sea, may be seen as additional buffers that could support the United States. Australia is at the

44. IISS, *The Military Balance*, 2008, 366; and David C. Kang, *China Rising: Peace, Power, and Order in East Asia* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007), 60-63.

45. Kang, *China*, 194.

46. Victor D. Cha, "Winning Asia: Washington's Untold Success Story," *Foreign Affairs* 86, no. 6 (November/December 2007): 109.

47. Kang, *China*, 72.

48. Bhaumik.



southern periphery of Southeast Asia; Japan, partly through its island chain reaching south almost to Taiwan, holds a strategically valuable position in the East China Sea and near the Taiwan Strait. Recent years have also seen a growing sentiment in the Japanese public for a more robust military force. India, jutting out into the Indian Ocean as it does, serves as a midpoint between the Persian Gulf and Southeast Asia; more importantly, it is the second indigenous Asian power and a potential competitor to China. Strong alliances, maritime cooperation, and naval exercises may help the United States form its own perimeter opposite China, from Japan in the north to Australia in the south, and west to India.

In this section, I have described some of the future opportunities that the United States should seize in order to strengthen its strategic position in Southeast Asia, ensure the balance of power, and deter China from any retrograde acts. The current geopolitical situation in the Near East and Central Asia does render other geostrategic concerns less important, but U.S. policymakers must look at the long-term threats and see that Islamist terrorism is by no means the only, or even primary, concern. The United States must establish solid links with states not only in Southeast Asia, but states that sit on the region's periphery. It must continue to build and modernize the fleet, adapting forces for the regional geostrategic setting. It must prepare itself for the future, whether China's rise be peaceful, warring, or something in between. By definition, deterrence only works if it is not followed by war. Successful deterrence, then, relies on preparation, strategic thinking, and multiple tools of dissuasion.

## Conclusion

I admit in the paper's introduction that I do not know the effects of China's rise on itself, the United States, and others. However, this paper operates under the assumption that China is not, but may become, a threat to U.S. hegemony at some point in this century. It would be well for the United States to prepare for that possibility. The altercations in early 2009 may be a sign of events to come. I also assume that global energy demands will continue, if not increase, so the Strait of Malacca will remain strategically important.<sup>49</sup>

In my disussion of Sino-American relations, I have barely mentioned Taiwan. It is consistently stated that, should a war occur between Beijing and Washington, it would be over and in Taiwan. Taiwan, it is affirmed, is the military flashpoint in Sino-American relations. I readily accept this point, but I would note that a threat in East Asia does not mean static military capabilities in Southeast Asia, or that Southeast Asia is less important from a geostrategic viewpoint.

Military force is a tool of politicians. As my paper stands, it should not be interpreted in a vacuum. Military preparedness is only one method—political, economic, humanitarian, and otherwise—by which the United States practices foreign policy. The

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 49. Tsutomu Toichi, "Asian Energy Demand and Competition" (paper, IISS-Japan Institute of International Affairs Tokyo Conference, Tokyo, Japan, June 3, 2008), 7.

Defense Department, Department of State, National Security Council, Intelligence Community, White House, Congress, interest groups, and voters (especially in election years) hold great sway in the foreign policies of liberal democracies. Some of my recommendations require the financial approval of the Congress and of the American voting public. It remains to be seen how the Obama Administration and voters feel about increased defense spending. Military power is one of the nation's tools, but it is only one in a set of instruments.

There may very well be a point of conflict between Beijing and Washington in the future. Powers do not like being challenged. Given that such a conflict has not occurred yet, it may still be avoidable. By strengthening itself now, Washington will be better prepared for future challenges, not only with regard to China, but also with any other threats in Southeast Asia, including political instability, war, and terrorism. The future is unpredictable. Washington needs to prepare for the worst so that it can ensure optimal operating conditions in the region. If the United States is going to remain a superpower in the 21st century, then it needs to adapt to the changing times and leave the 20th century behind. The United States would not need to fight to win if it could win without fighting.

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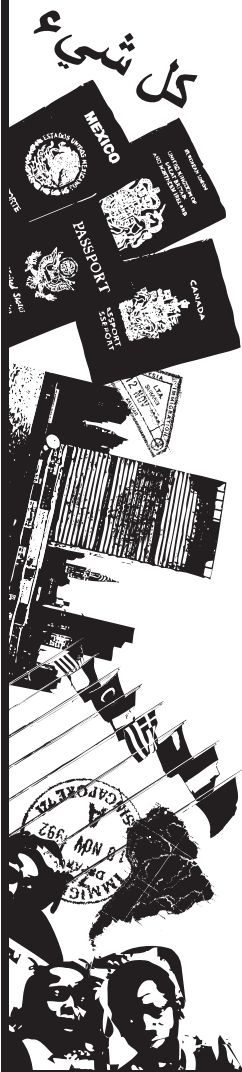
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# CZECHOSLOVAKIA

## FROM TOTALITARIANISM TO DEMOCRACY: Difficulties in Transition

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### Abstract

This essay examines the political difficulties in Czechoslovakia's transition from totalitarianism to democracy. First, it explores the challenges in creating formal democratic institutions, namely political parties and state agencies. Specifically, it establishes how a lack of democratic experience and tradition, the dearth of civil society resistance, and the leaders' neo-liberal ideology hampered the creation of a functioning democratic society and republican culture. Then, it examines informal obstacles of the transition associated with the enduring exponents – the institutions, individuals, and symbols – of communism and how the new state struggled to come to terms with its past. Czechoslovakia's odd legacy of "legal continuity" precipitated a crisis of legitimacy as the negotiated transition legitimized the communists' rule and the new democratic state continued to exist within largely the same legal framework, governed by the same institutions, staffed with the same individuals as its communist predecessor. The essay takes an in-depth look at the problems encountered in transitioning national industries, the state security apparatus, and judiciary, before posing a plethora of questions intended to highlight the depth and ubiquity of the political problems associated with the transition.

The Czech transition from a centrally-planned, totalitarian state to a free-market, democratic one has been a resounding success and thus serves as an important case study. The Czech experience provides key caveats, as well as, a possible model for future transitions from a totalitarian repressive regime to a representative republican system.

## Introduction

On November 17, 2009, thousands of proud Czech citizens celebrated the fall of communism, marching through the streets of Prague, and reenacting the student protest which twenty years earlier marked the beginning of the Velvet Revolution. Today, as a member of both the European Union and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, the Czech Republic is the envy of many of its fellow post-communist neighbors, with its relatively vibrant democracy and healthy economy. Unlike other radical political transformations, the Czech transition from a centrally-planned, totalitarian state to a free-market, democratic one has been a resounding success. Yet, radical political transformations never occur smoothly. Czechoslovakia's repressive regime did not fall as a result of armed uprising, but rather from the peaceful protests of hundreds of thousands of citizens. Thus, the creation of a new, free state required an intense struggle with its communist past. In the following paper, I will explore some of the political difficulties in the transition to democracy after the fall of totalitarianism in Czechoslovakia. First, I will assess some of the problems encountered in creating formal democratic institutions, namely how a lack of experience and the ideological underpinnings of the transition hampered the creation and functioning of political parties and state agencies. Then, I will examine some more informal obstacles of the transition associated with the enduring exponents – the institutions, individuals, and symbols – of communism and how the new state struggled to come to terms with its past. While much of the study will be country-specific, the number and nature of problems faced in Czechoslovakia's transition makes the country's experience an important case study, a historical lesson applicable to not only states still in transition in Eastern Europe, but also to nations that will shift from authoritarianism to democracy in the future.

## Formal Institutions

In post-communist Czechoslovakia, one of the first major obstacles encountered in establishing the formal institutions of democratic governance was the creation of active and functioning political parties. A political party is defined as an “organized group of people with at least roughly similar political aims and opinions, that seeks to influence public policy by getting its candidates elected to public office.”<sup>1</sup> Political parties serve as the integral link, the institutionalized mediators, between the governing class of decision-makers and policy implementers, and civil society, enabling representation of constituents' demands in government. Political parties are the physical manifestation of the democratic ideal of pluralism. In a totalitarian system, a single party, such as the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia (KSC), holds a “legally” mandated monopoly on power. In modern democracy, by contrast, the right to rule is derived from the will of the people, a maxim premised on the notion of a plural competition for popular support. Political parties are

1. “Roles and Definition of Political Parties,” Ace Encyclopedia, <http://aceproject.org/ace-en/topics/pc/pca/pca01/pca01a>.



the official bodies that compete for the public's votes, and therefore, they are regarded as an essential facet of any functioning, modern democracy. Yet, these parties do not only strive for electoral success; they also perform crucial tasks that not only enable but perpetuate democratic society. These include educating voters on important issues and political values, formulating policy according to citizens' demands, stimulating political interest and mobilizing grassroots support, and recruiting and preparing potential candidates for public office.<sup>2</sup>

As "formal," "institutionalized" apparatuses of the state, political parties differ in character from the "informal" or "associational" nature of civil society, a term which refers to "the arena of uncoerced collective action around shared interests, purposes, and values."<sup>3</sup> As participation in civil society is purely voluntary, the legitimacy and influence of the manifold bodies which often populate that realm, such as registered charities, NGOs, faith-based organizations, community groups, or trade unions and business associations, are not derived from the backing of the state, but rather the willing participation of citizens. In theory, civil society is distinct from the state or market, occupying space unfulfilled by those entities. However, in reality, the boundaries between state, market, and civil society are often "complex, blurred, and negotiated."<sup>4</sup> For example, while organizations within civil society are distinct from political parties in that they do not seek to take control of the state, they nonetheless make demands on the government and hold public officials accountable.<sup>5</sup>

An historical examination of civil society resistance and the nature of totalitarianism in Czechoslovakia will offer greater understanding of the difficulties encountered in creating functioning political parties. Given their adjacency to the political sphere and the number of overlapping activities that dissident groups and political parties engage in – for example, mobilizing individuals, coordinating events, and communicating with the public – civil society resistance groups were the natural forefathers of formal political movements in Eastern Europe. However, the jump from civil resistance to formal political institution is complicated, and the development of effective parties and a functioning political culture in post-communist Czechoslovakia was wrought with turmoil. In Hungary, social opposition movements turned into full-fledged political parties by late 1988, a full year before the fall of the Iron Curtain. In Czechoslovakia, by contrast, no comparable institutionalized political structures appeared until after the regime's collapse. The opposition did not even develop an articulated political approach for organized dissent by the time of the Velvet Revolution.<sup>6</sup>

In *Problems of Democratic Transition and Consolidation*, Linz and Stepan compare transitions to democracy and the nature of regime change in countries around the world. In

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2. Ibid.

3. "What is civil society?" 1 March 2004. Centre for Civil Society, London School of Economics, [http://www.lse.ac.uk/collections/CCS/what\\_is\\_civil\\_society.htm](http://www.lse.ac.uk/collections/CCS/what_is_civil_society.htm)

4. Ibid.

5. "Organised Civil Society as Stakeholders in the Voter Education Mandate," *Ace Encyclopedia*, <http://aceproject.org/ace-en/topics/ve/vec/vec03/vec03a/vec03a03>.

