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LETTER FROM OUR MANAGING EDITOR

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Dear Reader,

It is convenient that I may share with you that one of STAIR's founding editors, Alexander Betts, now a Professor at Oxford, joins our ranks once again as our Senior Member. The inspiration for the theme "Globalism & Multipolarity" arose as I combed through thousands of old STAIR files passed onto me by an old Treasurer, Miri Pittalis. It was a great pleasure, though simultaneously tedious, to peruse nearly two decades of archival material collected and maintained by the Journal. I confess that I greatly envy the STAIR editors of 2005, the year of the Journal's founding. Of course, I do not mean that I would have wished to code the website in HTML, to choose from a dizzying number of custom fonts, to have to interact with subscribers via the Postal Service (I am not entirely sure I know what a 'Post Office' is), or to be condemned to endure any other such anachronism. The Editors of that period have my respect for having persevered through such terrifying conditions, though I concede that owning Adobe software seems preferable to paying for it monthly.

Rather, what strikes me about the STAIR Issues of the mid-late 2000s is their epistemic optimism. I do not mean that our pioneering Editorial Boards were naive or arrogant. I merely wish to venture the claim that, on some level, they believed International Affairs could be understood, and that they were within earshot of the requisite conceptual tools with which to do so. They moreover seemed confident that knowledge could, in turn, be used in service of change, as common sense would certainly suggest. At risk of giving the impression that I have any comparative insight beyond that of mere hindsight, I leave a deeper discussion of these assumptions to the Issue's brilliant authors. Perhaps, however, a heuristic is in order: the impetus for this Issue was to discover how, if we were to travel back in time and share a coffee or two with Professors Schonmann, Betts, and Eagleton-Pierce - STAIR's founding troika - at the Barefoot Cafe on North Parade in 2005, we would explain to them headlines in International Affairs of nearly two decades later. Issue 19.1 could therefore be alternatively entitled "What the hell is going on?"

Why is the Western Right actively undermining the defence of a pro-Western nation (Ukraine) against Russia, NATO's enemy *par excellence*? What happened on January 6th, 2021 in Washington D.C., and why did a near carbon copy of those events occur in Brasilia two years later? Why have trucker convoys become a mainstream method of protest, such as among farmers in Delhi in 2020, COVID-19 lockdown critics in Canada in 2022,

and others? How has Saudi Arabia managed to improve relations with both Israel and Iran, two regional rivals, with the support of the United States and China, two Great Power rivals? Who are the BRICS, and why is there serious momentum behind the notion that they may challenge the supremacy of the US Dollar?

It goes without saying that the questions above are far too numerous to be addressed by any single journal issue. Nonetheless, in broaching those questions in our Calls for Proposal, we wished to convey to authors that, no matter the particular subject matter of their Theme Section submissions, we were interested in critical analyses of Grand Narratives and basic dogmas of International Affairs therein. I am incredibly grateful to our Theme Section authors for their contributions to the study of our emerging multipolar order, and to our General Section authors for upholding STAIR's lofty editorial standards with insightful and relevant manuscripts.

We are also pleased to announce the creation of STAIR's Commentary Section. Last year, as we crafted our originally planned Issue 17.2 about the Russian invasion of Ukraine, we quickly discovered that peer reviewed journals were not necessarily the best place to write about the war. While we were fortunate to receive excellent submissions, some of which were published in Issue 18.1 in October 2023, many authors encountered what would become a routine set of challenges: the war was changing so rapidly. The peer review process was too slow to keep up with the press. Authors quickly realized that as new developments occurred, their submissions required constant retooling. The pool of possible reviewers about wartime topics was relatively shallow, even among experts of Russia and Ukraine, as the war was nascent and scholars continued to refine their perspectives thereof. The Commentary section, with its op-eds, analyses, news pieces, and Podcast episodes now provides scholars with a means to contribute to STAIR in a more flexible format. This has been essential to STAIR's ability to produce high quality content on emerging issues such as the Israeli invasion of Gaza, the record-breaking number of elections taking place this year, the sudden death of Iranian President and Foreign Minister, and, of course, the ongoing war in Ukraine.

STAIR is deeply indebted to the financial support provided by St. Antony's College, including the Graduate Common Room and the Antonian Fund. We are further grateful to our Advisory Board and newly formed Steering Committee for their continued interest in and support for the Journal, particularly as many major changes may usher in the Journal's twentieth year. I am personally indebted to Miriam Pittalis, a former STAIR Treasurer, Senior Advisor, and a current Steering Committee member,

for her stewardship of our files, institutional history, financial documents, and more, well beyond her term of service. I likewise extend my sincere gratitude to Sasha Diouk, a former Managing Editor who now joins Miri on the Steering Committee, for being an authoritative yet kind voice in my ear, particularly during the process of transition whereby I took the helm. Finally, I would like to thank Robin Mitchell, also a Steering Committee member, for far exceeding the expectations of his role last academic year in support of the publication of Issue 18.1.

I have greatly enjoyed working alongside Nick, Noah, Jack, Tommy, and Joshua on Issue 19.1. Having joined STAIR at a time when I was its only returning member, it would be remiss if I did not make special mention of how instrumental you have all been in keeping me sane, pushing me forward, and holding this Journal to its high standards, all while being introduced to STAIR for the first time yourselves. To Tommy, in particular, our resident "force multiplier," you have more than earned your reputation as the affable drill sergeant with appropriate military discipline on whom we have been able to rely. Moreover, to Joshua, who joined us so recently, the breakneck speed at which you expertly edited so many submissions has set a tremendously high bar for future Copy Editors to follow.

May your successors strive valiantly to follow your examples as Editors, members, and as friends.

Sincerely,

Armin Safavi
Managing Editor

EDITORIAL INTRODUCTIONS

Welcome to Issue 19.1 of the St Antony's International Review (STAIR). In this Issue, STAIR hopes to investigate questions and concerns regarding globalism and multipolarity. We noted that when STAIR was founded in 2005, Grand Narratives such as the 'The Clash of Civilizations', 'The End of History' and many others were utilised by academics and students in order to understand International Affairs and Politics. Issue 19.1 hopes to investigate whether these Grand Narratives remain useful in understanding International Affairs and Politics. This is especially pertinent due to current questions concerning American unipolarity, the rise of China and the rise of other countries in the Global South.

The manuscripts in the Theme Section address these matters head on from a multiplicity of perspectives. They examine a range of diverse subject matters, from contemporary British strategy making to North Korea geopolitics and political ideology. In addition, we have an excellent array of General Section articles that bring a wide range of timely academic interventions on important topics in International Affairs. Lastly, this Issue provides an excellent review of the book *Good Governance in Nigeria: Rethinking Accountability and Transparency in Nigeria* by Portia Roelofs.

As STAIR reaches almost twenty years of age, I hope that this Issue provides the Reader with a timely reflection on the multifaceted state of International Affairs whilst also reflecting on how pronounced academics conceptions of International Affairs has possibly changed since STAIR first began. I would especially like to thank the of the Publications Team and Managing Editor for their hard and endless work. Without this, it would not have been possible to bring this thought-provoking Issue to life.

I very much hope that you enjoy reading this issue.

Sincerely,

Nicholas Brown,
Publications Director

Theme Section

In recent years, we have witnessed a palpable shift in global politics. Assumptions that were once considered foundational frameworks of the International Relations (IR) discipline are now being scrutinized. As we examine the power of grand narratives in this era of global politics, we turn to recent scholarship characterized by discourse on the 'Rise of the Rest,' the decline of unipolarity,

and the emergence of a new multipolar world. These works have garnered varied reactions, ranging from enthusiasm and fear to blatant denial and passive acceptance. While well-established arguments exist on all sides of the question "Are we living in a multipolar world, and if yes, what do we do about it?" this issue aims to address these questions and problematize the use of existing IR frameworks and assumptions while grappling with the outcomes. With this in mind, the five articles herein tackle different aspects of these main questions.

Wallerand Bazin and Zac Gunaratnam-Bailey investigate the reinvestment of core-periphery heuristics to uncover colonial injustices, given their potential to equalize "incomparable geographies," thus exacerbating epistemic violence and the financialization of nature. Drawing insights from recent environmental justice scholarship, Bazin and Gunaratnam-Bailey propose that afforestation projects predicated on the neo-Ricardian "win-win" transfer have ushered in a new period of carbon colonialism. They argue that while the core-periphery grand narrative used by IR scholars in the past holds merit for its delineating capabilities, its binary nature homogenizes the lived experiences of the peripheries. Focusing on the largely unexplored geographies of IR, Bazin and Gunaratnam-Bailey begin the issue with a well-developed critique of the core-periphery grand narrative and a call for scholars to incorporate more careful theorization.

Efe Can Gürcan and Gerardo Otero shift the focus to probing global multipolarity itself, asking what the key factors contributing to the rise of multipolarity are and the ramifications of these factors on the shape of multipolarity. Taking a Gramscian lens, Gürcan and Otero propose a conjunctural rereading of multipolarity, finding that failures of the neoliberal order have aggravated the rise of the Latin American left and the global far-right. They also suggest that the rise of South-South cooperation can be attributed to the breakdown of the hegemonic global governance system. The authors leave us with two possible scenarios depicting the future of multipolarity, addressing the second part of this issue's focus.

The third article, by Julia Youjia Hoffmann, centers on the field of normative power. Hoffmann investigates the three core dimensions of Ian Manners' normative power—ontological, positivist, and normative—arguing that the theoretical foundations and practical applications of normative power are inherently Eurocentric/EU-centric. By comparing dimensions of Manners' "normative power Europe" with relevant conceptions of normative power by the United States and China, Hoffmann calls for IR scholars to develop a deeper awareness of the issues inherent in the discipline's foundational texts and to "re-world" normative power in this new, multipolar, yet global era.