6. Juan J. Linz and Alfred Stepan, "Varieties of Post-Totalitarian Regimes: Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Bulgaria," in *Problems of Democratic Transition and Consolidation* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996), 321

their analysis of Czechoslovakia, they argue that the “frozen” character of post-totalitarianism following the Soviet suppression of the Prague Spring precipitated a dearth of civil society resistance. As previously mentioned, the communist government in Czechoslovakia simply “collapsed” after several days of peaceful protest. Unlike its neighbors in the Eastern Bloc, the government was not overthrown by force or compelled to concede power by negotiation, a phenomenon Linz and Stepan contribute to the lack of organized resistance within the state.<sup>7</sup> Indeed, after 1968, communist Czechoslovakia closely approximated the post-totalitarian ideal type: it adhered to ideological orthodoxy, attempting no subsequent experiments in political or economic liberalization, and strictly suppressed all potential forms of dissent. This created an utterly atomized society devoid of nearly all vestiges of community life. After the Prague Spring, the KSC, compelled by Moscow, initiated “probably the largest purge of Communist Party members in the history of Eastern Europe”: about 500,000 people, one-third of all members, were expelled from the party and some 800,000 lost their jobs.<sup>8</sup> Because communists held a monopoly on power, only party members could exert any direct influence on government policy. Thus, all reform movements within the communist bloc stemmed not from outside opposition, but rather reform factions within the party itself. Therefore, after anyone with reform-minded tendencies was purged in 1968, political thought in Czechoslovakia subsequently stagnated. As Jan Urban, a key signatory of Charter 77 and leading figure in the Velvet Revolution noted, from that point on, “The party could no longer reform. Henceforth, it could only control the people through corruption and fear.”<sup>9</sup> Indeed, the term “frozen” accurately portrays the static nature of politics in Communist Czechoslovakia, as the government after 1968 not only rolled back reforms, but also ceased its attempts to “mobilize enthusiasm,” to legitimate its rule via propaganda.<sup>10</sup> “Normalization” was marked by a “retreat from politics and hollowing of ideology.”<sup>11</sup> The party simply became a tool for self-advancement and Czechs ceased to look for anything from the party at all. Renowned Oxford Historian Timothy Garton Ash incisively captures the essence of political life in Czechoslovakia after 1968 in the following passage:

“Forgetting is the key to the so called normalization of Czechoslovakia. In effect, the regime has said to the people: Forget 1968. Forget your democratic traditions. Forget you were once citizens with rights and duties. Forget politics. In return we give you a comfortable life... We don’t ask you to believe in us or our fatuous ideology. All we ask is that you will outwardly and publicly conform ... I have never been in a country where politics and indeed the whole of public life, is such a matter of such supreme indifference.”<sup>12</sup>

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7. Ibid.

8. Ibid., 318.

9. Ibid.

10. Ibid., 319.

11. Ibid.

12. Timothy Garton Ash, “Czechoslovakia under the Ice,” in *The Uses of Adversity: Essays on the Fate of Central Europe* (New York: Random House, 1989), 62-63.

Without real legitimacy the state relied almost entirely on oppression and fear to retain power. Additionally, without any movements for economic or political liberalization, or the “pockets of vitality” that one could find in university life in other places such as Poland, Hungary, or Slovenia, civil resistance in communist Czechoslovakia paled in comparison to opposition movements elsewhere in Eastern Europe.<sup>13</sup> Even Charter 77, considered the most influential dissident group in Czechoslovakia, whose leaders formed the new democratic government after the Velvet Revolution, was merely a loose association of nonconformists. Members of Charter 77 were concentrated amongst the intellectual elite and the group lacked a firm ideology, political orientation, and active plan to pursue power. Furthermore, Charter 77 was decidedly “anti-political,” a term developed by George Konrad and Vaclav Havel, Czechoslovakia’s first president and leader of Charter 77, in that it sought to escape control rather than struggle for control of the state.<sup>14</sup> Charter 77 represented a commitment to “live in truth,” to break free from the total control of Communism and establish a “parallel polis” in which the individual could be free from the moral burden of living a life of disingenuous outward conformity. Thus, Charter 77 was not a body of formal political opposition. Instead, it represented a form of personal protest in civil society, a characterization that can generally be applied to the other resistance groups that emerged in post-totalitarian Czechoslovakia.<sup>15</sup>

Comparing Charter 77 to Solidarity, a non-communist, legally recognized opposition trade union founded in Gdansk, Poland, illustrates the relative deficiency of Czech civil resistance. Rather than a loose association of a few hundred intellectuals, by 1981 only a year after its founding, Solidarity had ten million members, a quarter of the Polish population. In Solidarity, intellectuals aligned with common laborers, giving the masses a directed thought and ideology. The movement successfully extracted concessions from the government, impelled a pro-socialist martial coop to maintain communist power, and successfully led talks at the Opposition Round Table which negotiated the first semi-free elections and ultimate democratic transition. Whereas in Poland Solidarity mobilized millions, in Czechoslovakia, “the StB (the Czechoslovak secret police) estimated the hard core of ‘anti-socialist opposition groups’ to consist of about sixty people with some five hundred supporters and collaborators.”<sup>16</sup>

Thus, organized civil dissent played a very limited role in the fall of communism in Czechoslovakia. Indeed, the opposition was surprised by its unexpected success; Jan Urban admitted, “We believed in the regime’s invincibility until it collapsed on its own.”<sup>17</sup> Linz and Stepan argue that communism succumbed to decades of “decay,” the result of legitimacy lost after years of economic and political stagnation, evident moral bankruptcy, and a hollowing of ideology. They contend that the KSC ultimately collapsed when large swaths “within the

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13. Linz and Stepan, “Varieties of Post-Totalitarian Regimes,” 318.

14. Mary Kaldor, “The Ideas of 1989,” in *Global Civil Society: An Answer to War* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2003), 55-56.

15. Linz and Stepan, “Varieties of Post-Totalitarian Regimes,” 321.

16. Jan Urban, “The Powerlessness of the Powerful” (Prague, Nov. 1992, unpublished manuscript), 22.

17. *Ibid.*

interior of the state, particularly within the middle levels of the coercive apparatus,” defected, refusing to squash peaceful protests.<sup>18</sup> When demonstrators recognized the government’s hesitation, their rallies gained momentum, until a half-million Czechs gathered in Wenceslas Square and the regime was forced to abdicate power. After brief negotiations, the KSC transferred state control to dissident leaders, and the completely communist parliament elected dissident leader, Vaclav Havel, President of Czechoslovakia on December 29th, 1989.

In “The Powerlessness of the Powerful,” an unpublished manuscript written on the eve of the Velvet Divorce, three full years after the fall of communism, Jan Urban articulates the influence of the lack of civil society resistance on the creation of effective and functioning political parties in the post-communist era:

“We did not know how to organize ourselves to form a political opposition... we were left alone with an unknown atomized non-society... Had the Communists been able to bargain longer... the new power elite would have learned at least something about how to organize political support and how important it is to institutionalize it... Blinded by the easiness of taking power, we did not think about its nature and institutions... Because of our own anti-political way of existing as political creatures before the change, we were bound to lose – unless we ourselves changed into politicians. By now we know we have failed.”<sup>19</sup>

Thus, the “frozen” nature of totalitarianism in Czechoslovakia following the Soviet suppression of the Prague Spring closely approximated the post-totalitarian ideal type. This resulted in a lack of civil society resistance that hampered the creation of effective and functioning political parties in the transition to democracy. The inward-looking, personal nature of Charter 77 and other dissident groups – summed up in Havel’s commitment to “live in truth” – resulted in a lack of practice and experience in community organization, grassroots mobilization, and mass communication, all essential skills in the formulating functioning political parties.

Abby Innes’s *Czechoslovakia: The Short Goodbye*, an examination of electoral politics in the Czech Republic and former Czechoslovakia, introduces some of the enduring consequences of this four-decade dearth of political experience. In 1994, Vaclav Klaus, then Prime Minister of the Czech Republic, declared the Czech ‘transition’ complete: “We have created a standard system of political parties which function in a pluralistic, parliamentary democracy.”<sup>20</sup> However, Innes exposes several facets of Czech democracy that contradict that claim, revealing the highly fragmented and volatile nature of Czech politics. For instance, after the elections in 1992, the Liberal Social Union and Left Bloc, two of the four opposition parties in parliament, were “themselves unstable coalitions of smaller groupings,” and deputies often engaged in “political ‘tourism,’” switching parties as many as three times

18. Linz and Stepan, “Varieties of Post-Totalitarian Regimes,” 319-322.

19. Urban, “The Powerlessness of the Powerful,” 22.

20. Abby Innes, “The New State Builders: 1993-2000,” in *Czechoslovakia: The Short Goodbye* (Yale: Yale University Press 2001), 220

a year. The result was a weak opposition that could hardly be deemed securely pluralist.<sup>21</sup> Furthermore, parties had a difficult time communicating effective, concrete messages to voters. In 1996, the electoral campaigns were roundly criticized for their abstraction from the concerns of ordinary citizens, and in the run-up to the 1998 election, public opinion polls suggested the voters' utter "bewilderment; people changed their minds by massive margins from one week to another."<sup>22</sup> The result was a massive decline in voter turnout. In the parliamentary elections of June 1990, the first after the fall of communism, some 96% of registered voters cast their ballots; by the second round of Senate elections in 1998, only four election cycles later, just 20% of Czech voters went to the polls, the lowest figure in any major election in any country in Central Europe since 1989.<sup>23</sup> Thus, a legacy of political apathy and distrust, the atomization of society, the inexperience in political participation and mobilization, and the volatile and immature multiparty system that emerged after the fall of communism, all proved problematic in the development of effective and functioning political parties in post-communist Czechoslovakia.

Ideology presented another barrier to confronting the creation of formal state institutions. For example, because of the strong anti-political tendencies of the leaders who emerged from the Velvet Revolution, Czech leaders often rejected opportunities to develop state-wide political parties.<sup>24</sup> Yet, the negative influence of ideology in building an effective and functioning democratic state affected the creation of state agencies as well. In "The New State Builders", Innes argues that Klaus and other post-communist politicians' strong inclinations towards neo-liberalism resulted in a profound ideological antipathy towards building strong administrative and regulatory institutions.<sup>25</sup> Neo-liberalism, an ideology espousing small government, free markets, low taxes, and minimal regulation, held major symbolic significance for democratic political figures during the transition. Portrayed as the champions of free elections and free markets, neo-liberal devotees distinguished themselves from the political and economical oppression of the communist totalitarian system, marking an important break from the past and ushering in a new age in Czech history.

Yet, although Klaus and his colleagues proclaimed themselves the vanguards of democracy, Innes argues that their ideology actually inhibited the creation of a functioning democratic state. "Constructing such a state," she writes, "is arguably the hardest task for every post-Communist country; however, simply to abdicate this task ... was to introduce new barriers to both economic and democratic developments."<sup>26</sup> For example, corruption in the economic sphere combined with a lack of oversight and legal clarity allowed for an array of scandals. According to Innes, because of their ideology, Klaus and the CDP considered powerful state institutions vestiges of socialism, leading them to resist all attempts to professionalize the civil service throughout the 1990s. Innes deems this: "The

21. *Ibid.*, 221.

22. *Ibid.*, 225.

23. *Ibid.*, 230.

24. Linz and Stepan, "Varieties of Post-Totalitarian Regimes," 316.

25. Innes, "The New State Builders," 232.

26. *Ibid.*

first necessary step towards strengthening the state and allowing for the possibility of high-quality administration.”<sup>27</sup> The result was a highly politicized bureaucracy, which resulted in administrative weakness and ineptitude. In adhering to neo-liberal economic orthodoxy, the CDP coalition not only resisted new, but also obfuscated existing regulatory frameworks, opposing legislation for “shareholder rights, investment fund regulation, laws on conflict of interest, and disclosure requirements.”<sup>28</sup> Furthermore, they minimized the possibility of external audit, omitted provisions governing insider trading, and set only minor punishments for violations. While the neo-liberals believed the all-powerful market would regulate the economic transition, and capital market regulation was “an anachronism of ‘American socialism’” as former Deputy Finance Minister Dusan Triska exclaimed, the failure to manage many aspects of economy resulted in corruption and collusion. Privatization was not only an essential aspect of the economic transition, but also a powerful political symbol legitimating the new government and representing a break with the past.<sup>29</sup> Yet, without a developed legal framework and a lack of effective oversight, the process was plagued with instances of corruption and insider trading, as politicians, bureaucrats, and former firm managers leveraged their political influence, privileged relations, and insider knowledge to game the system for their advantage.

Thus, paradoxically, neo-liberalism, a post-communist ideological backlash championing democracy and free markets, actually hindered the creation of functioning democratic institutions and an independent, professional civil service. It engendered an ideological antipathy to large bureaucratic and regulatory structures resulting in weak public administration and inadequate government oversight. This created opportunities for corruption and collusion in the economic sphere.

### The Legacy of Communism: Institutions, Individuals, Symbols

The difficulty in democratic transition was not limited to the creation of formal government institutions. Four decades of brutal totalitarian control could not be forgotten. In order to faithfully move forward, the state and society at large had to come to terms with their troubled past. Problems associated with the legacy of communism – its institutions, individuals, and symbols – further complicated the transition. These problems stemmed, in large part, from the odd legacy of “legal continuity”, the uninterrupted succession of the new democratic government from the old totalitarian one.

The “revolution” in Czechoslovakia is termed “velvet” because of its non-violence. As discussed earlier, the regime collapsed after several days of massive peaceful protests forced the communists to relinquish power. During the Velvet Revolution, Havel and other opposition leaders created the Civic Forum, a social movement turned political

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27. Innes, “The New State Builders,” 232.

28. *Ibid.*, 235.

29. Katherine Verdery, “A transition from socialism to feudalism? Thoughts on the postsocialist state,” in *What Was Socialism and What Comes Next?* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996), 210.

party to coordinate all anti-regime forces and present a united front of opposition at the roundtable talks with the KSC.<sup>30</sup> The result of those discussions was a peaceful transfer of state control, with Vaclav Havel and Alexander Dubcek elected President and Speaker of Parliament, respectively, on December 29th, 1989. Without such discussions, the political history of Czechoslovakia may have been very different: perhaps a “real” revolution, a violent storming of the seats of power, a clash between armed protesters and the communist security apparatus would have taken place. Perhaps the state would have devolved into civil war, with bloody clashes among ethnic and minority groups, as in the former Yugoslavia. The roundtable negotiations that resulted in the peaceful transition to democracy undoubtedly spared citizens’ blood. However, the talks were nonetheless criticized, as they granted legal recognition to the communist government. By virtue of engaging in discussion rather than toppling the regime, the opposition leaders tacitly acknowledged the legality of Communist rule, something that was anathema to the millions who suffered under totalitarian oppression. Furthermore, the odd legacy of “legal continuity” existed also as the new state persisted within the same legal framework as its predecessor. Indeed, while certain laws were edited and others repealed, the Czechoslovakia’s constitution, as well as civil and criminal codes survived the transition essentially intact. Therefore, largely the same legal structure that legitimated communist crimes comprised the legal foundation on which democracy was built.<sup>31</sup>

Additionally, because the transition was negotiated and there was an uninterrupted succession of power, the new democracy was initially governed by the same institutions and the same individuals as its communist predecessor. Key leaders, such as Havel and Dubcek, were the first to be installed in the new administration, and the process of “co-option”, the replacement of communist members of parliament and top ministry officials with opposition leaders, began immediately thereafter; however, the overwhelming majority of mid- and low-level, as well as many top-level, government bureaucrats remained in their posts. These were individuals who, whether party members or not, helped perpetuate totalitarianism by simply going to work everyday. Difficult questions arose: Should these people be replaced? Should they be punished? By virtue of their professions, were they complicit in the communists’ crimes? Or were they simply trying to protect themselves and their families by “living the lie” of outward conformity?

The new democratic government was forced to strike a difficult balance between morality and pragmatism: its duty to right the wrongs of the past and its obligation to build and maintain a new, functioning democratic state. Indeed, it is one thing to create a new ministry, but it is quite another to staff that ministry with qualified people. These bureaucrats, communists and non-communists alike, were the ones with experience in the existing state institutions and could not all be purged. Therefore, the complexity in building effective democratic institutions reached far deeper than mere ideological opposition.

The state’s new control over national industries, the state security apparatus, and

30. Jan Čarnogurský, “The Fall of Communism in Czechoslovakia,” 47-48, <http://clovekvtsini.cz/download/pdf/static/chapter4.pdf>.

31. *Ibid.*, 48-49.

the judiciary proved particularly problematic, as well, as Czechoslovakia's new leaders were forced continually to balance moral demands with practical reality. As the new democratic government inherited the communist command economy, it initially held complete control over all business activities in the state. While citizens demanded the replacement of communist managers, a reasonable moral claim, these managers were the only individuals with real firsthand knowledge of national industries.<sup>32</sup> As privatization began and businesses started to struggle in the new economic environment, the new democratic leadership faced a delicate situation regarding the standing of former communist managers.

Similar problems appeared in the government's security apparatus. While the State Security Service (StB), the communists' intelligence, law enforcement, and terror apparatus were completely dissolved in 1990, a development of particularly symbolic import for democratic society, the issue was far more complex than it seemed.<sup>33</sup> These organizations' individuals were practiced in clandestine operations, such as counter-intelligence, surveillance, and wiretapping, activities indispensable to the security the nascent democracy. This forced the administration to bring many former communist security officials back into the government, an uncomfortable decision for both the administration and society at large.

Finally, the state faced a peculiar predicament with the judiciary. When Havel advocated for legislation for broad legal amnesty, he recognized the culpability of the judiciary. The act was based on the grounds that communist judges had artificially produced criminals and that many deserved to be released. Indeed, amnesty was granted to thousands of Czechoslovakian prisoners in January 1990, an important symbolic and moral effort, though it elicited vitriolic public backlash and increased instances of crime.<sup>34</sup> On the one hand, by simply sitting on the bench, judges granted legal recognition to communist rule, causing a strong moral impetus for their purge. On the other hand, because the new state continued to exist within the same legal framework as its predecessor, these judges held years of valuable knowledge and experience, which would have been unwise to dispose of. To reconcile this clash between morality and pragmatism, the government screened judges who drew complaints and did not reappoint any whose decisions violated international human rights laws. Despite these measures, however, the government only forced a small fraction of judges off of the bench.<sup>35</sup>

Thus, the transition to democracy required a violent struggle with the legacy of Czechoslovakia's communist past in which leaders were forced to balance morality and pragmatism. In addition, an intense struggle for legitimacy arose since all segments of the population could not be satisfied simultaneously. The pressure of high hopes and expectations for democracy after forty years of repressive rule exacerbated this struggle. In the previous section, I explored in depth the gravity and complexity of some of the issues

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32. *Ibid.*, 48.

33. *Ibid.*, 49.

34. *Ibid.*, 46-47.

35. *Ibid.*, 46-48.



facing Czechoslovakia's new democratic government; however, several other predicaments existed, as well. For instance, debate abounded over whether the state's secret files, which contained personal information collected on millions of citizens, should be released. The files were a symbol of state terror, and opening them would represent a new age of government transparency and accountability. Yet, was it worth the risk of exposing old wounds? Would the files spark violent reprisals against secret informers and party members? Was it best to just move forward? What was to become of the KSC? Should the new, pluralist, democratic state accept the continued existence of the communist party, or outlaw it? What, if anything, should be done to punish the communists, to reconcile the crimes of the past? Were all party members culpable or just those in power? Was retroactive legislation even moral, or did it contradict the democratic ideals of the new state? Should former communists be prohibited from participating in the new government, or incorporated into it? The questions above are meant to highlight the depth and ubiquity of the political difficulties plaguing the transition from totalitarianism to democracy.

## Conclusion

The emergence of democracy resulted from thousands of years of political evolution, yet Czechs attempted their transition nearly overnight. For all the difficult questions, all the hardship endured, and all the crises encountered, one must declare the Czech transition a success, which forestalled bloodshed, anarchy, and total political collapse. Today, the Czech Republic has one of the strongest post-communist economies and enjoys good relations with its neighbors. Prague is the crown jewel of East-Central Europe and for the first half of 2009, the state held the presidency of the European Union. Indeed, despite a lack of democratic experience and tradition, the barriers of neo-liberal ideology, and the manifold complexities faced in coming to terms with the communist past, Czech democrats have achieved the seemingly impossible.

Czechoslovakia's success makes it an important case study, a model for action in states transitioning from repressive regimes to representative republics. For instance, the enduring difficulties following Czechoslovakia's failure to establish formal democratic institutions, such as functioning political parties and effective state institutions, serve as an important caveat and possible guide for action in states that will transition in the future. Additionally, Czechoslovakia's peculiar legacy of "legal continuity" and the myriad problems that stemmed from the nature of the Czech transition suggest that in some instances peaceful revolution may not be ideal and armed uprising could ease some issues in transition. Whatever one concludes, Czechoslovakia's resounding success in moving from totalitarianism to democracy proves an interesting case study. Extrapolating from the Czech experience can perhaps ease some transitional hardships in other states involved in similar situations.

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### About Joshua Roberts

Joshua C. Roberts is a junior in the College of Arts and Sciences at the University of Pennsylvania. A Political Science major concentrating in International Relations with a minor in History, Joshua is particularly interested in the twentieth century. Last summer, he interned in the Technology and Public Policy Program at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, an elite Washington foreign policy think-tank where he conducted research on issues ranging from cyber security and innovation to international environmental policy. Last semester, he spent four months studying abroad in Prague and traveling through Europe. The experience brought to life the events of the last century. He took classes in a historic building in Wenceslas Square, where Soviet tanks suppressed the Prague Spring in 1968 and the peaceful protests of hundreds of thousands of Czech citizens precipitated the collapse of the Czechoslovak Communist Party twenty years later.

# Self-Determination, Secession, and Sovereignty: South Ossetia's Claim to Right of External Self-Determination and International Law

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## Abstract

The destabilizing nature of breakaway regions is extremely concerning, especially in light of the political stalemate that often occurs regarding the legal status of secessionist entities. While theoretical international legal standards do exist, the interpretation and real-world application of these standards is often subjective and politicized, leading to frustration and potentially violent confrontation. South Ossetia's unilateral declaration of independence from Georgia illuminates a paradox between the right to territorial integrity and the right to self-determination. This paper draws on international treaties, beginning with the U.N. Charter, to outline the traditional standards for statehood. Then, in an attempt to reconcile the aforementioned contradictory principles, customary state practice and the writings of legal theorists are taken as sources of international law to investigate the legality of South Ossetian secession. Citing a report of the Independent Fact-finding Mission on the Conflict in Georgia, it is determined that the humanitarian violations in the region did not justify South Ossetian independence. However, in light of recent developments, the paper calls for more specific and practical international guidelines regarding secession, and expresses hope that the forthcoming International Court of Justice advisory opinion on Kosovo may provide contemporary insight into the right to self-determination from the perspective of international law.