Alastair Morgan then examines the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK)'s grand narrative. Morgan suggests that despite the state leadership's claims of taking a new path, this narrative follows familiar patterns. Morgan examines the incorporation of discourse on the multipolar order into the DPRK's strategic orientation. Using the pronouncements of the DPRK's leadership to trace developments in the narrative from 2019, Morgan posits that the DPRK values nuclear deterrence, will remain aligned with Russia and China for the time being, and believes that the rise of multipolarity is advantageous to the state's objectives.

Finally, Andrew E. Ward, through the examination of UK strategic reviews, assesses the extent to which IR theory and grand narratives influence UK strategy-making. Ward affirms that while the drivers and constraints of UK strategy have remained constant, policymakers are not faced with a lack of maneuverability. The article asserts that UK strategy-making has utilized this freedom to adapt to changes in IR, from the bipolarity of the Cold War to the rising multipolarity today.

Sincerely,

Noah Smith,
Theme Section Editor

General Section

In addition to the articles in this Issue's Theme Section on Grand Narratives, STAIR's general section publishes a set of articles by established and emerging scholars on issues ranging from the justification for interventions to migration and development.

Fikayo Akeredolu contributes a comparative piece seeking lessons from South Korea's historical development experience for Nigeria. She argues that with adherence to two key lessons - upskilling the Nigerian workforce and enhancing the absorptive capacity of firms - Nigeria could potentially leapfrog expected development pathways. Her piece is well situated in a growing literature on Technological Learning and is highly contemporary in its intuitive exploration of development beyond prevalent paradigms.

James Morton's article investigates the effect of migration from Sudan to OPEC countries in the late 1970s on Sudan's exchange rate and productivity. Morton proposes a modified Dutch Disease model—a Double Dutch Disease model—for understanding why Sudan's economy struggled with high inflation and expensive imports despite considerably large remittances from abroad. Morton's model is extremely relevant for other developing states which suffer from migration but benefit from high remittances.

Dr. Agis Papageorgiou examines the morality of U.S. Cold War interventions. He challenges the argument that Cold War interventionism was motivated by self-interest, and thus inherently immoral by presenting a consequentialist moral framework which American Presidential Administrations used when deciding when an intervention was necessary. Papageorgiou's framework and findings explain why Administrations believed they were morally right in pursuing interventions which at times contradicted the liberal values which America espoused.

Chaitanya Rawat's piece explores the impact of the Cold War on India. By taking foreign aid used to build the Bokaro Steel Plant as a proxy for Cold War influences in India, Rawat argues that India, and other 'Third World' countries had substantially more agency in the geopolitical tensions between the United States and Soviet Union. Rawat builds a framework for understanding how states could maintain policy independence through promoting the institutional competition that characterized the bipolar Cold War. Rawat's article holds relevance for modern geopolitics and offers a possible roadmap to enable 'middle powers' to retain their agency.

Finally, M. Christian Uta, in his piece on U.N. humanitarian interventions in oil-producing states, examines the primary motivations behind Peacekeeping missions authorized by the Security Council. He uses quantitative methods to empirically test the Realist hypothesis that the P5 members of the Security Council take advantage of their power to further their own national interest, specifically with reference to oil production. Uta's findings deepen our knowledge of the decision-making processes that take place within the P5 and the broader Security Council and add nuance to our understanding of interventions in oil producing states.

These five articles cut across a broad range of topics that are hotly debated in the discipline. The morality and justification of international interventions has not been as relevant in the last 15 years as it is now, the need for 'middle countries' to design strategies to maintain their autonomy, and the role of migration in political economy. What is striking is that all four papers ground their empirical analysis in the experience of the Cold War. This speaks to a second order shift in grand narratives: the Cold War is no longer the subject of international relations, but rather a testing ground for contemporary theories.

Sincerely,

Jeffrey (Jack) Love
General Section Editor

THEME SECTION

INCOMPARABLE GEOGRAPHIES IN A MULTIPOLAR WORLD

Wallerand Bazin, University of Oxford
Zac Gunaratnam-Bailey, University of Oxford

Abstract

Postcolonial geographies have toiled with polar paradigms undergirding conventional histories of conservation, whereby ideas of nature, and conservation practices emerge from a Western "core" and pervade a colonized "periphery." Richard Grove's 1995 work *Green Imperialism* nuanced these purportedly unidirectional exchanges, arguing that the flow of environmental ideas and practices between Britain and the tropics were multidirectional and co-evolving [1]. Cores and peripheries remain compelling heuristics with which to expose uneven development in global trade, such as in the case of afforestation and reforestation projects to sequester carbon. Predicated on a neo-Ricardian "win-win" resource transfer, carbon projects, predominantly in the Global South, allow high-consumption countries to claim to be able to off-set their carbon emissions. The resulting exchange from a core Global North to a peripheral Global South is unequal insofar as regions that bear the brunt of the ecological and social impact of afforestation - such as biodiversity loss and dispossession - are not those to which carbon rents accrue. With a market capitalization forecasted to surpass that of the oil and gas industry by 2050 [2], the carbon off-set market is said to re-enact 'extractivist' logics inherent to "ecological imperialism" [3] triggering a new scramble for land and a new phenomenon of carbon colonialism [4]. Leaning on the Grovian boomerang, this paper reinvests polarity to challenge the apolitical 'we' of Anthropocenic environmental meta-narratives (Part I), examining how carbon forestry projects on marginalised land in Uganda and Scotland re-enact racialized ideas of colonial natures as unpeopled Eden and the colonial politics of knowledge over land as degraded and abandoned (Part II). We argue that unless we 'think with care' when using the core-periphery heuristic as a plotline to expose injustice, we risk flattening differences between otherwise "incomparable geographies," thereby aggravating the financialization of nature (Part III) and epistemic violence (Part IV).

Reinvesting Core-Periphery Heuristics

When the philosopher and essayist Sylvia Wynter thinks of humans as storytelling species, or "*homo narrans*", she conceives of

meta-narratives not merely as tools of domination, which ground the status quo in a narrative that infuses fatalistic weight to an unchangeable situation [5]. Reinvesting meta-narratives can also be emancipatory by shattering commonly held beliefs. We look here at the possibilities of reinvesting the core-periphery heuristic in the case of colonial and carbon forestry.

Quest for narratives?

Since Jean-Francois Lyotard's *Post-Modern Condition* was published in 1979, a mistrust of meta-narratives has pervaded the social sciences. These Grand Narratives are criticized as attempts at infusing meaning into certain events, whilst eclipsing other forms of conceptual organization that do not fit the narrative. This "quest for narratives" [6] nonetheless continues unabated, with Anthropocene narratives, and subsequent detractors, the most recent attempt at making sense of the epoch-shifting moment at hand [7-8]. But the Anthropocene is partial and totalizing: it "might seem to offer a dystopic future that laments the end of the world, but imperialism and ongoing (settler) colonialisms have been ending worlds for as long as they have been in existence" [9].

Sylvia Wynter argues that narratives serve as "powerful knowledge systems and origin stories that explain who/what we are" and "produce the lived and racialized categories of the rational and irrational, the selected and the dysselected, the haves and the have-nots" [10]. Dominant narratives are necessarily incomplete, and yet "the epistemological elaboration of a story line, such as natural scarcity and bell curves, is made to appear, in common sense terms, as being naturally determined" [11]. New narratives that estrange, caution, or galvanize, effectively "yearn for an alternative" that can push back on this common-sense naturalized story of how the world must be and "is" [12]. Critical theory should therefore strike the right balance in reinvesting the space offered by narratives to systematize patterns of structural injustice, whilst at the same time resisting the lure of totalization that flattens place-based differences.

When both reinvested and deconstructed, narratives remain a useful tool in International Relations research. They expose mechanisms of structural violence and exclusion that continue to influence global development patterns and financial flows which manifest in unequal capital gain and pollutant responsibilities [13]. It could be argued that continued use of core-periphery models as a metanarrative is concurrent with contemporary environmental social science in that it counters the assumptions inherent in researching the 'Anthropocene' where a collective humanity is responsible for climate and ecological breakdown, "predicated on Whiteness as the color of universality" [14]. Instead of dispersing accountability through universality, we must isolate the stratified

relations of outsourced violence to recenter the core's economic exploitation and ecological entitlement. The roots of climate injustice and degradation reside not in a natural continuation of human development, but in the strategic manoeuvres of metropolises—handily obscured by the post-political narratives of the Anthropocene that erase imperial lineage.

Using core-periphery to understand carbon exchange

Recent environmental justice and post-growth scholarship has explored in detail the processes and outcomes of extractive practices and the extreme levels of over-consumption in a Global North core, which largely excludes 'peripheral' nations of the Global South from associated increases in standards of living. Hickel, Sullivan, and Zoomkawala found that the Global North has extracted 152 trillion USD from the Global South since 1960 (in raw materials and human labour), enabled by foreign direct investment and one-sided trade deals whereby these peripheral nations must export more to the core than the comparative value of their imports [15]. Meanwhile, these same countries of the Global North—as of 2015—have been responsible for 92% of "excess emissions" of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere [16]. The core-periphery heuristic illuminates current trajectories of climate catastrophe and deprivation of development gains not as incidental externalities, but predictable outcomes given that the gravity of capital and power tilts in the global North's favour.