## Introduction

The disputed status of South Ossetia as a state independent from Georgia has been an unresolved issue in the international arena for many years. One of "ten self-

declared independent entities” currently in existence, South Ossetia presents some of the shortcomings and ambiguities within international law regarding international recognition of contested states and the right to external self-determination in the form of secession.<sup>1</sup> Due to the lack of direct and concrete international guidelines on the practical legality and scope of unilateral declarations of independence, customary state practice and the writings of respected legal theorists emerge as the sources of international law from which the case of South Ossetia must be considered.<sup>2</sup> From this lens, the established standards of international law do not justify the South Ossetian secession. Nevertheless, the destabilizing effect of the entity’s disputed status, the large-scale military conflict in August of 2008, and the recognition of Kosovo as an independent state in February of 2008, suggest that new international mandates and regulations regarding the right to external self-determination will be necessary to resolve disputes about secession in the future.<sup>3</sup>

### Customary Criteria for Determining Statehood

A breakaway region that unilaterally declares independence from the authority of its original state will almost invariably encounter international opposition to its attempts to join the ranks of confirmed states on the world stage.<sup>4</sup> The legal status of a secessionist entity is determined by the extent to which it meets several conditions first enumerated in the Montevideo Convention on Rights and Duties of States (1933) that are necessary for a state to qualify as a competent subject of international law.<sup>5</sup> These criteria customarily include: (1) a permanent population; (2) a defined territory; and (3) an effective government.<sup>6</sup>

There is no minimum standard that must be met with regard to the size, condition or composition of a state’s population or territory.<sup>7</sup> Traditionally, an effective government was characterized by its ability to uphold decorum internally and represent the state’s policies in the international community.<sup>8</sup> However, the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples (1960) placed such a high value on “sovereignty for non-independent peoples” that even states with relatively weak or nearly no central authority—such as Somalia and Bosnia and Herzegovina—were allowed “juridical statehood” in light of the lax criteria.<sup>9</sup> As of a 1999 U.N. Human Rights Commission resolution, however, a greater preoccupation with the enforcement of human rights and

1. Deon Geldenhuys, *Contested States in World Politics* (Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan, 2009), 2.

2. “Report of the Independent International Fact-Finding Mission on the Conflict in Georgia,” Vol. II, [http://www.ceiig.ch/pdf/IIFFMCG\\_Volume\\_II.pdf](http://www.ceiig.ch/pdf/IIFFMCG_Volume_II.pdf).

3. *Ibid.*, 139.

4. Deon Geldenhuys, *Contested States in World Politics* (Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan, 2009), 3.

5. Deon Geldenhuys, *Contested States in World Politics* (Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan, 2009), 8.

6. “Report of the Independent International Fact-Finding Mission on the Conflict in Georgia,” Vol. II, [http://www.ceiig.ch/pdf/IIFFMCG\\_Volume\\_II.pdf](http://www.ceiig.ch/pdf/IIFFMCG_Volume_II.pdf).

7. Deon Geldenhuys, *Contested States in World Politics* (Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan, 2009), 8,9.

8. *Ibid.*, 12.

9. *Ibid.*

the expansion of democratic ideals has elevated the importance of free and fair government practices.<sup>10</sup>

Sovereignty, defined as “freedom from external control” and “a capacity to enter into relations with other states,” is sometimes taken into account when evaluating claims for statehood.<sup>11</sup> It is here that the role of international recognition in determining the legal status of a state comes into question. The declaratory and typically more popular theory argues that recognition of a state should simply be interpreted as an acknowledgment of diplomatic intentions, and therefore bears no weight in preventing an aspiring state from ascending to legitimate statehood if recognition is not given.<sup>12</sup> The constitutive school, however, contends that recognition of the contested state’s legality by members of the international community is necessary before the entity achieves any sort of role in the international arena.<sup>13</sup> The Guidelines on the Recognition of New States in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union (1991) as adopted by the European Council are one example of a recent shift towards “a more prescriptive approach, premised on the ideological aspirations of the predominant international actors.” The 1991 Guidelines allow already confirmed states to withhold meaningful, lasting *de jure* recognition if a contested state does not conform to certain conditions mentioned in the document. Consequently, an already existing state can withhold recognition if the secession of the entity in question does not suit the confirmed state’s interests.<sup>14</sup> Likewise, a state may grant *de jure* recognition where it is undue. It is possible to see how the subjective nature of this aspect of international law could be politicized or upheld in a biased manner.

### The Right to Self-Determination and Territorial Integrity

Whether accepted by the international community or not, claims of independence are almost always made on the basis of “the right to self-determination.”<sup>15</sup> There is no question that the right to self-determination is a cornerstone of international law. Article 1(2) and Article 55 of the Charter of the United Nations both specify that the purpose of the U.N. is based on “respect for the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples.”<sup>16</sup> The International Covenants on Civil and Political Rights (1966) and Economic, Social and

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10. *Ibid.*

11. Ralph Wilde, “Kosovo: Independence, Recognition and International Law,” A Summary of the Chatham House International Law Discussion Group meeting held on 22 April 2008, [http://www.chathamhouse.org.uk/files/11547\\_il220408.pdf](http://www.chathamhouse.org.uk/files/11547_il220408.pdf). Deon Geldenhuis, *Contested States in World Politics* (Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan, 2009), 8.

12. “Report of the Independent International Fact-Finding Mission on the Conflict in Georgia,” Vol. II, [http://www.ceiig.ch/pdf/IIFFMCG\\_Volume\\_II.pdf](http://www.ceiig.ch/pdf/IIFFMCG_Volume_II.pdf).

13. Deon Geldenhuis, *Contested States in World Politics* (Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan, 2009), 20.

14. *Ibid.*, 21. “Report of the Independent International Fact-Finding Mission on the Conflict in Georgia,” Vol. II, [http://www.ceiig.ch/pdf/IIFFMCG\\_Volume\\_II.pdf](http://www.ceiig.ch/pdf/IIFFMCG_Volume_II.pdf).

15. Deon Geldenhuis, *Contested States in World Politics* (Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan, 2009), 29.

16. Charter of the United Nations, “Chapter I: Purposes and Principles,” <http://www.un.org/en/documents/charter/chapterI.shtml>.

Cultural Rights (1966) also include this right.<sup>17</sup> While the freedom of a “peoples” to shape their own fate may appear incontrovertible, the principle of territorial integrity as mentioned in Article 2(4) of the U.N. Charter appears to pose a significant contradiction, especially in the case of secession.<sup>18</sup> Stemming from the same fundamental source of international law, “both principles have equal value,” rendering a reconciliation between the two even more complex.<sup>19</sup>

Attempts by international bodies and subsequent agreements to determine the precise application and scope of the right to self-determination have only managed to further convolute the issue. The Declaration on Principles of International Law concerning Friendly Relations and Cooperation among States (1970) clearly states that the right to self-determination shall not “be construed as authorizing or encouraging any action which would dismember or impair, totally or in part, the territorial integrity or political unity of sovereign and independent states.”<sup>20</sup> However, the Declaration, which was adopted by the U.N. General Assembly as Resolution 2625, later specifies that this principle of sovereignty is only applicable to states “conducting themselves in compliance with the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples as described above and thus possessed of a government representing the whole people belonging to the territory without distinction as to race, creed or colour.”<sup>21</sup> The intended implications of this particular clause of the Declaration remain ambiguous, leaving the legality of secession in the case of an unrepresentative and discriminatory government unclear. Neither the Helsinki Final Act of 1975 nor the Badinter Commission (1991) did much to shed light on how the paradox of self-determination and territorial integrity should be reconciled in terms of practical application.<sup>22</sup> In fact, the Badinter Commission conceded, “international law as it currently stands does not spell out all of the implications of the right to self-determination.”<sup>23</sup>

### Scholarly Debate and State Practice

In the absence of definitive international legal guidelines on the legality of secession, particularly in the face of unfair and unrepresentative governments, state practice over the years and the writings of legal theorists serve as sources of international law. The fervent debate among legal scholars ranges from those who argue that external self-determination is completely incompatible with the principle of territorial integrity and those who hold that

17. Deon Geldenhuys, *Contested States in World Politics* (Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan, 2009), 32.

18. “Report of the Independent International Fact-Finding Mission on the Conflict in Georgia,” Vol. II, [http://www.ceii.ch/pdf/IIFMCG\\_Volume\\_II.pdf](http://www.ceii.ch/pdf/IIFMCG_Volume_II.pdf), 136.

19. *Ibid.*

20. Resolutions Adopted on the Reports of the Sixth Committee, “Declaration on Principles of International Law concerning Friendly Relations and Cooperation among States,” <http://daccess-ds.un.org/TMP/8615165.html>.

21. *Ibid.*, Gnanapala Welhengama, *Minorities’ Claims: From Autonomy to Secession*, (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing, 2000), 80.

22. *Ibid.*, 87. Deon Geldenhuys, *Contested States in World Politics* (Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan, 2009), 31.

23. *Ibid.*, 32.

secession “on the basis of unequal treatment is rationally justifiable” as it “may be the only remedy available when the oppressed are a distinct, politically disempowered minority.”<sup>24</sup> Yet even those who favor this sort of “remedial secession” as the “ultimate remedy” maintain that it should only be granted when all other attempts at internal self-determination, such as “regional autonomy, [or] economic independence,” have failed.<sup>25</sup> However, legal theorists who do acknowledge that a right to external self-determination may exist in a legal sense still underscore the fact it exists only in the case of “persistent gross violations of human rights,” or in the presence of “a serious threat to the survival and the culture of the minority group concerned.”<sup>26</sup> Therefore, it is only in light of the most serious international grievances, such as “genocide, cultural extinction,” “oppression,” and “deliberate and systematic discrimination,” that a national sub-group’s claim to self-determination “cannot be defeated by arguments about territorial integrity.”<sup>27</sup>

Crucially, however, all legal writings and U.N. General Assembly Resolutions (such as the Declaration on Friendly Relations) are non-binding.<sup>28</sup> Numerous instances indicate that, in practice, states are very unwilling to challenge the status quo (as dictated by a state’s borders accepted under the principle of *uti possidetis*) out of fear that an avalanche of ethnic fragmentation will destabilize the international arena.<sup>29</sup> Therefore, the international community will almost certainly reject the right to external self-determination, even if the entity meets the criteria for legal statehood, unless presented with overwhelming evidence of what amounts to a burgeoning humanitarian crisis.

### Case Study: South Ossetia

South Ossetia’s disputed secession from Georgia was not valid on the basis of international law and has thus far only been recognized by Russia and a handful of other governments. South Ossetia undeniably meets the criteria of having a permanent population (of about 65,000 inhabitants) and a definite territory.<sup>30</sup> It is argued, however, that South Ossetia’s anti-Georgian government, based in Tskhinvali, relies too strongly on the leadership

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24. Thomas M. Franck, *The Power of Legitimacy Among Nations*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), 170.

25. Gnanapala Welhengama, *Minorities’ Claims: From Autonomy to Secession*, (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing, 2000), 240-1. *Ibid.*, 267-8.

26. *Ibid.*, 240-1. “Report of the Independent International Fact-Finding Mission on the Conflict in Georgia,” Vol. II, [http://www.ceiig.ch/pdf/IIFFMCG\\_Volume\\_II.pdf](http://www.ceiig.ch/pdf/IIFFMCG_Volume_II.pdf), 136-139.

27. Deon Geldenhuys, *Contested States in World Politics* (Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan, 2009), 40.

Gnanapala Welhengama, *Minorities’ Claims: From Autonomy to Secession*, (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing, 2000), 89.

28. “Report of the Independent International Fact-Finding Mission on the Conflict in Georgia,” Vol. II, [http://www.ceiig.ch/pdf/IIFFMCG\\_Volume\\_II.pdf](http://www.ceiig.ch/pdf/IIFFMCG_Volume_II.pdf), 138.

29. *Ibid.*, 143. Gnanapala Welhengama, *Minorities’ Claims: From Autonomy to Secession*, (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing, 2000), 85-7.

30. Deon Geldenhuys, *Contested States in World Politics* (Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan, 2009), 79.



of its Russian patron and thus does not qualify as an effective government on its own.<sup>31</sup> Therefore, according to the Independent Fact-finding Mission on the Conflict in Georgia, South Ossetia constitutes “an entity short of statehood.”<sup>32</sup> Regardless of whether or not this is the case, in 1989 the South Ossetians, on the grounds of long-term efforts to realize their right to self-determination, voiced a desire to become an “autonomous republic” as opposed to simply an “autonomous region” within Georgia.<sup>33</sup> The central Georgian government in Tbilisi responded by prohibiting South Ossetian political parties from being represented in a parliamentary election, which was in turn interpreted as “a ploy to disqualify the South Ossetian Popular Front.”<sup>34</sup> As tensions escalated, the South Ossetians disregarded traditional Georgian elections in 1990 and nominated their own government on the basis of a declaration of sovereignty and independence.<sup>35</sup> Following a Georgian-declared state of emergency, several armed conflicts, and the deterioration of diplomatic relations between the two, South Ossetia held a referendum in 1992 to elect a new government and determine how to proceed with self-determination. An overwhelmingly strong turnout in favor of severing ties with Georgia, a state which most South Ossetians feel is an artificial and unjust patriarch, reaffirmed the sense of sovereignty amongst the South Ossetian people. Unfortunately for the secessionist movement, the results of the referendum were rejected internationally.<sup>36</sup>

Internationally-mediated peacekeeping methods and treaties, such as the Sochi Agreement signed in 1992, aimed to promote dialogue between the feuding parties and achieve a lasting model of internal autonomy that suited both the Georgian and Ossetian leaders.<sup>37</sup> However, over the years these efforts to create an agreeable resolution have failed, partially because both sides have been unwilling or unable to compromise.<sup>38</sup> In the eyes of the Tskhinvali government and the South Ossetian people, Georgian President Saakashvili never intended to allow the Ossetians to enjoy any form of autonomy while part of the Georgian republic. Saakashvili’s attempt to create a cultural and “humanitarian initiative” program to win over the affections of the South Ossetians was interpreted by the secessionist peoples as an attempt to thwart the operation of the Tskhinvali government, led by Eduard Kokoity.<sup>39</sup> A repeat referendum in 2006 produced another overwhelming victory in support of the secessionist government. Yet in November 2006, Tbilisi-sponsored rival elections installed a competing pro-Georgian administration in the region, often considered a continuation of stifling the South Ossetians’ right to internal self-determination and political representation.<sup>40</sup>

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 31. “Report of the Independent International Fact-Finding Mission on the Conflict in Georgia,” Vol. II, [http://www.ceiiij.ch/pdf/IIFFMCG\\_Volume\\_II.pdf](http://www.ceiiij.ch/pdf/IIFFMCG_Volume_II.pdf), 132-3.

32. *Ibid.*, 134.

33. Deon Geldenhuys, *Contested States in World Politics* (Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan, 2009), 80.

34. *Ibid.*, 79-80.

35. *Ibid.*

36. Deon Geldenhuys, *Contested States in World Politics* (Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan, 2009), 80-81.

37. *Ibid.*

38. *Ibid.*, 82-83.

39. *Ibid.*, 83.

40. *Ibid.*, 83-4.

Nevertheless, these instances of political and cultural discrimination do not amount to the type of disastrous humanitarian transgressions that have customarily been deemed necessary to legally justify the violation of a sovereign state's territorial integrity.<sup>41</sup> South Ossetia was only an autonomous region within Georgia at the time of Georgia's independence from the former Soviet Union, and under the principle of *uti possidetis*, the integrity of the borders of the newly-independent republics (and not any constituent regions within the republics) will be upheld as the status quo in international law.<sup>42</sup> While there is some proof of the fact that the Georgian government was not behaving in utmost accordance with a commitment to "democratic governance," allegations of discriminatory infractions on the side of the South Ossetians as well seem to indicate that this was an unambiguous for secession.<sup>43</sup>

## Conclusion

Based on an analysis of state practice using existing international documents, resolutions, and legal writings, South Ossetia's unilateral declaration of independence from Georgia was not supported by international law. Secession was clearly not the "ultimate remedy" available to the South Ossetian people, and further attempts at resolving the conflict by means of internal self-determination and greater autonomy for the region within the bounds of the Georgian state should have been made before South Ossetia unilaterally declared independence in the early 1990s. Recent events, however, indicate that the current situation may be slightly different.

Georgia and South Ossetia have been unable to agree upon the appropriate degree of autonomy for the region. Negotiations have continued to break down despite numerous internationally mediated peacekeeping arrangements. Perhaps the best indicator of this diplomatic impasse is the violent and deadly military conflict that occurred in August of 2008 as a result of escalating tensions and frustrations between Georgia, the South Ossetians and the Russians.<sup>44</sup> Furthermore, the widespread international recognition of the separation of Kosovo from Serbia indicates that disputes regarding legal precedent and whether or not the case of Kosovo was *sui generis* will continue to complicate issues regarding contested states in the future. Perhaps the highly anticipated advisory opinion by the International Court of Justice regarding the legality of Kosovo's secession will provide some welcome

41. "Report of the Independent International Fact-Finding Mission on the Conflict in Georgia," Vol. II, [http://www.ceiig.ch/pdf/IIFMCG\\_Volume\\_II.pdf](http://www.ceiig.ch/pdf/IIFMCG_Volume_II.pdf), 136, 141.

42. *Ibid.*, 143.

43. Deon Geldenhuys, *Contested States in World Politics* (Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan, 2009), 33.

"Report of the Independent International Fact-Finding Mission on the Conflict in Georgia," Vol. II, [http://www.ceiig.ch/pdf/IIFMCG\\_Volume\\_II.pdf](http://www.ceiig.ch/pdf/IIFMCG_Volume_II.pdf), 134.

44. "Report of the Independent International Fact-Finding Mission on the Conflict in Georgia," Vol. II, [http://www.ceiig.ch/pdf/IIFMCG\\_Volume\\_II.pdf](http://www.ceiig.ch/pdf/IIFMCG_Volume_II.pdf).

guidance on the subject of self-determination, territorial integrity and the right to secession.<sup>45</sup> Finally, confirmed states ability to grant de jure recognition of contested states on the basis of their own political standpoints and agendas hardly represents an impartial application of international law. At the risk of further military conflict and destabilization, a review and clarification on the application of international guidelines concerning secession and self-determination for the modern, globalized era is necessary.

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 45. Ralph Wilde, "Kosovo: Independence, Recognition and International Law," A Summary of the Chatham House International Law Discussion Group meeting held on 22 April 2008, [http://www.chathamhouse.org.uk/files/11547\\_il220408.pdf](http://www.chathamhouse.org.uk/files/11547_il220408.pdf).

# The Effect of Industrial Agriculture on the Health of Latin American Peasant Farming Communities

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## Abstract

Industrial agriculture, considered by many to be a key method to end world hunger, has become the prevalent system of modern food production in Latin America. The techniques used are instrumental in achieving economies of scale in production, creating new markets for consumption, and spurring innovative developments of agricultural machinery and genetics. Although industrial agriculture produces large amounts of food and advances scientific technologies, it also poses challenges to the health of Latin American peasant farming communities. This research paper provides a brief history of Latin American agriculture, highlighting how industrial agriculture altered more traditional systems. It then examines how these new methods provoked food insecurity, harmful working conditions, and environmental degradation in rural peasant farming communities. In light of these detrimental effects, this paper then proposes potential solutions, particularly niche organic and fair trade markets.

## Introduction

The first of the eight UN Millennium Development Goals is to “end poverty and hunger.”<sup>1</sup> Many people believe that the key to feeding the 1.02 billion hungry people worldwide is industrial agriculture, defined by the Ecohealth Environmental Change glossary as “modern farming methods that depend on synthetic fertilizers and pesticides, large amounts of irrigation water, major transportation systems, factory-style practices for raising livestock, and machine technology.”<sup>2</sup> In 2006, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation awarded over \$100 million in grants to Monsanto, a multinational agricultural biotechnology corporation, to promote further

1. United Nations, “End poverty by 2015,” United Nations Website 2008, <http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/> 3 December 2009.

2. Ecohealth Environmental Change and Our Health, “Glossary” Ecohealth Glossary, <http://www.ecohealth101.org/glossary.html>. Food and Agriculture Organization, “Food Security Statistics,” State of Food Insecurity in the World, 2008. [www.fao.org/es/ess/faostat/foodsecurity/index\\_en.htm](http://www.fao.org/es/ess/faostat/foodsecurity/index_en.htm).

innovation in the company's development of industrial agriculture.<sup>3</sup> Although many have touted industrial agriculture as the solution to world hunger, it also has produced detrimental effects, especially prevalent amongst the peasant farming communities of Latin America. These farming communities typically utilize traditional agricultural methods such as raised fields, terraces, polycultures involving local food varieties, and agroforestry systems, without agrochemicals.<sup>4</sup> John P. Dickenson, president of The World Trade Partnership, specifically defines peasant farmers as those who use "local resources in such a way as to support the local community by production of foodstuffs both for internal consumption and for sale or exchange and also to maintain the productive capacity of local resources for future generations."<sup>5</sup> At the turn of the twenty-first century, the peasant population of 75 million in Latin America accounts for 41% of the agricultural output for domestic consumption, despite the fact that the average peasant farm size is 1.8 hectares.<sup>6</sup> Industrial agricultural crop production directly affects the health of Latin American peasant farming communities through food insecurity, harmful working conditions, and community environmental degradation; however, organic and fair trade niche markets may provide a solution.

This paper will provide a comprehensive view of the health effects of industrial farming on peasant farmers as well as some potential solutions to this problem. I was restricted to secondary sources due to the inaccessibility and dearth of primary ones. The paper will first examine the historical background of industrial agriculture in Latin America. It will then assess the different health effects of industrial agriculture such as food insecurity, harmful working conditions, and community environmental degradation. Finally, it will offer solutions such as niche organic and fair trade markets.

### Background of Industrial Agriculture in Latin America

Latin America has a long and complex agricultural history characterized largely by agrarian dualism wherein the majority of farmers are relegated to smaller, less fertile plots, while a select few monopolize the more productive land.<sup>7</sup> During the late 1800s to the mid-1900s, when many Latin American countries started to assert their independence, farmers were introduced to a modern industrial agricultural system due to the effects of globalization. In fact, the rise of an international money-based economy promoted the modernization of large plantations, known as latifundios, as well as private foreign investment and foreign corporate ownership. For example, US investments in Latin America rose from negligible in 1870 to over

3. Patel, Raj, Eric Holt-Gimenez & Annie Shattuck, "Ending Africa's Hunger? Gates Foundation and Monsanto," Health Freedom Alliance, [www.healthfreedomalliance.org](http://www.healthfreedomalliance.org).