An illustrative instantiation of core-periphery is the growing complex of global carbon finance and its attendant structural issues. Predicated on a neo-Ricardian "win-win" resource transfer, high-consumption countries aim to off-set their emissions by investing in afforestation projects, predominantly in poorer regions [17]. However, the exchange is unequal, as the regions that bear the brunt of the ecological and social impacts of afforestation—such as biodiversity loss and dispossession—are not those where carbon rents accrue [18-19]. Tree planting to mitigate climate change by sequestering carbon has bolstered a new scramble for land and triggered a new phenomenon of carbon colonialism [20-22]. The carbon off-set market is said to re-enact extractivist logics inherent to "ecological imperialism" [23-25]. Predicated on logics of dependency, power asymmetries and unequal transfer of both carbon wealth and waste between the core and periphery [26-27], ecological imperialism describes "the subjugation of the economic, political, and/or social institutions of a peripheral country for the biophysical, metabolic needs of the core or semi-periphery" [28].

In his seminal book, *Green Imperialism*, Richard Grove shows how resource grabs were supported by a dissemination of ideas of nature between the metropole and the colonies which consequently led to conservation practices across the Empire [29-30]. By situat

ing disproportionate climate impacts and expanding emissions offsets in peripheral regions, carbon colonialism undergirding the "making of the world system" is the latest iteration of colonial land appropriation and resource capture [31].

Thinking with care

Although the core-periphery model holds merit for its potential to subvert an apolitical 'we' which assumes some kind of collective human responsibility for the conditions of the "colonial Anthropocene" [32], there remains a tension within the use of such grand narratives. "Thinking with care" is necessary when using core-periphery frameworks to expose colonial legacies of violence and extraction [33]. When thinking within a model predicting continuing patterns of injustice, we risk falling prey to determinism and polarisation. It is important that emergent scholarship elide frameworks which maintain—with particular reverence and dependence—the 'periphery' for the sake of conceptual wholeness and analytical harmony [34]. A *care*-ful use of grand narratives ought to expose structural harms rather than reproduce pain-based narratives [35]. Reinforcing narratives of suffering risks not only limiting the possibility of emancipatory scholarship, but also portrays colonial ideals of nature and its contemporary commodification as the result of "an enormous, global conspiracy" [36]. Reducing the periphery as passive receptacles "to satisfy the masters needs" removes the need to scrutinise the active, insidious ways in which such projects perpetuate neocolonial agendas [37]. Consequently, this obscures the agency of peripheral actors and their capacities to contest and renegotiate power dynamics.

The dualistic distinction of core/periphery relies particularly on the homogenisation of colonised countries, bodies, and natures where those delineated as inferior become othered and reside as merely "the rest" [38-39]. This cross-cultural homogenisation remains complicitly embedded in those contemporary development patterns built on dualistic western epistemologies, as well as in research that remains inattentive to this lens. The field of International Relations as a field has drawn criticism for its "over-attention to sameness" [40] in that even scholarship that appears critical to the deep-rooted epistemic injustices within IR research re-enacts this privileged position with the ability to homogenise, through its "ability to frame and claim the epistemic terrain." The ability to homogenise is a mark of power in this context since the ability to control narrative, knowledge, and representation is itself laden with power [41] (Foucault, 1980). In homogenising the multiplicity of experiences of peripheral landscapes and people, the core exercises power through a unification of 'truth' that casts the periphery as a backdrop to the central narrative of the extension of processes controlled by the core. Foucault argued that power operates within discourses that define what is normal, acceptable,

and true. When individuals or groups lack the power to define their own existence and conditions within these discourses, they are effectively excluded from the mechanisms of power [42].

Seeking to unsettle the epistemic terrain and the homogenising pitfalls of core-periphery analysis, the notion of "thinking with care" [43] here serves as a methodological counterbalance in challenging the "objectifying" and "totalizing" tendencies of the heuristic. The core-periphery's binary logic lacks theoretical care by typecasting the periphery as a passive recipient excluded from the mechanisms of power by the core. Thinking with care about this narrative can generate other ways of relating to the production of knowledge—capturing the variety of manifestations and resistances to global engines of power and inequality—as a *care*-ful way to "connect sites that do not easily connect, making knowledge interesting" [44]. Thinking with care provokes us to question what is missing from an application of the core-periphery narrative where "encounters are both challenging and diversifying beyond the expected and manageable" [45]. As such, thinking with care about the core-periphery narrative compels us to engage with a relational yet geographically specific approach; what André Saramago calls "a historical-sociological approach to grand narratives" [46].

From Green Imperialism to Carbon Colonialism

As a guiding model in colonial historiography, the core-periphery narrative is compelling to sketch global asymmetries and similarities among subjugated peripheral territories. Richard Grove's *Green Imperialism* can thereby be useful to assess how contemporary carbon forestry in peripheries of global capitalism, such as in the well-studied Scottish and Ugandan landscapes, re-enacts past colonial entanglements and asymmetries. In this section, we show that it is possible to put in relation peripheral geographies and histories by exploring how racialized ideas of nature as an unpeopled Eden and politics of knowledge over land as degraded and abandoned undergirded colonial interventions in the colonies and continue to infuse carbon forestry projects.

A Grovean boomerang

Mapping the flow of ideas of nature and conservation practices between the core and periphery of the Empire is highly contentious [47-48]. It can lead to totalizing historiographies that use, and reify, the "core" as a vantage point to explain the dissemination of British ideologies across the colonized world [49]. Rather, in tracing the ebbs and flows of these conceptions, Grove identifies a way that conceptions of nature in the core were informed by the "British's encounter with the tropics" and co-evolved with those in the "periphery", resulting in a heterogeneous "ideological and scientific content of indigenous, orientalist and romantic conser-

vationism" [50]. In doing so, Grove escapes Mignolo and Walsh's criticism [51] of historians like David Worster [52] and Keith Thomas [53], who rest on "the hypothesis of a purely destructive environmental imperialism" that consequently downplays dynamic exchange within the Empire [54]. Rather, Grove argues that the tales of these destructions and the exposure to indigenous ontologies subsequently sparked romantic ideals and concerns for environmental conservation in Britain. He shows how the search for Edenic natures "coincided with the realisation that the economic demands of colonial rule on previously uninhabited oceanic island colonies threatened their imminent and comprehensive degradation" and how this provided much of the impetus for the creation of natural parks and unpeopled reserves in both the Global North and South [55-56]. Conceptions of nature were exchanged within Empires along with accompanying conservation measures, such as how the tree planting initiatives in St. Helena inspired similar practices in India and later on in Scotland [57-58].

Furthering Grove's history of co-evolutionary environmental ideas, Adams and Mulligan [59] argue that conservation measures not only transformed landscapes in the colonies but boomeranged back to the UK, modifying the way the UK perceived and managed its land, both in Ireland and Scotland [60]. Co-evolution of conservation is still relevant today with the neoliberal turn to environmental governance. For instance, the one-size-fits-all proposals of payment for ecosystem services (PES) which emerged from the USA in the late 1990s, were later applied in Costa Rica and now underpin major bodies of European agri-environmental policy, most notably the UK's new Environment Land Management Schemes [61]. Carbon forestry is but one example of PES; in the next section, we assess how racialized discourses over people and land shaped British "colonialscapes" and continue to infuse carbon forestry projects in Uganda and Scotland.

Ideas of nature

In *Imposing Wilderness*, Neumann (1998) describes how the circulation of commissioned landscape painting across the empire enshrined nature as picturesque, in line with orientalist ideas of the "Edenic Myth" in African colonies or romantic ideas of forbidding wastelands in Scottish uplands [62]. These representations of nature overlapped with racialized discourses, which essentialized the "primitive as picturesque" or depicted landscapes emptied of its inhabitants [63]. Africans were presented as "noble savage[s]" who were closer to nature than civilization, whilst highlanders' stated backwardness was said to be linked to the "alien" and hostile nature of the barren environment in which they lived [64-65]. Landscapes devoid of humans became "metaphors of the mind", which reflected the anxieties of colonizers with regards to social form, attempting to both obscure the social upheavals of the time,

whilst motivating social reform [66]. This dual control of nature and people occurred both in Scotland through the mastery of the highlands, where large-scale conifer plantations were planted to meet England's timber demands [67], and overseas, where green imperialists legitimized the exploitation of Black and Brown bodies as the mastery over an uncivilized and wild nature [68]. This illustrates the flipside of the way Africa was imagined, not only as an Edenic paradise but also a forbidding wasteland, whereby those living next to these plantations serve as buffers or receptacles of the white body's displaced waste [69].

Building on both of these colonial imaginaries, tree planting continues the colonial heritage of narratives of nature where the images portrayed by carbon off-setting firms are disconnected from the reality to which they refer [70]. "The erasure of human presence, especially but not exclusively aboriginal peoples" is what Baldwin [71] refers to as racial rule of forest carbon management, what he calls "carbon nullius." In Scotland, the rush towards afforestation is paralleled to the highland clearances insofar as it is couched in discourses of upland farming as unproductive and empty. Calls to reforest sit within more general calls for nature's recovery, including rewilding, which is built upon the idea that left-behind places are germane places to rewild [72].

Land politics

Ecological imperialism was also mediated by particular conceptions of the land, claimed as right of conquest or with the moral justification that the land was "terra nullius", either abandoned, underutilized, or degraded by local populations [73-74]. Instigated by the new carbon commodity frontier, carbon forestry has launched a new land grab that re-casts these framings of land [75]. As a result of incomplete land registrations under colonial rule and resistance to formalization, 90% of the land in Africa remains untitled [76]. The legal blur regarding who owns, occupies or uses the land has been a useful loophole for carbon sequestration projects, which have categorized the land as "abandoned" [77]. The pervasive trope that land is an "available treasure" is best showcased by exaggerated corporate commitments for afforestation; for example, ENI's "pledge" to "plant trees on an area equivalent to four times the size of Wales in Africa" [78]. In addition to the problematic idea that swathes of land would merely be available in Africa, the complexity of land tenure arrangements is a prohibitive obstacle to fair afforestation campaigns; certain customary arrangements prohibit tree planting on community owned land [79].