4. Altieri, Miguel A. "Agroecology, Small Farms, and Food Sovereignty," *Monthly Review*, (July 2009): 1, <http://www.monthlyreview.org/090810altieri.php>.

5. Dickenson, John P. *A Geography of the Third World*. New York, New York: Routledge Publishing, 1996, p. 127.

6. Altieri, "Agroecology," 1.

7. Cypher, James M and James L. Dietz. *The process of economic development*. New York: Routledge, 2004, 316.

\$1.5 billion by the end of 1914.<sup>8</sup> Furthermore, international businesses encouraged the export and commercialization of traditional agricultural exports such as coffee, bananas, sugarcane, and cocoa.<sup>9</sup> The emphasis on these cash-crops reflected the growing prioritization of international profits over domestic food production.

The Green Revolution of 1940s to the 1970s introduced farmers to agricultural modernization methods with innovative technologies that had previously only been used in developed countries. These technologies included pesticides, synthetic nitrogen fertilizers, hybridized seeds, and genetically modified organisms (GMOs), and thus revolutionized the Latin American agricultural system.<sup>10</sup> During this time period, latifundios transformed into large capital-intensive plantations, growing increasingly dependent upon these foreign technological inputs and government support. Specifically, plantations increasingly relied on subsidized credits and technical assistance to develop monocultures, genetically uniform crops grown annually in the same field, which required expensive inputs.<sup>11</sup> Many countries, including Mexico and Argentina, paid for these credits by borrowing from international creditors such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF).<sup>12</sup> However, due to various monetary issues, such as easy credit over leveraged loans, Latin American governments and individual farmers accumulated massive debts, which exacerbated the situation in the farming communities. These financial issues forced farmers into a vicious cycle, in which they were unable to pay their debts, yet were increasingly limited to agricultural crops reliant on large amounts of foreign technological inputs.

From the 1960s to the 1980s, tensions emerged between the government and peasant farmers, who were losing their land and the ability to compete with modernized crop techniques. The peasant farmers grew increasingly disillusioned with the technological changes of the Green Revolution, which were mostly confined to capitalist industries. Specifically, Guatemala's agrarian problem is defined as the "minifundio-latifundio dichotomy," an unbalanced land distribution pattern. This system is characterized by latifundios, extensive tracts of land primarily used for agricultural exports, and minifundios, small subsistence-oriented farms that provide for most of the domestic produce. This inequitable land distribution pattern fueled social, cultural, political and ecological upheaval, which resulted in greater rates of immigration, political violence, and natural resource degradation. Similarly, Colombia, Brazil, Nicaragua, and El Salvador experienced various violent uprising over land shortages, and thus began to implement agrarian reforms. However, in many instances, these reforms were mismanaged by the government or thwarted by opposition, thereby resulting in limited to no change. By 1980, 20% of large commercial land-holders occupied 80% of the land in Latin America;<sup>13</sup> thus, the

8. Richmond, Douglas W. "Comparative Elite Systems in Latin America and the United States, 1870-1914," *Revista de Historia de América*, no. 114 (1992): 61-89.

9. Thrupp, Lori Ann. *Bittersweet Harvests for Global Supermarkets: Challenges in Latin America's Agricultural Export Boom*, World Resources Institute, 1995.

10. Conway, G.R. *The Doubly Green Revolution: Food for all in the 21st Century*. London, UK: Penguin Books, 1997.

11. Altieri, Miguel. "Ecological Impacts of Industrial Agriculture," *Hungry for Profit*. Ed. Fred Magdoff, John Foster, and Frederick H. Buttel. New York: Monthly Review Press, 2000, 79.

12. Pastor, Robert. *Latin America's Debt Crisis: Adjusting to the past or Planning for the Future?* Boulder, Colorado: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1987.

13. Araghi, Farshad. "The Great Global Enclosure of Our Times: Peasants and the Agrarian Question at the end of the Twentieth Century," *Hungry for Profit*. Ed. Fred Magdoff, John Foster, and Frederick H. Buttel. New York: Monthly Review Press, 2000, 148.

Green Revolution led to the incongruous distribution of land favoring agrocaptalists and further excluding peasant farmers.

The “Lost Decade” of the 1980s introduced neoliberal economic policies to Latin America, which played an important role in establishing present-day industrial agriculture. In the early 1980s, the financial pressures of debts incurred to finance the Green Revolution culminated in a debt crisis as Latin Americans could not pay their loans. Thus, in order to ameliorate the severity of the crisis, the IMF and the World Bank instituted Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPs), which provided conditions for receiving new loans or obtaining lower interest rates on existing loans. These programs promoted neoliberal policies such as deregulation and competitive exchange rates, trade liberalization, and liberalization of foreign direct investment.<sup>14</sup> At the same time, these policies generated adverse effects in some of the poorer sectors of the population. For instance, the intent of public prosperity was replaced with private accumulation designs, as SAPs required privatization of state enterprises and promoted the further commoditization of crops. Furthermore, the Agreement on Agriculture (AoA), negotiated during the Uruguay Round of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) and implemented in 1995, furthered neoliberal policies by reducing subsidies to farmers, barriers to trade, and export subsidies. However, this legislation, too, disadvantaged small Latin American farmers who were confronted with a diminished tariff protection plan, while developed countries were allowed to pay their farmers large subsidies.<sup>15</sup> In fact, the AoA permits the allocation of more than half of EU subsidies to just 1% of farmers and 70% of US subsidies to just 10% of farmers, who tend to own large profitable commercial farms.<sup>16</sup> For example, since 1973, the US Farm Bill had provided massive subsidies and direct payments to farmers in mostly commercial farms.<sup>17</sup> Despite neoliberal enthusiasm for strengthening an open-market system, many developed countries harmed the very communities that needed the most assistance.<sup>18</sup>

With the advent of agribusiness in Latin America, countries experienced a dichotomy in agriculture between large plantations and small farms. Industrial agriculture, coupled with international influences, forced farmers to rely heavily on expensive inputs to fund biotechnology, mechanization, and monocultures. Thus, compounded by neoliberal economic policies that were intended to ameliorate the situation, the conditions of the peasant farming communities worsened. As agribusinesses have expanded, rural peasant communities have become increasingly landless. Recently, the United Nations Environmental Program summarized these issues, declaring that, “modern agriculture has become one of the major threats to the indigenous and local communities as well as to biodiversities, healthy ecosystems, and food security.”

14. Williamson, John. “What Washington Means by Policy Reform.” *Latin American Readjustment: How Much Has Happened*. Ed. John Williamson. Washington: Institute for International Economics, 1989.

15. World Trade Organization. *The Agreement on Agriculture*. Uruguay: World Trade Organization, 1995.

16. “Fine Words- Now we need action.” *The Guardian Online* 15 November 2005 [www.guardian.co.uk](http://www.guardian.co.uk).

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18. United Nations Environmental Program. Qtd. in *The Center for Food Safety*. “Making Room for Alternatives.” *International Forum for Globalization* [www.ifg.org](http://www.ifg.org).

## Health Effects on Peasant Farming Communities: Food Insecurity

According to the World Food Summit of 1996, “Food security exists when all people, at all times, have physical and economic access to sufficient, safe, and nutritious food to meet their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life.”<sup>19</sup> Industrial agriculture contributes to food insecurity by increasing poverty and reducing the availability of affordable staple foods in the community. Thus, industrial agriculture paradoxically leads to dire health effects on the peasant farming communities.

When agribusinesses enter Latin American countries, peasant farmers are forced to choose among several undesirable options, all with high risks of poverty. Due to the inability to compete economically with agribusinesses, farmers often go out of business. In these situations, neoliberal market theories do not translate fluidly into effective policies. For instance, the US Farm Bill and the Agreement on Agriculture allowed subsidies that led to the dumping of agricultural products by the EU and the US; in turn locally grown foods became relatively more expensive, negating the theory of comparative advantage.<sup>20</sup> When foreign industrial agribusinesses enter the market, local farmers cannot compete with imported products and Latin American governments cannot afford to pay similar subsidies. As Philip McMichael notes, “The Uruguay Round agreement bears all the hallmarks of an elaborate act of fraud. It requires developing countries to open their food markets in the name of free market principles, while allowing the US and the EU to protect their farm systems and subsidize exports.”<sup>21</sup> Contrary to the theory of comparative advantage, peasant farmers are generally unable to adapt to the new economic situation and shift to non-traditional sectors due to lack of capital, technical knowledge, marketing skills, and economies of scale.<sup>22</sup> This creates an alarming situation wherein farmers become landless. For example, in Costa Rica, the 2000 richest cattle owners occupy more than 50% of the nation’s arable land while 55% of all rural households are landless.<sup>23</sup>

When local peasant farmers are forced to abandon their jobs, their community is also affected. The “multiplier effect” is severely diminished since money generated in the agricultural sector cannot circulate through local businesses before leaving the community.<sup>24</sup> When farmers are no longer able to work in their rural communities, they typically move to urban areas, a current worldwide trend. In fact, the world population living in rural areas declined from 70% in 1950 to 55% in 2007. The increased populace in urban areas has led to masses of urban poor who are unable to grow their own food.<sup>25</sup> In a problematic cycle, the lack of local food

19. World Food Summit, “Rome Declaration on World Food Security,” 1996 World Food Summit, Rome, Italy: 13-17 November. <http://www.fao.org/docrep/003/w3613e/w3613e00.HTM>.

20. Koo, Won W. and Lynn Kennedy. *International Trade and Agriculture*. Published online 28 January 2008. <<http://www3.interscience.wiley.com/cgi-bin/bookhome/117892100>>, 14.

21. McMichael, Philip. “Global Food Politics.” *Hungry for Profit*. Ed. Fred Magdoff, John Foster, and Frederick H. Buttel. New York: Monthly Review Press, 2000, 126.

22. Kay, “Rural Poverty,” 474.

23. Farshad, *Hungry for Profit*, 155.

24. Heffernan, William D. “Concentration of ownership and control in agriculture.” *Hungry for Profit*. Ed. Fred Magdoff, John Foster, and Frederick H. Buttel. New York: Monthly Review Press, 2000, 73.

25. Farshad, *Hungry*, 146.



options increases the community's dependency upon imports, which are subject to large price fluctuations; the community has no resiliency in case the imports become unaffordable or import supply is interrupted.

Another option for farmers when industrial agriculture enters Latin America is to adjust their own farms and compete with the agribusinesses. In order to compete and in some cases qualify their food for stringent export regulations, peasant farmers must purchase expensive inputs such as fertilizers, pesticides, GMOs, and machines. As Via Campesina, an international peasants movement, has noted, "Only a small number of farmers in developing countries have the ability and luxury to be part of these lucrative markets."<sup>26</sup> Aside from the aforementioned international policy issues, expensive technological inputs and economies of scale are the main reasons that small farmers find it difficult to compete with industrial agricultural companies. Fertilizers and pesticides are incredibly expensive, and their prices rise almost every year. For example, in 2008 fertilizer prices increased 270%.<sup>27</sup> Unfortunately, the efficiency of pesticides and fertilizers is decreasing and in many cases, yields are leveling off or even declining. As a result, farmers must purchase more in order to maintain their original yield quotas. In addition, GMOs, also necessary for competition, present numerous problems for a peasant farmer. The seed patent laws of the World Trade Organization give 10 corporations 100% of the supply market for genetically engineered or transgenic seeds, permitting these companies to develop an oligopoly, a market dominated by a small amount of sellers.<sup>28</sup> Peasant farmers must also use expensive machines such as tractors and processing equipment in order to achieve economies of scale similar to those of large corporations. If farmers do manage to obtain the necessary inputs and equipment, they must still compete in an unfair global market where developed countries provide artificially low-priced crops and technological inputs promote higher worldwide production, thus increasing supply and reducing price.<sup>29</sup> So as inputs become more expensive, outputs remain relatively stable and thus generate less profit, resulting in increased poverty and food insecurity.

Lastly, peasant farmers can opt to work for the agribusinesses. However, this too presents numerous disadvantages. Farmers that work for these businesses are paid extremely low wages. For example, farmers working for Empaque Santa Rosa in Mexico do not earn enough wages a month to purchase the daily lunches sold at the factory.<sup>30</sup> In addition, workers not provided with health or disability insurance, oftentimes cannot unionize because they are uneducated regarding their rights and are easily replaceable.<sup>31</sup> Moreover, since the agribusiness serves as one of the largest employers in the community, farmers have little leverage to advocate their rights. Rather, they must withstand the unfavorable working conditions, which in turn perpetuate a cycle of poverty and food insecurity.

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 26. Via Campesina, "An Answer to the Global Food Crisis," Via Campesina Online 2 May 2008 < [http://viacampesina.org/main\\_en/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=525&Itemid=1](http://viacampesina.org/main_en/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=525&Itemid=1)>.

27. Altieri, "Agroecology," 1.

28. Shiva, *Stolen*, 9.

29. *Fatal Harvest: The tragedy of industrial agriculture*. Ed. By Andrew Kimbrell, Sausalito, CA: Foundation for Deep Ecology, 2002, 51.

30. Barndt, *Tangled Roots*, 173.

31. Barndt, *Tangled Roots*, 177 and Kay, "Rural Development," 472.

Along with poverty, industrial agriculture promotes food insecurity because affordable staple foods are less available. Agribusinesses do not grow staple foods for the hungry, but rather are devoted to growing luxury high profit items such as cotton and flowers.<sup>32</sup> As the production of cash crops increases, that of staple foods decreases; the prices of staples thus increase and consumption by peasant farming communities subsequently decreases.<sup>33</sup> Generally, cash crops are grown using monocultures, which contribute to lack of affordable staple foods in a number of ways. They replace land typically used for traditional grain supplies and thus destroy local production systems.<sup>34</sup> Furthermore, they are much more susceptible to disease than polycultural non-modified crops, since one infected plant can destroy an entire crop.<sup>35</sup> Though monocultures produce more in terms of yield, polycultures can prove to be more effective as they can produce sixty times more food per unit of input.<sup>36</sup> Finally, monocultures contribute to the elimination of game species by transforming habitats, displacing populations of native species, and introducing non-native species.<sup>37</sup>

### Health Effects of Industrial Agriculture: Harmful Working Conditions

Industrial agriculture creates harmful working conditions for peasant farming communities in Latin America. Most notably, workers are exposed to dangerous pesticides, which can result in organ damage, cancer, birth defects, miscarriages, sterility, and death.<sup>38</sup> The rate of pesticide poisoning among Latin American peasant farmers is thirteen times higher than among United States agricultural laborers.<sup>39</sup> In the Culiacan Valley in Mexico, reports estimate that three thousand field workers are hospitalized due to pesticide intoxication each year.<sup>40</sup> Although many Latin American countries do have regulations regarding these toxins, such as the volume of pesticide that can be applied, they are often not enforced.<sup>41</sup> Moreover, the lacking international regulation system allows developed countries to export banned or unregistered pesticides to Latin American countries. For example, since 25% of US pesticide exports are not registered by the Environmental Protection Agency, twenty-six pesticide ingredients banned in the US are exported to the developing world - six of which are used in Mexico.<sup>42</sup> Additionally, workers typically do not receive any formal directions regarding chemical usage, which exacerbates the potential toxicity.<sup>43</sup> Due to high illiteracy rates, many peasant farmers are unable

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32. Fatal Harvest, 51.

33. Shiva, *Stolen Harvest*, 13.

34. *Ibid.*

35. Fatal Harvest, 56.

36. Shiva, *Stolen Harvest*, 13.

37. Fatal Harvest, 61.

38. Davis, Andrew. "Can Congress close off the circle of poison?" *Business and Society Review*, no. 82 (1992): 40.

39. Tansey, Richard. "Eradicating the pesticide problem in Latin America," *Business and Society Review*, no. 92 (1995): 53.

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41. Pesticide Action Network International, "Dangerous pesticide use in Central America- Wanted: a new approach," *Pesticides News*, no. 54 (2001): 12-14. <[www.pan-uk.org](http://www.pan-uk.org)>.

42. Davis, "Can Congress," p.37. Also, Hanson, David. "Administration seeks tighter curbs on exports of unregistered pesticides," *Chemical and Engineering News* 72, no. 7 (1994): 16-17.

43. Barndt, 168.

to read what information is available on the labels. Many workers are further exposed to the harmful effects of pesticides due to improper protective gear, even when it is provided.<sup>44</sup>

Other harmful working conditions prevalent in the agricultural sectors of Latin America include child labor and long workdays. Child labor, condemned as an exploitative practice by many international institutions, occurs frequently with the growth of industrial agriculture. In Guatemala, approximately 32% of the country's 300,000 industrial plantation workers are children. They live in dilapidated houses, are frequently malnourished, and are paid half the wages of an adult worker.<sup>45</sup> For child laborers as well as adult workers, the average workday consists of roughly twelve hours of manual labor.<sup>46</sup> Although a few countries, such as Uruguay, have recently passed laws reducing the workday to eight hours, these laws are not enforced effectively. For the most part, workers may not be aware of their rights and they also have little leverage to unionize.<sup>47</sup> Thus, harmful conditions such as child labor and inordinately long workdays continue to plague Latin America's agricultural communities.

### The Health Effects of Industrial Agriculture: Community Environmental Degradation

As Via Campesina has noted, "Excessive and uncontrolled use of chemical fertilizers and pesticides along with the heavy machinery of the industry-driven model provoke harmful secondary effects on the environment which affect the health of the community."<sup>48</sup> Environmental degradation is an alarming consequence of industrial agriculture. The two main components of community environmental degradation are contamination of water resources and destruction of soil quality.

Due to the various amounts of pesticides and fertilizers, industrial agriculture gives rise to water and soil contamination. Pollution of both ground and surface water produces acute impacts on the communities, affecting drinking water as well as the ability to fish. In Costa Rica, for example, synthetic fertilizer inputs in coffee production have contributed to nitrate contamination in drinking water aquifers; groundwater pollution has exceeded World Health Organization levels, increasing the risk of cancer, birth defects, and developmental problems in children.<sup>49</sup> Not only does contaminated water pollute drinking supplies, but it also affects the fish population, thus eliminating a potential source of food. For example, during one month in

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44. Ransom, Pamela. "Women, pesticides, and sustainable agriculture." Position Paper presented at CSD NGO Women's Caucus, [www.earthsummit2002.org](http://www.earthsummit2002.org), 1.

Brodesser, J. et. al, "Pesticides in developing countries and the international code of conduct on the distribution and the use of pesticides," Paper for the International Atomic Energy Agency, < <http://www.naweb.iaea.org/nafa/fep/News-AGES-CoC.pdf>>.

45. Bureau of International Labor Affairs, "Child Labor in Commercial Agriculture," United States Department of Labor Report, <http://www.dol.gov/ilab/media/reports/iclp/sweat2/commercial.htm>.

46. Barnett, 170.

47. Estrada, Daniela. "Latin America: Strides and Setbacks for Domestic and Rural Workers," Inter Press Service News Agency, 27 September 2009 < <http://ipsnews.net/news.asp?idnews=48613>>.

48. La Via Campesina, "Proposals for family farm based, sustainable agriculture," Proposal published at the World Summit on Sustainable Development Summit, Johannesburg, August 2002, < [http://www.viacampesina.org/main\\_en/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=50&Itemid=42](http://www.viacampesina.org/main_en/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=50&Itemid=42)>.

49. Olman, Segura B. and Jenny Reynolds, "Environmental Impact of Coffee Production and Processing in El Salvador and Costa Rica," UN Conference on Trade and Environment, UNCTAD/COM20 27 August 1993, 15-16.

1994, there were five incidences of massive fish deaths in Costa Rica due to contaminated water surrounding banana plantations.<sup>50</sup> In addition, industrial agricultural methods contribute to soil erosion and desertification as well as decreased soil fertility due to salinization.<sup>51</sup> In Bolivia, for example, modern agricultural practices such as less fallowing time have rendered soils compacted and impermeable.<sup>52</sup>

## Solutions

Organic and fair trade niche markets can provide Latin American farmers with the opportunity to enter high value markets. Organic production is defined primarily by “the application of agronomic, biological and mechanical methods instead of chemical synthetic inputs [and] the use of... ‘better land husbandry’ techniques such as soil-conservation measures, crop rotation and the use of green manure and of mechanical methods instead of the slash-and-burn technique.”<sup>53</sup> Fair trade refers to a social and economic movement which promotes the payment of a higher price to farmers in exchange for the practice of sustainable farming methods.<sup>54</sup> In these markets, farmers do not have as much competition from agribusinesses and can thus produce crops in a manner that ameliorates, or even eliminates, the food insecurity, harmful working conditions, and environmental degradation caused by industrial agriculture. These niche markets, subsets of product markets, can be truly effective when farmers work in collaboration to grow and sell traditional Latin American crops in a manner tailored to the needs of the country. The case of Andean quinoa provides a paradigm for how niche markets can successfully operate with other Latin American crops.

Niche organic and fair trade markets restore a competitive advantage to peasant farmers. Organic farming that requires labor-intensive production, which peasant farmers already employ, and relatively little investment.<sup>55</sup> Additionally, farmers can achieve fair trade certification when they produce in an organic, sustainable manner that includes fair working conditions such as no forced labor. Because many peasant farmers already produce organically and their farms are based on voluntary family labor, they can easily qualify for fair trade certification.<sup>56</sup> Furthermore, peasant farmers generally use few, if any, biotechnological inputs such as GMOs, fertilizers, and pesticides. The fact that they have always used less biotechnological inputs implies that they are not likely to experience a higher incidence of pests upon producing organically. In contrast,

50. McCracken, Carrie. “The Impact of Banana Plantation Development in Costa Rica.” California State University, Hayward Paper, 1998 < [http://www.google.com/search?hl=en&source=hp&q=CSU+hayward&rlz=1R2ADFA\\_enUS338&aq=f&oq=&aqi=g10](http://www.google.com/search?hl=en&source=hp&q=CSU+hayward&rlz=1R2ADFA_enUS338&aq=f&oq=&aqi=g10)>.

51. Thrupp, 16.

52. Dregne, H.E. “Desertification of arid lands,” *Physics of Desertification*, ed. F. El-Baz and M.H.A. Hassen. Dordrecht, The Netherlands: Martinus, Nijhoff, 1986.

53. The International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), “The Adoption of Organic Agriculture among small farmers in Latin America and the Caribbean,” Evaluation Report, 1 March 2007 < [http://www.ifad.org/evaluation/public\\_html/eksyst/doc/thematic/PL/organic.htm](http://www.ifad.org/evaluation/public_html/eksyst/doc/thematic/PL/organic.htm)>.