Although the description of land as "unused" or abandoned was paramount in the conquest of the Highlands [80-81], it is rather in claims of unprofitable land management schemes that the privatization of public land for deerstalking or afforestation projects

has been galvanized [82-84]. Lockean moral justification for land grabbing on grounds of productivity - "first in use, first in right" [85-86] - "prioritize a user's ability to use the resource in ways that differ from indigenous conceptions of productivity" [87]. In Uganda, carbon forestry re-enacts the transformation of "landscapes of consumption" [88], whereby the exclusion of local people is justified on the basis that afforestation projects provide a more productive use of the land than the subsistence agriculture which they are replacing [89].

The discourse around land being degraded by mismanagement or encroachment of Indigenous peoples was a common justification for colonial intervention [90-91]. Political ecologists have written extensively on the co-optation of the word "degradation," which is often used in "simplistic, selective and inaccurate ways" to displace the responsibility of resource degradation onto local communities or governments [92-93]. However, "degradation narratives" are witnessing a revival in carbon forestry projects insofar as peasants are constructed as environmental destroyers [94]. Paradoxically, calling upon the degraded state of the land justifies the implementation of projects that inevitably degrade the land. In Uganda, the level of degradation was overemphasized by forestry companies who often run the relevant environmental audit [95].

The abuse of the word "degradation" reveals how scientific discourses are co-opted for political ends [96]. This echoes the intrinsic tie between science and imperialism which supported colonial domination [97-98]. But science was also called upon to essentialize a particular hierarchy of nature, race, and gender that legitimized colonial rule and supported social reform [99]. Anker shows that the role of ecology as a discipline was fundamental in projecting different conceptions of nature, either mechanistic or idealist, which supported different ways of controlling populations and colonial ecosystems [100]. In *Imperial Ecology*, Anker argues that "the concept of management was taken to the extreme" through an "optimal" resource control aimed at preventing an environmental crisis that would be detrimental to the hegemony of colonial rule [101]. The climate crisis discourse today, as in the past, is called upon to dispel criticism of the potential negative outcomes of experimental conservation practices "tested out" in the Global South [102]. Insofar as environmental change is portrayed as external and apolitical, the colonial legacies underpinning climate change research are insufficiently addressed [103-104].

Critics have argued that the unequal production of knowledge is preventing adequate and context specific research, which is driving afforestation on land that is unplantable [105]. Concentration of the production of knowledge in the hands of the few also serves underlying interests, which inform international climate gover-

nance whilst sidelining certain interests [106]. By assigning a concept of value in technical and rational terminology that belittles other expressions, they prevent ontological pluralism and contribute to hierarchies in systems of knowledge [107-108]. In Scotland, "lay knowledge is often referenced to emotional traditions based upon the use of the local environment. It is implicitly assigned a lower value in conservation than that of knowledge-based experimentation and universal verification" [109].

Resisting

Although parallels can be made in both time (colonial and post-colonial) and space (Uganda and Scotland), there are significant limitations to putting forests and landscapes in equivalence, given that they are contextually determined [110]. As Sharma et al. [111] argue in the case of Scotland, "these 'glocal' forests cannot be abstracted from their place specific socio-political contexts." Jazeel [112-113] warns against fallacious universal knowledge-objects, here "landscapes" or "forests", whose blanket use reflects a high-modernist desire to render all geographies commensurable. Although residual "structures of colonialism are directly relevant when considering how [colonial] experience shaped modern Scottish landscapes," forestry in post-colonial Scotland cannot be put in equivalence to post-colonial Uganda [114]. There is consequently an uncanny unease when using polarity as a structural framework that attempts to put incomparable landscapes on planes of equivalence. This section therefore warns that, when reinvesting narratives to highlight structural injustices, scholars must resist a totalizing aim, which risks ignoring "spaces of friction" [115]. It argues that the reductionism of core-periphery narratives may serve rather than deter the growing financialization of nature and reinforce the epistemic violence within IR where academic scholarship in the core only contributes piecemeal engagement with scholars in the periphery.

Flattening Differences Serves the Aim of Financialization

Although shared histories of British imperial rule have yielded differentiated outcomes in the "colonialscapes" of Uganda and Scotland [116], the continuation of green imperialist logics have proliferated throughout the Global North and South in the form of neoliberal conservation practices [117]. The neoliberal turn in conservation has brought about a financialization of nature which, we argue, brings "incomparable geographies" into comparison as if on planes of equivalence. It is precisely the homogenization of distinctively incomparable forests into standardized carbon forests that allows these to be put in relation. In fact, the pervasive and totalizing idea of reducing forests to units of carbon perhaps recalls colonial logics in attempting to render legible and comparable otherwise incommensurable natures [118]. Building on Marx and

Polanyi, Castree argues that this requires both a construction of a resource by enclosing nature and disembedding it from its context in order to derive an exchange value [119]. However, this "apparent legibility risks obscuring the plethora of issues that do not easily lend themselves to measurement" and comparison [120].

The "commodification of nature" is a term often used to describe the process wherein "sub-systems" of "marketization, monetary valuation, privatization, (and) financialization" bring nature into the realm of the financial markets and ascribe it a use-value that contains inherent implied human ownership and control [121]. Whilst necessary for the legitimisation of these systems, the view of nature-as-resource exists in a positive feedback loop with modern day capitalism. Built on a system of colonial rule that facilitated the systematic extraction of 'natural resources' for economic development, the institutionalised emphasis on growth and accumulation has deeply entrenched the metabolic rift. This capitalist conceptualisation of nature as a commodity has extended to ascribe it the role of tool, repository for waste, or imposed limit to growth (spatially, or in terms of "planetary boundaries" regarding pollution and degradation) [122]. This applies to the over-extension of the market-based logic to realms that were previously outside its domain, such as the financialization of nature which underpins carbon forestry projects [123].

Carbon forestry requires the enclosure of the forest into tangible and legible resource units of "tonnes of sequestered carbon per hectare" [124]. In this way, carbon rents are derived by subjecting space to a standardization practice of amount of trees per hectare. Such standardization of forest practices explains in part the preference for monoculture plantations in carbon credit projects over old growth forests, whose resistance to measurability had much to do with their felling and replacement by monoculture plantations [125]. The resulting patchy and fragmented landscape materializes alien capital, "like a rash spread on the skin of the landscape for cash" [126]. But the production of space within natural boundaries also leads to internal territorialisation that reconfigures ownership regimes in different ways [127].

Whereas carbon forestry in Uganda benefits from state-enabled land-grabs of previously community-owned land for foreign companies, current afforestation campaigns in Scotland encourage privatization of the land. In the wake of forty years of neoliberal policies' "new enclosures" of public land, fears are growing that the UK's new Environmental Land Management Scheme may further these dynamics by subsidizing private landowners to plant trees, entrenching claims to the land through 30+ year carbon rent contracts [128]. According to Hodge, the particularity of the Scottish land ownership system is that it sits within strong dynamics of

ownership, whereby "owners of property also control the powers of the state" leading to a "greater weight to be given to the protection of existing property rights against the interest of non-property owners." [129]. This points to the re-enactment of the "slow violence of jurisdiction" that Marx had described as paramount in the enclosure of the English commons [130]. It described the "production and enforcement of laws that were necessary to create the conditions from which early capitalist practices could emerge alongside the social-political inequalities they generate" [131]. In Uganda, carbon colonialism has manifested itself in state-sanctioned land-grabs for foreign interests [132].

Dis-embedding the commodity

Carbon projects are criticized for evolving in abstract realities, whereby these dispossessions and exclusions are not reflected in the "speculatively virtual" carbon price [133-134]. Building on Polanyi, Keucheyan describes this as the disembedding process of commoditization, wherein an exchange value is derived from the newly enclosed unit of nature by desingularizing it from its surroundings [135]. In this way, the carbon commodity can be put in equivalence, whereby a molecule of carbon emitted by a London commuter, or a tree planted either in Scotland or Uganda is considered equal [136-137]. This builds on Polanyi's [138] criticism of "fictitious commodities" [139] -- markets are separated from the social substratum from which they are derived and consequently "divorced from the realities to which they refer" [140-141].

In Scotland, "private investment forestry has all the features of colonial extractive industry with most financial and trade benefits accruing far from the resource" [142]. This leads to a "discontinuity of resemblance" between the resource and its total biodiversity and social costs [143]. Criticism of carbon markets as indulgence systems [144], where the rich are able to buy a conscience by offsetting their daily consumption, points to this disconnect between consumer and consumed. In "[hiding] the truth from themselves," consumers engage in a supreme or crowning barbarism that sums up all the daily barbarisms" [145]. This disconnect is obfuscated by the naturalization of carbon commodification as an apolitical tool [146-147]. However, the disembedding of the commodity from its social consequences commodifies subjectivities along the lines of class and race, rendering marginalized, low-income, Black communities as fungible and dispensable [148-150]. This ties back to the colonialist vision of the Black body as a part of nature that must be subdued or commodified—exemplifying Césaire's process of thinification [151]. In this way, the slow violence of carbon colonialism is not only discursive, whereby carbon off-set systems serve as indulgence schemes for the rich [152-154], but also material to re-enact the "tinge of decay" of imperial ruins [155].