54. Fair Trade Certified, “Fair Trade Overview,” Transfair USA, <http://www.transfairusa.org/content/about/overview.php> 17 December 2009.

55. IFAD, “Adoption of Organic Agriculture,” 1.

56. Global Exchange, “Fair Trade,” Transfair USA 7 December 2009 < <http://www.globalexchange.org/campaigns/fairtrade/>>.

farms that employ chemical inputs prior to switching to organic farming typically experience an initial increase of pests and disease as crops adapt to organic production methods.<sup>57</sup> Since the transition to organic and fair trade markets is fairly simple for peasant farmers, it has been suggested that they have comparative advantage in these markets and thus can successfully compete with agribusinesses.<sup>58</sup>

Organic fair trade farming has the potential to reduce the food insecurity, harmful working conditions, and environmental degradation caused by industrial agriculture. Food security is achieved through increasing farmer income and providing staple foods for domestic markets. Farmers' incomes increase because organic products command a higher international premium price than foods produced conventionally or with industrial farming methods. Organic foods generally have greater profit margins than foods produced more conventionally. Furthermore, fair trade production significantly increases the product price and reduces price instability. The organic requirement of not using pesticides eliminates many of the harmful working conditions and environmental damage caused by industrial agriculture. Moreover, organic farming typically involves soil conservation measures which remedy the erosion caused by industrial farming.<sup>59</sup> Also, there are fewer instances of worker abuse because farmers are self-employed and fair trade certification ensures that producers receive a fair price; forced labor and exploitative child labor are prohibited, and all aspects of trade and production are reviewed for public accountability. Therefore, organic trading would begin to restore healthy working conditions in Latin America.<sup>60</sup>

Although many peasant farmers can easily produce organically and in a manner in concordance with fair trade standards, farmer collaboration is critical in order to actually receive organic and fair trade certification and to enter the niche market. Small farmers associations are crucial for a number of reasons. They allow farmers to achieve economies of scale in the production and marketing of crops. Furthermore, members of the associations can combine their products, and thus achieve large enough quantities for export as well as negotiation leverage. In addition, associations can organize training in the characteristics of organic production and implement monitoring systems to control compliance with organic standards. This standardized training combined with the monitoring system can significantly decrease the costs of organic and fair trade certification, as the certification agency must only inspect samples of association members rather than each individual member. Also, associations can attract government agencies and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to help them adopt necessary changes for organic production. Finally, small farmers associations promote sustainable agriculture by enforcing sustainable practices and providing a strong support network that guarantees more stable crop prices and the provision of expensive processing equipment. Through small farmers associations, farmers can more easily obtain the necessary inputs and quantities to achieve the benefits of niche markets.

Andean quinoa provides an excellent case study of how organic and fair trade niche markets, developed through collaboration, can ameliorate the detrimental health effects of

57. IFAD, "Adoption of Organic Agriculture," 1.

58. *Ibid.*

59. *Ibid.*

60. Global Exchange, "Fair Trade," Transfair USA 7 December 2009 < <http://www.globalexchange.org/campaigns/fairtrade/>>.

industrial agriculture. Quinoa is a highly nutritious annual cereal that has been grown in the Andean region of Latin America for over 7000 years and can prosper in rough conditions of cold temperatures, drought, high altitudes, and soil salinity.<sup>61</sup> Beginning in the mid-1990s, quinoa became quite popular in the health food markets of developed countries and quinoa production in the Andean region increased by 50% from 1997-2002.<sup>62</sup> Organic quinoa commands an international price 10-15% higher than conventional quinoa, thus reducing poverty and food insecurity.<sup>63</sup> As a highly nutritious grain, quinoa has been elected by the Food and Agriculture Organization as one of the crops which will offer food security in the 21st century.<sup>64</sup> Thus, unlike the cash crops produced by industrial agriculture, it is a staple crop, which proves to be extremely effective in providing needed nutrients. Furthermore, the process of quinoa organic and fair trade certification requires no pesticides, but rather promotes soil conservation. Thus, quinoa eliminates many of the harmful working conditions and environmental damage caused by industrial agricultural practices.

Through different organizations, farmers are able to garner the technological knowledge, marketing capabilities, and economies of scale that are necessary to grow quinoa and enter both domestic and international niche markets through collaboration. CIRMA, or the Centro de Investigación de Recursos Naturales y Medio Ambiente, is a Peru-based NGO that coordinates about 800 smallholder farmers to help them produce for the domestic market. CIRMA has helped farmers coordinate their production and add value to their crops by installing facilities for the mechanical cleaning of quinoa, providing good seed, offering technical assistance, utilizing marketing committees to develop new ways of packaging products, providing business advice, and directly connecting producers and wholesalers in order to bypass intermediaries.<sup>65</sup> These methods have been extremely effective in opening the domestic organic niche market to farmers, adding value to crops, diversifying market options, improving consumer appeal, and allowing farmers better control over the quality of their quinoa.<sup>66</sup> Farmers associated with CIRMA have been able to obtain yields of 700-1400 kg/ha, much higher than the average of 500 kg/ha typically seen in the region.<sup>67</sup> In addition, they have been able to avoid intermediaries and transport costs, which could comprise up to 70-80 percent of the final price of quinoa.<sup>68</sup>

ANAPQUI, or Asociación Nacional de Productores de Quinoa, was founded in 1983 in Bolivia and focuses on the international export market for quinoa rather than the domestic market. ANAPQUI helps farmers collaborate with each other through organizing purchases of processing plants, helping farmers qualify for organic certification, coordinating farmers so that they have enough quinoa to achieve sufficient export quantities, linking farmers to international

61. Hellin, Jon and Sophie Higman, *Feeding the Market*. Bloomfield, CT: Kumarian Press, Inc., 2003, 90.

62. Jacobsen, SE, "Quinoa: research and development at the international potato center," CIP-DANIDA (2002).

63. Hellin, 100.

64. El-Hage Scialabba, Nadia, Cristina Grandi and Christina Henatsch, "Organic Agriculture and genetic resources for food and agriculture," Food and Agriculture Organization AC784/E, 2002, 1.

65. Centro de investigación de recursos naturales y medio ambiente, "Misión," CIRMA Website, <<http://www.condesan.org/socios/cirma/cirma.htm>>.

66. Hellin, 104.

67. Ordinola, M. "Nuevos esquemas para la comercialización de la quinoa," Memorias primer taller internacional en Quinoa: recursos genéticos y sistemas de producción, Eds. Jacobsen, SE, Mujica, A. and Portillo, Z., Proyecto Quinoa CIP-DANIDA (2001).

68. Hellin, 95.

markets, and offering fixed prices to farmers for their crops.<sup>69</sup> Bolivia's exports of quinoa have risen from 378 tons in 1997 to 2000 tons in 2000, demonstrating that ANAPQUI has indeed had a significant effect.<sup>70</sup>

Although niche markets achieved through collaboration have helped to ameliorate many of the detrimental health effects of industrial agriculture, unfortunately, some problems remain for peasant farmers attempting to enter these markets. Small farmers associations face many stresses including lack of cooperation among members, inflexible deals with foreign buyers who demand specific quantities, expensive certification costs, and limited information and organization, which eventually lead to lower prices for products because farmers are unable to negotiate favorable deals.<sup>71</sup> One of the biggest issues that these organizations face is that although they are not directly competing with agribusinesses, they still face indirect competition. For example, while commercial agribusinesses do not present steep competition in quinoa production, they do present competition in complementary goods such as cereals. Thus, although quinoa has the potential to increase food security for peasant farming communities, many times these communities cannot afford the already-processed and cleaned quinoa sold in supermarkets. Thus, domestic consumers often opt to purchase subsidized wheat from foreign imports instead, which offers a relatively lower price.<sup>72</sup>

There are several ways in which these limitations can be addressed. Collaboration with NGOs, such as CIRNMA, provides technical and educational assistance and equipment to farmers while connecting them to domestic and international markets. In addition, NGOs could help improve sustainability through maintaining high-quality large yields. They could also assist with developing economies of scale, and thus reduce prices of crops in domestic markets. For example, farmers could eventually produce cheap, ready-made quinoa for domestic markets to be able to effectively compete with other cereals produced by agribusinesses. Government collaboration is also a strategy that has not yet been explored. Although certain Latin American governments, such as that of Peru, have arranged to buy native crops from local farmers for national food programs, these governments have yet to collaborate specifically with organic and fair trade farmers. Studies suggest that government programs dealing with organic agriculture would be both inexpensive and effective.<sup>73</sup>

## Conclusion

Although many people think that industrial agriculture is the only way to provide food for the hungry, agribusinesses actually produce alarming detrimental health effects in peasant farming communities including food insecurity, harmful working conditions, and environmental degradation. Michael Sligh notes, "The fatal flaw of today's food production is that it is modeled on the industrial system. It does not attempt to remain within the bounds of nature, but rather

69. Hellin, 101.

70. Hellin, 99.

71. IFAD, "Adopting Organic Agriculture," 9.

72. Hellin, 112.

73. IFAD, "Adopting Organic Agriculture," 9.

is designed to 'beat' nature- beat it with technology, cheap labor, and cost externalization."<sup>74</sup> Some solutions to these problems are organic and fair trade niche market entry achieved through farmer collaboration. Although niche markets for farmers of the developing world have recently increased in popularity, there is still significant potential for expansion and the creation of a more sustainable and healthy food production system in Latin America.

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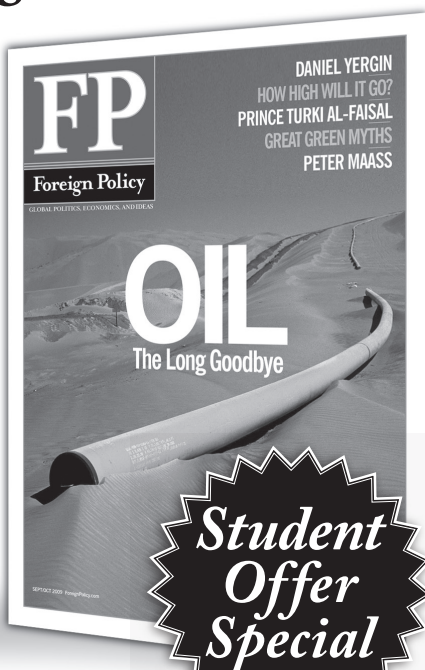
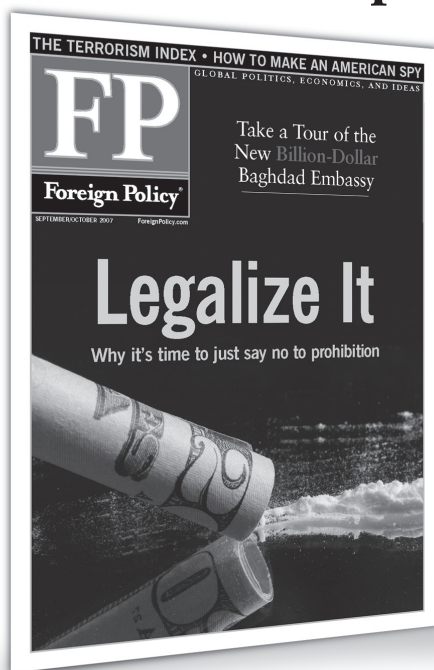
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