The core-periphery model's tendency to place 'incomparable geographies' on planes of equivalence reflects the self-sustaining epistemic grand narrative of IR research and its "core-periphery dynamics" [156]. The geographies of IR remain largely unexplored and reinforce a lack of place-specificity within disciplinary theories, narratives, and assumptions [157] — with much of what constitutes IR theory the result of "the projection onto the world at large of (the) United States." In doing so, the epistemic 'core' that dominates knowledge production (the USA and the UK) develop theory that is applied elsewhere out of context [158], solidifying the position of the Western social scientist as the "enlightened outsider" [159], undertaking the "major colonial task of social science research (...) to pose as voicebox, ventriloquist, interpreter of subaltern voice" [160]. The coloniality of knowledge [161] within International Relations systematically silences and subjugates non-Western modes of knowing, imposing a core-periphery structure that is "historically rooted" and "racially inflected" [162]. This epistemic imperialism is not a passive, but rather an active erasure that "represses, expropriates, and imposes" a dominant knowledge framework, categorising non-Western knowledge as "traditional"—the antithesis of such empirical knowledge that represents the benchmark of validity. This continued "distortion" of the epistemic contributions of the periphery works in "naturalizing and legitimizing racial hierarchization and exclusion" [163] in the academic field, as metanarratives can in the global geopolitical arena.

In much the same way that the conceptualisations of nature that have enabled such A/R projects disseminated from the metropole, 'valid' IR knowledge that necessitates a relationship of dependence for conceptual wholeness is disseminated from and gatekept by the academic empire. The constructivist basis of IR research post-Cold War [164] informs our assertion that both academic theory and conceptualisations of nature enter into a co-constitutive relationship with the homogenised geographies of the 'periphery'. This in turn produces realities shaped disproportionately by those who have the most to gain from these projects that export pollution and grab land—both financially and as subjects of academic analysis. Missing from the constructivist basis is equal epistemic participation in what determines these realities and what is considered as valid in doing so —and contained within is a hermeneutical deficit [165] where the language of IR means that those on the periphery cannot explain their marginalisation in analysis deemed as appropriate, nor consistent with English as the dominant language of the field [166].

This dynamic is nuanced by Grove [167]. In showing how nature conservancy practices effectively "boomerang" across the empire,

environmentalism becomes a syncretic product of Western and Indigenous ideas of nature. Grove's work confronts core-periphery dynamics by illustrating how colonial environmental practices were rooted in a dual agenda: exploiting natural resources for economic gain while simultaneously developing notions of conservation to protect the "natural" beauty perceived by European settlers and administrators. This duality reflects the broader patterns of knowledge production and power distribution that characterize the core-periphery relationship, challenging scholars to critically examine the ways in which environmental narratives and policies are shaped by historical and ongoing power imbalances between the core and periphery.

Thinking with care about this core-periphery structure in IR as a field of research can in turn facilitate a more geographically sensitive application of grand narratives as an effective framework of understanding. To borrow from Cindi Katz [168-169], a 'minor narrative' stance can attend to the "contour lines" between overarching global narratives and highly specific contexts. For a grand narrative to become minor, it must relinquish aspirations of an overarching mastery, instead becoming "relentlessly transformative and inextricably relational" [170]. The dominance of a particular theory becomes historically and geographically dependent, where designations of minor and major (that is, becoming the dominant mode of understanding a contextualised phenomena) remain in flux as contexts change. In the case of the core-periphery grand narrative, it may remain major in theorising on how the globalisation process and structures originate from the core but subsume a minor status in conversation with the multiplicity of local contexts (both within the core and periphery) that truly shape how these processes take hold and reverberate. Tickner [171] argues that even ideas from IR satellite scholars that may infiltrate the core of English written journals or US academic departments are at first influenced by/built upon theory from the metropole or come from those who "attach to the core intellectually, in order to harness the potential benefits to be derived from complacent and close interaction." Thus, the becoming major of knowledge produced in the periphery (that investigates these processes once deemed as natural constituents of grand narratives) can contribute to balancing the epistemic terrain, rather than having to abide by Western-centric frameworks applied out of context for academic validation. This harmful disconnect is noted in the misplacedness of Green Resources offering medicine provisions and a scholarship to a local community in Uganda to compensate for their loss of land to grow subsistence crops. The community members understand that medicine is no use without land and food to consolidate a future [172]. Such instances signal how the peripheral community's understanding is regarded as minor even in relation to their own sovereignty, with a theory of fair exchange

In terms of the use of the core-periphery heuristic itself in producing this knowledge, we can also learn from Katz [174] in attending to the underexplored geographies of IR through "contour lines" [175]. We must keep at the forefront of our understanding that "capital is voracious, but its appetite may not absorb all populations (geographies) in similar ways (...) mobilising differences, not commonalities" [176]. A reframing of the flattening of difference between 'incomparable geographies' through the growing financialization of nature cannot conceptualise a 'periphery' as an assigned or wholly characterising position. The tension therefore lies within acknowledging the integration of ever-so different natures into the capital accumulation machine, whilst working to not "replicate the Eurocentric propensity to foreground a singular mode of thought at the cost of suppressing diverse cosmologies and experiences" [177]. Involving a "particular precision and specificity" [178], the process of peripheral homogenisation can be overcome in a more *care*-ful core-periphery analysis by offering "contour lines" as a "multifaceted way of theorizing the connectedness of vastly different places" without the flattening of difference. Contour lines refer to "a politics that maintains the distinctness of a place while recognizing that it is connected analytically to other places"—such as the eviction of villagers from the community land where they both lived and grew crops for subsistence in Uganda [179], and the removal of indigenous peoples from estates of land to be replaced by sheep and deer in Scotland [180]. Both processes are connected by the financialization of nature causing displacement, but their manifestations (conversion of community farmland and repopulation with alternate species respectively) differ dramatically due to their historical-geographical contours. Such an approach with contour lines drawn between differentiated landscapes similarly affected by processes of globalisation is only possible if the diverse knowledge of international questions of power and politics are attended to as major in the contexts from which they originate. They can therefore provide validated insights into "the ways specific historical geographies embody and help reproduce particular social relations of power and production" [181].

Conclusion

The core-periphery heuristic remains a useful framework for understanding the structural injustices and asymmetric patterns of accumulation that both undergird and are produced by carbon A/R projects. We must however remain cautious about reinvesting in such grand narratives without thinking with care [182] about their potential to flatten geographical and contextual particularities. While the core-periphery model can illuminate how A/R schemes

often represent new forms of ecological imperialism and carbon colonialism [183] rooted in racialized discourses around land and nature, each localized instantiation of these processes manifests in distinct ways shaped by specific socio-political contours [184].

The growing financialization of nature enabled by carbon markets demands abstraction and standardization – rendering diverse natural landscapes interchangeable through the reductive commodity of sequestered carbon. Just as these diverse landscapes are homogenized into carbon repositories, the knowledge from the 'peripheries' where these A/R initiatives largely find themselves remain marginalized in an IR discipline that "is held together through references to IR theory as developed in the transatlantic core" [185]. By attending to scholarship from peripheral contexts as 'major' in status rather than having "to go through the transatlantic core in order to be recognized globally" [186], contour lines can be traced between truly incomparable geographies in a way that maintains the integrity of place-based difference whilst still connecting locales through macro-level processes [187-188], such as carbon reforestation. This multidirectional flow of knowledge echoes the nuance inherent in Grove's analysis of the boomerang of knowledge across the colonial empire, where peripheral nations were active constituents of conservation practices and conceptualisations of nature across the colonies [189]. Representative knowledge production within IR is essential for a more rigorous application of core-periphery analysis to contemporary processes like A/R, in seeking not to perpetuate the very patterns of marginalization that we critique in neocolonial development projects. As perverse incentive structures like carbon markets transform diverse landscapes into interchangeable resource repositories, *care-ful* theorisation attuned to geographical difference is urgently needed. Otherwise, well intentioned and theoretically sound critical scholarship risks replicating the universalising abstractions of the capitalist modernity it aims to resist.

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THE CONJUNCTURAL ANALYSIS OF MULTIPOLARITY: BRIDGING THE BOTTOM-UP AND TOP-DOWN DYNAMICS

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Abstract

Multipolarity, rising amid the crisis of neoliberal globalism, presents a critical area of study to understand the dramatic reconfiguration of world politics since the 2000s. In this article, we use conjunctural analysis to explore the origins and main catalysts of multipolarity. Conjunctural analysis is a holistic and context-sensitive approach to understand the dialectical interplay between various social, political, and economic dynamics. What are the key factors driving the emergence of multipolarity as a dominant trend in the international system, and how do the complications arising from these factors influence its specific shape? To answer these questions, we trace the emergence of multipolarity to the hegemonic crisis of neoliberal capitalism in the 1990s, a period defined by the convergence of US unilateralism and economic instabilities. Chief ramifications of this hegemonic crisis are observable at two distinct yet interconnected levels. First, at the grassroots/bottom-up level, neoliberal failures have been met with the ascent of the Latin American left and the alter-globalisation movement since the 1990s, alongside the rise of the far-right worldwide throughout the 2020s. Second, at the interstate level, the breakdown of the global governance system has been met by the rise of South-South cooperation. These factors contribute to a "post-hegemonic" moment, a process characterized by profound contradictions and uncertainties, both globally and on the national scale. Our major contribution lies in proposing a conjunctural understanding and a dual-layered conceptualization of multipolarity that integrates both top-down geopolitical dynamics and bottom-up processes.

Keywords: alter-globalization; conjunctural analysis; left; multipolarity; neoliberalism; South-South cooperation

Introduction

In the dynamic arena of international relations, multipolarity has emerged as a pivotal and much-debated theme since the 2010s. Indeed, the current shift from a seemingly unipolar world to a multipolar one, where political, economic, and military power is distributed among several significant actors [1-2], constitutes a defining trend in contemporary world politics. The multipolar

world is a complex mosaic of diverse interests, where the conflux of various powers has been redefining the rhythms of cooperation, competition, and conflict. This new power structure, marked by its diversity and fluidity, presents unique challenges and opportunities in the realm of global security and development. Traditional security concerns have evolved, requiring a more nuanced and comprehensive approach to global threats and conflicts. At the same time, this dispersed power structure offers new avenues for cooperation in addressing global issues, from climate change to international trade.

What are the key factors driving the emergence of multipolarity as a dominant trend in the international system, and how do the complications arising from these factors influence the specific shape of multipolarity? Using the method of "conjunctural analysis", we address these questions by exploring the origins, main catalysts, and possible directions of multipolarity. Our conjunctural analysis traces the emergence of multipolarity to the hegemonic crisis of neoliberalism in the late 1990s, a period defined by the convergence of the US unipolar moment, after the collapse of the Soviet Union, and economic instabilities showing up as the result of the neoliberal reformation of capitalism in the 1980s. Two distinct yet interconnected levels of the hegemonic crisis are: First, at the grassroots/bottom-up level, neoliberalism's failures have been met with the ascent of the Latin American left and alter-globalism as crucial elements undermining US hegemony since the 1990s. This trend has been matched by its opposite: the global rise of populism and the far-right throughout the 2020s, which destabilizes the US-led liberal international order. Second, at the inter-state level, the breakdown of the global governance system has been met by the rise of South-South cooperation, including the need for the Group of 7 countries to promote the formation of the Group of 20, following the Great Recession. These factors contribute to a multipolar moment characterized by profound global and national-scale contradictions and uncertainties.

"Supremacy" is a key term guiding our analysis. In Antonio Gramsci's lexicon, the notion of supremacy is used interchangeably with power. Gramsci differentiates between two major forms of supremacy, namely (a) "domination", or "command", a coercion-based form of political rule and (b) "moral and intellectual leadership", which implies persuasion and consent, or "hegemony." Numerous IR scholars use the term "hegemony" to describe scenarios wherein a single state (or a group of states), "plays a predominant role in organizing, regulating, and stabilizing" world politics [3-4]. In many contexts, this implies a Gramscian reinterpretation of hegemony in terms of "cultural, moral and ideological leadership over subordinate groups," which is acquired by the "active and practical involvement of the hegemonized

groups" [5]. Worthy of note here is that even in military and financial affairs, the persisting influence of international organizations such as the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and the World Bank speaks to the relevance of hegemony, even though they also involve coercive elements.

In Gramsci's original formulation, hegemony relies on "the combination of force and consent variously balancing one another" as part of a "continuous process of formation and superseding of unstable equilibria" [6]. Therefore, our Gramsci-inspired interpretation of "hegemony" does not necessarily require unanimous consent and stable baselines. It rather encapsulates a nuanced interplay of consent and coercion in varying degrees depending on the conjuncture, which serves to relatively stabilize the international order and its alliance system led by a hegemonic power pretending to act in the general interest, even in the face of discernible dissent and conflict. For example, after World War II, the US emerged as the lynchpin of world politics, positioning itself at the epicentre of global relations. Simultaneously, it balanced this position in a roughly stable equilibrium with another superpower—the Soviet Union (USSR)—in the Cold War era.

The dissolution of the USSR in 1991 led to a period of perceived if not actual unipolarity, characterized by the prevalent belief that the US had won the Cold War (rather than, for instance, the USSR having collapsed due to its own internal contradictions—though these two are not necessarily mutually exclusive) and stood unrivalled in global leadership. This hegemonic understanding was attributed to US economic superiority as a model nation, credibility in global governance, perceived military invincibility, cultural appeal, and the dominance of the dollar as a reserve currency in trade, global finance, foreign exchange transactions, etc. [7]. By the 2020s, however, the ascent of multipolarity highlights a growing crisis in US hegemony, bringing its supremacy into question.

In this context, multipolarity corresponds to a post-hegemonic stage in global affairs where the relative decline of US supremacy (perceived or actual) is evident, yet it has not been replaced by a clear alternative power or a coherent system. The US faces challenges to its preeminent status amidst a multipolar world rife with economic and military complexities. The international landscape sees a shift towards multi-vector foreign policies over direct anti-US stances, and a notable absence of a unified alternative to neoliberal capitalism. This period is also marked by increased South-South cooperation and a surge in alternative governance mechanisms, reflecting a move towards more regionalized coalitions, centrally the rise of the BRICS+ (Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa), which expanded with the addition of six new members in 2024: Argentina, Ethiopia, Iran, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, and the

United Arab Emirates. However, Argentina later withdrew its intention to join the group, and Saudi Arabia's membership has yet to be officially confirmed.

The unipolar world order is thus contested by diverse, emerging forces, signalling a transition towards a pluralistic and competitive global stage, which Efe Can Gürcan calls a "post-hegemonic" moment of multipolarity as an interregnum period [8-10]. In this sense, the term "interregnum" draws on Gramsci's well-known assertion, "the old is dying and the new cannot be born", which characterizes a scenario where dominant groups are losing their legitimate "authority," and an increasing number of actors become disillusioned with mainstream arrangements during a period of hegemonic crisis [11]. Gramsci cautions that the "restoration" of the old order cannot be ruled out despite the prospects of emerging alternatives [12]. Drawing on Gramsci's notion of interregnum, we propose a conjunctural understanding of multipolarity. We seek to make a substantial conceptual and empirical contribution by providing a dual-layered interpretation of multipolarity, which further adds to our conjunctural conceptualization. Typically, multipolarity is regarded primarily as an inter-state phenomenon. However, our research illuminates the intricate political-economic and political-sociological dynamics that underlie this concept. Radhika Desai's influential work [13] has successfully bridged the political-economic and geopolitical dimensions of multipolarity. Taking the cue from Desai, we bridge the often disparate domains of top-down geopolitical dynamics and the bottom-up processes that are foundational to the understanding of multipolarity. Furthermore, although multipolarity is frequently portrayed as part of a "New Cold War" narrative [14], focusing on geostrategic rivalries, we aim to broaden the understanding of multipolarity by also highlighting the centrality of international cooperation in this context. The following sections systematically explore the bottom-up and top-down dynamics of multipolarity.

Let us first provide a brief definition of neoliberalism. Loosely defined, it stands as a UK and US-originated policy paradigm that gained prominence in the 1980s and stands predicated on various, core hegemonic principles associated with Thatcherism and the 'Washington Consensus.' Among these are privatization, financial deregulation, trade liberalization, the dismantling of universal welfare services, deregulated labour markets, and the reduction of corporate tax rates [15-16]. Our conjunctural analysis reveals that multipolarity retains "residual" elements of the neoliberal era. Despite the rise of new coalitions across Latin America, Eurasia, and the Western world, these initiatives have not presented a unified critique of neoliberalism or a coherent roadmap. This holds true even though their emergent ideological tendencies draw from the political far left and far right. A closer look at these ambiguities

and contradictions prompts us to consider multipolarity as the dominantly articulated element in this dynamic, to use the terminology of conjunctural analysis.

The Conceptual Literature on Multipolarity

This research contributes to the conceptual literature on multipolarity, tracing the initial systematic efforts to define contemporary multipolarity in the post-Cold War period. We employ a descriptive strategy of interpretative conceptual analysis to study the conceptual literature on multipolarity in the post-Cold War era. This approach aligns with our research aim of reconceptualizing multipolarity. Concepts are broadly understood as mental constructs or symbols representing ideas, individuals, objects, or events, facilitating thought, communication, and explanation of social phenomena. Through interpretative conceptual analysis, researchers can explore and interpret the changing meanings of key concepts, as well as understand the relationships among them, to acquire a more systematic understanding of social phenomena [17].

Starting in the late 1990s with pioneering work by scholars such as Samuel P. Huntington and Charles A. Kupchan, the interest in multipolarity intensified notably after 2009. This period intriguingly aligns with the aftermath of the US subprime lending crisis and the beginning of the Great Recession, which marks a pivotal moment in the study of global power dynamics. Importantly, Huntington's "uni-multipolarity" thesis [18] suggests that the current international system is shaped by a single superpower alongside multiple significant powers, set against a backdrop of diverse civilizations. This configuration implies that, although nations like France, Russia, and China might oppose US hegemony, cultural differences could limit their coalition-building efforts. Consequently, the United States may find engaging in a uni-multipolar world less strenuous and more advantageous than its tenure as the uncontested superpower [19]. In turn, Kupchan suggests the United States should anticipate and adapt to its diminishing global dominance by fostering "regional unipolarity" in key areas: North America, Europe, and East Asia [20]. Kupchan also introduces the concept of "benign unipolarity", a hierarchical model where a dominant region (the core) influences less powerful areas (the periphery) through a hub-spoke pattern, not through coercion but by mutual agreement. This structure of regional unipolarity encourages voluntary participation and moderates power use, leading to stability and reduced competition both within and among regions [21].

Geeraert's notion of "multilayered polarity" [22] highlights a multipolar world system divided into two main tiers: the top

tier dominated by the United States and China, and the second tier consisting of regional powers like India, Brazil, Russia, and major European countries, among others. While these regional powers are influential in specific international issues, they lack the comprehensive power of the first tier [23]. In a similar vein, Kausch introduces the concept of "competitive multipolarity" [24] to describe the shifting geopolitical dynamics in the Middle East, marked by significant structural changes in the influence and roles of various actors. She observes a decline in the influence of the United States and Europe, alongside the increasingly important and game-changing roles of Russia and China in the region. Additionally, the intensification of the Iranian-Saudi rivalry, the emergence of regional "swing states," and the growing impact of non-state actors are altering the traditional power balance. These developments collectively contribute to a more competitive and multipolar regional landscape, where multiple powers vie for influence and control [25].

According to Efsthathopoulos [26], geostrategic rivalries around multipolarity do not necessarily lead to confrontation and systemic exclusion but can also result in reformist outcomes. His study on World Trade Organization (WTO) negotiations reveals a shift towards "reformist multipolarity" in global trade governance, characterized by three key features. Firstly, it involves a multipolar decision-making process where both established and emerging powers have veto rights but are committed to the global economy's stable management. Secondly, there is a developing consensus among these powers on the WTO's central role in regulating global trade. Lastly, emerging states adopt a reformist stance within this system, aiming to renegotiate the roles and responsibilities of each major player. This approach indicates a potential move towards a more inclusive and balanced global trade system beyond the WTO's context [27].

For some, these reformist efforts are sparking a new wave of globalization and multilateralism. By way of example, Pieterse argues that multipolarity does not spell the demise of globalization but rather heralds its evolution into a new phase termed "multipolar globalization" [28]. This phase is marked by significant developments including increased South-South trade, a decline in US financial dominance coupled with the emergence of China's financial initiatives, a global move away from the Washington Consensus, and a reduction in US hegemony against a backdrop of escalating conflicts [29]. As regards multilateralism, moreover, Hadano emphasizes its significance in the evolving multipolar system [30]. He acknowledges that while states may not always share converging interests or participate equally in this era, multilateralism remains crucial for coordinating policies among nations, including emergent powers, and lending

legitimacy to their decisions. However, as these rising powers seek more autonomy in their foreign policies and prioritize the management of great power dynamics, they might lean towards a form of multilateralism that limits equal state participation [31]. Similarly, Weaver introduces the notion of "balanced multipolarity" to explain the role of multilateralism in multipolarity [32]. In balanced multipolarity, powers are evenly matched, preventing any single state from exercising hegemony, where a "security community" — a stable and peaceful order among states — could emerge, provided there is a collective inclination toward peace and stability among involved states [33].

The conceptual literature on multipolarity points to the significance of regionalism for the multilateral dynamics of multipolarity. For example, Acharya introduces the concept of "regiopolarity" to describe the future world order [34]. He suggests that emerging powers will stay deeply rooted in their regional strategic and economic contexts, without becoming full-fledged global powers. In Acharya's view, this world structure will see regions challenging the power projection capabilities of both established and rising powers [35]. This mirrors the scenario in Latin America, where a resurgence of leftism and its attempts at regional integration have contributed to the formation of a regional pole challenging US hegemony. Similarly, Garzón discusses the concept of "decentred multipolarity" to explain how regional dynamics contribute to the development of a multipolar world [36]. Rather than merely forming regional clusters or aligning around dominant regional powers, state interactions in this decentred multipolar world cross regional boundaries, connecting with extra-regional poles in various directions. Led by powerful centrifugal forces within regions, this shift is reshaping global economic and political relations, moving away from traditional regional or hub-spoke models towards a more interconnected international system [37]. Garzon's concept of decentred multipolarity underscores how regionalism, particularly the ascendancy of the Latin American left, can extend beyond domestic politics to significantly influence international relations and shape multipolarity. The active participation of Lula's Brazil in the BRICS, as well as the eagerness of Argentina's left-leaning governments to join this platform and the contribution of Latin America's social-movement leftism to the alter-globalization movement, highlights Latin America's impact beyond regional confines, as will be explored below.

The literature on multipolarity in the post-Cold War era serves as an essential foundation for understanding its recent developments. Contrary to Huntington's view, however, it seems that cultural differences have not fully hindered coalition efforts, particularly between China and Russia, which points to a more nuanced reality of international alliances. Additionally, Kupchan's concept of

"regional unipolarity" has not materialized as anticipated, where US dominance continues to be challenged across Eurasia and Latin America. Certainly, the analyses by Geeraet and Kausch highlight the undeniable complexity of current global dynamics by shedding light on the multilayered and competitive aspects of multipolarity. Furthermore, the importance of globalization and multilateralism in shaping a multipolar world, where regionalism plays a crucial role in fostering a relatively interconnected international system, cannot be overstated.

This valuable body of work predominantly adopts a state-centric view, often overlooking the influence of social movements and civil society actors, or what might be termed "multipolarity from the ground up." Additionally, there is a notable gap in the systematic exploration of the political-economic dimensions of multipolarity, especially in relation to the hegemonic crisis of neoliberalism, seen as the economic underpinning of U.S. post-Cold War unipolarity. In this article we address these shortcomings by proposing the concept of post-hegemonic multipolarity. We view it as an interregnum of hegemonic crisis through a Gramscian lens, thereby contributing to a more comprehensive and nuanced understanding of the multipolar system.

Conjunctural Analysis in Studying Multipolarity

John Clarke defines conjuncture as a spatial-temporal "moment of condensation: an accumulation of tendencies, forces, antagonisms and contradictions... [that] produces a point of uncertainty and possibility" [38]. Conjunctures can range from expansive, long-term periods in the history of global capitalism, such as the neoliberal and Keynesian eras, to more specific and shorter-term events. These may include the fall of the Berlin Wall, the Arab Spring, conflicts in Syria and Ukraine, the Trump era in the United States, the rise of populisms, and the COVID-19 pandemic.

Inspired by the works of Antonio Gramsci, Louis Althusser, Raymond Williams, and Stuart Hall [39], conjunctural analysis offers a historical method of analysis that can be applied across various disciplines in social sciences, from cultural studies to political science, sociology, and international relations. In this study, thinking of international relations in conjunctural terms means analysing global affairs by focusing on the specific, often unique combinations of factors and circumstances that come together at a particular moment in time to shape world events and relationships between states and non-state actors. This methodological approach emphasizes the importance of the context and the transient configurations of power and interests that define international interactions at any given point.

Conjunctural analysis proceeds from the recognition that the world is not static and that international relations are shaped by an ever-changing mix of factors and contexts. It thereby allows for a multi-dimensional understanding of international phenomena by considering a wide range of factors — economic, political, social, technological, and cultural — that influence a particular situation or event. By analysing the different historical and situational factors at play in a particular conjuncture, this method also helps identify the key actors and understand their interactions, providing a sharper understanding of power dynamics [40-42]. By critically examining power relations and adopting a dialectical research philosophy that emphasizes the study of contradictions, conflicts, and the dynamic interactions between opposing forces, conjunctural analysis sets itself apart from positivistic methods in qualitative case studies, such as process tracing [43].

Conjunctural analysis may be seen as a three-step process based on a slight modification of Lawrence Grossberg's model [44]. In our formulation, the first step is the identification of key factors, actors, and forces shaping the conjuncture. This includes analysing economic conditions, political institutions, cultural norms, social movements, and influential individuals or groups. The second step delves into the analysis of interactions and relations among these elements. Here, the focus is on examining how these various factors and actors interrelate, with particular attention to power dynamics, alliances, conflicts, and contradictions. This second step also involves identifying critical moments when existing social, political, economic, or ideological structures become unsustainable or are challenged, potentially leading to instability. Additionally, it includes analysing the temporal and spatial dynamics of these interactions, understanding how they have developed over time and how historical events and geographical factors influence the current situation.

The third and final step is "articulation." Based on the insights gathered in the first two steps, this stage synthesizes the information to form a holistic understanding of the conjuncture. In this final phase, the researchers undertake a comparative periodization and contextual assessment of the new conjuncture's distinct characteristics, examining how conditions inherited from the previous period influence the current situation and identifying the prevailing trends within their dialectical interplay. This analysis scrutinizes the interactions and dynamics among elements that are "dominant" in the current period, those that are "residual", or reflective of past conjunctures, and those that are "emergent," signalling new developments [45].

According to Raymond Williams, for example, the concept of a rural community is predominantly a residual notion in capitalist

society, mostly incorporated into urban industrial capitalism as either an idealized notion or a setting for leisure as part of the dominant, or mainstream bourgeois culture. Similarly, the monarchy, while not necessarily opposing the capitalist system, has been integrated into earlier forms of capitalism in Europe. Additionally, the concept of "emergent" is exemplified by the rise of the working class as a distinct social class, particularly noticeable in 19th-century England. Capitalist emergence was marked by new cultural practices and institutions, such as trade unions, working-class political parties, and distinctive working-class lifestyles [46]. The idea here is to understand how these dominant, residual, and emergent trends are articulated in various spatial-temporal contexts [47]. Therefore, this third step involves drawing conclusions about the nature, causes, and implications of the conjuncture and reflecting on the uncertainties and possibilities that emerge from it.

The critical emphasis of conjunctural analysis on contradictions in the broadest sense allows us to see beyond geopolitical rivalries and contextualize bottom-up dynamics. We thus reexamine multipolarity as a conjunctural phenomenon, tracing its roots to the crises of neoliberalism and the emergence of popular movements that challenge the status quo. This perspective enables us to illustrate how fractures in the neoliberal order coincided with the ascent of social movements and new political coalitions. Such bottom-up developments are mirrored in the inter-state system, evidenced not only by heightened rivalries but also by the creation of alternative governance mechanisms, as will be explored in our ensuing analysis. Table 1 provides a summary of our formulation of conjunctural analysis and its application to multipolarity.

Table 1: Three Steps in Conjunctural Analysis

Three Steps in Conjunctural Analysis		
Steps	Procedures	Case Application (Multipolarity)
1. Understand the Key Elements Shaping the Current Conjuncture	- Identification of crucial factors influencing the conjuncture - Examination of prevailing economic conditions, as well as the role of political institutions, cultural norms, social movements, and other influential individuals and groups	- U.S. hegemony and neoliberalism after the Great Stagflation era of the 1970s - U.S. interventionism of the post-Cold War era - Bottom-up resistance against neoliberalism - Contender states (e.g., China, Russia)
2. Contextualize Interrelations and Dynamics of the Key Elements	- Analysis of how factors and actors interconnect focusing on power dynamics, alliances, conflicts, and contradictions - Identification of pivotal moments leading to structural challenges or instability - Exploration of temporal and spatial dynamics in these interactions	- Ravages of neoliberalism and U.S. military interventions - Alter-globalization movement and Latin American left as the first global challenge to U.S. hegemony in the post-Cold War era - Great Recession and crisis of global capitalism (met with growing popular dissent) - Rise of "contender states" in the 2000s - Crisis of global governance and South-South cooperation as an alternative (BRI, BRICS, SCO, CSTO, EAEU, AIIB, ALBA, UNASUR, CELAC, etc.)
3. Articulation	- Comparative periodization and contextual assessment of the new conjuncture's novel features and unfolding dynamics (<i>emergent</i>) - Examination of how previous conditions influence the current situation (<i>residual</i>) - Identification of prevailing trends and their dialectical interactions (<i>dominant</i>) - Reflection on the uncertainties and emerging possibilities from the current context	- <i>Emergent</i> tendencies observed in resistance movements contesting neoliberalism and South-South cooperation - <i>Residual</i> elements inherited from the neoliberal era and coercive strategic culture - A "post-hegemonic" interregnum as the <i>dominant</i> tendency - Two potential future scenarios of multipolarity (coercive multipolarity vs. cooperative enforcement)

The adoption of neoliberalism by the United States can be understood as a strategic response to the need to reinvent its hegemony and maintain its position as the leading global power, especially in the context of the economic instabilities and military setbacks of the Vietnam War and the Great Stagflation era of the 1970s [48]. David Harvey puts it in stark terms: neoliberalism was a global project to reassert the domination of the capitalist class, which had been diminished during the Keynesian era. On the inter-state level, this reinvention was crucial for ensuring US global supremacy and was facilitated by technological advancements during the Third Industrial Revolution. Neoliberalism played a key role in opening world markets to Western corporations, effectively eliminating potential competition from the developing world, while reinforcing US leadership through what came to be known as hegemonic global governance [49]. Understanding neoliberalism is thus essential for a comprehensive grasp of US domination and the dynamics of multipolarity amidst a perceived or actual decline in American leadership.

Intriguingly, the rise of global social movements opposing neoliberal globalism and US hegemony predates the multipolar conjuncture led by "contender states" in the developing world [50]. Contender states are those equipped with "the material capabilities for competing for dominance in a system" and "the potential to foster global political change by promoting and expanding [their] own projects" [51-52]. Considering that the mobilization of global social movements came before the emergence of these contender states as a unified force offering more organized resistance at the inter-state level, movements may be seen as forerunners to the advent of multipolarity. Grassroots resistance against neoliberal policies, as key agents of multipolarity, may have laid the internal groundwork for the later contender states to wage a more structured challenge from developing nations seeking to redefine global power dynamics.

From a conjunctural perspective, the "alter-globalization" movement, which refers to "a large spectrum of global social movements supporting new forms of globalization based upon values of democracy, justice, environment and human rights" [53], represents the first major initiative by what may be seen as a global civil society attempting to mount a substantial challenge against neoliberalism and US hegemony in the post-Cold War era. According to Geoffrey Pleyers [54], this movement has undergone three major phases. The initial phase was characterized by the formation of the alter-globalization movement through various mobilizations against neoliberal policies worldwide. Its global

nature became evident during events like the 1999 Seattle protests, but also traces back to the insurrection of the Zapatista National Liberation Army in Mexico—the same day the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) was inaugurated: January 1, 1994. Sequel mobilization was marked by expert meetings, counter-summits, which challenged the dominant global ideology. Engaged scholar-activists and intellectuals played a crucial role in this phase, drawing public attention to globalization and initiating key organizations like ATTAC and Global Trade Watch [55].

The first phase of the alter-globalization movement was marked by several historic events. In October 1993, half a million Indian farmers marched in Bangalore against the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), which in 1995 became the World Trade Organization (WTO), protesting its potential adverse impact on their livelihoods and control over seeds. This event was the first international protest targeting the WTO, regarded as the symbol of neoliberal globalization [56]. The same year saw the formation of *Vía Campesina*, which quickly became the world's largest global social-movement organization of landless, small, and medium farmers, leading crucial protests in December 1993.

The 1994 Zapatista uprising, led by an army of indigenous people, sought recognition of indigenous rights, democratization of the country, and contested neoliberal policies and market domination. In their first communiqué, the EZLN argued that NAFTA represented the death sentence to indigenous ethnicities. In 1996, the Zapatistas convened the first Inter-Galactic Gathering, a precursor to the People's Global Action network and the World Social Forums. Another significant event was the protests during the 24th G8 Summit in Birmingham, where around 70,000 people formed a human chain, calling for the cancellation of Third World debt under the Jubilee 2000 initiative. The activist network Reclaim the Streets launched its first Global Street Party, promoting road closures for pedestrians and cyclists, a festive form of protest that would be replicated worldwide. The culmination of this phase was the massive blockade of the WTO conference centre in Seattle by about 50,000 protesters on December 1, 1999. This event set the stage for numerous counter-summits and protests in cities like Washington DC, Prague, Sydney, and many more, solidifying the alter-globalization movement's presence on the global stage [57].

The second phase of alter-globalisation began with the first World Social Forum held in Porto Alegre, Brazil, on January 25, 2001. This event, organized as a counterpoint to the World Economic Forum in Davos, representative of the hegemonic status of neoliberalism, brought together 12,000 to 15,000 activists from around 100 countries under the banner "another world is possible", focusing on creating a fairer, more solidaristic world that respects differences,

which represents a multipolar claim in its own right. This bottom-up phase was preceded by significant global developments: the "Dot-Com" bubble burst of 2000 and George W. Bush's assumption of the US Presidency in 2001. Additionally, major corporate scandals involving companies like Enron and Worldcom damaged the financial sector's reputation. The Bush administration's wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, after the 9/11 attacks on the World Trade Center, emerged as critical flashpoints, particularly between 2002 and 2004, and became major themes at the 2003 and 2004 Social Forums. By the 2005 World Social Forum, the focus shifted primarily to global governance and economic issues, including third world debt, fiscal justice, and reform of international institutions. However, international trade experienced a resurgence post-2003, leading to a period of significant growth until mid-2007 [58].

On the political level, all was not well in the US's immediate regional sphere of influence. The rise of the left was initiated by Hugo Chávez's ascent to power in Venezuela's 1998 presidential election, a landmark in the conjuncture of multipolarity [59]. Countries such as Venezuela, Brazil (as a BRICS+ member), and Argentina later became the leading contender states as part of growing multipolarity. This situation represented the first significant leftist wave since the Soviet Union's collapse, challenging the prevailing myths of unipolarity, such as the hegemonic buzzword TINA ("There is no alternative!"), Francis Fukuyama's "End of History", and Samuel Huntington's "Clash of Civilizations." It also marked a notable policy-level effort to present a viable alternative to neoliberalism and US supremacy.

In Latin America, contestation has come both from the bottom-up and from the top-down, in the form of leftist parties being elected to govern. The growing dynamism of various social movements in the region has reshaped the fundamental terms of political discourse on a range of crucial issues. These include socioeconomic equality, social security, human rights, indigenous politics, environmentalism, reproductive rights, and the treatment of ethnic, cultural, and gender minorities [60]. In the first decade of the 2000s, the Latin American social and political left solidified its position as one of the most formidable backers of the alter-globalization movement on international platforms, such as the World Social Forums. This engagement played a key role in inspiring the emergence of anti-austerity and occupation movements globally, signifying Latin America's influential contribution to the global push for political and economic alternatives in a multipolarizing world [61].

On a cautionary note, the rise of the Latin American left did not necessarily empower the precursors of this very movement in the post-Cold War era. Despite neo-Zapatismo's historical significance,

for example, the EZLN has seen diminishing support and, according to Srnicek and Williams [62], now exists with relative freedom primarily because it is no longer perceived as a threat by the state and capital. Instead of developing into a revolutionary movement with the potential to spread across Mexico through robust alliances, the EZLN has overly committed to prefigurative politics, horizontal structures, and civil society mobilization—primarily at the regional level in the Southeastern state of Chiapas. This focus has ultimately been "a serious liability" [63], hindering its capacity to challenge established power structures effectively. Yet, one should also acknowledge that the EZLN might have acted as a precursor of an eventually successful challenge by the political left in the form of Movimiento Regeneración Nacional (National Regeneration Movement, MORENA) and Andrés Manuel López Obrador's (AMLO) 2018 electoral victory as "Mexico's first leftist president in seven decades" [64].

Other Latin American movements and left-leaning governments suffer from similar limitations. For example, Venezuela was compelled to implement restrictive policies in response to increasing US backing for the opposition and sanctions affecting the economy. Notably, left-leaning governments' reliance on extractive policies centred on oil, mining, and transgenic monoculture, stemming from an uneasy cooperation with foreign-owned extractive firms and large landowners, left them vulnerable to global commodity price fluctuations. As a residual element of the neoliberal era, this vulnerability contributed to electoral setbacks for the left in Venezuela, Bolivia, Brazil, Argentina, and Ecuador since 2015. However, this did not signify the end of the leftist wave in Latin America. Lula's Workers Party is back in power in Brazil, and leftist parties have been elected in Chile, Honduras, and Peru (2021), Colombia (2022), and Guatemala (2023). In the last two countries, the left had never ruled.

The limitations of the Latin American left reflect the dominant character of the multipolar conjuncture, marked by the post-hegemonic aspect of what might be described as "multipolarity from the ground up," highlighting the alter-globalization movement's contradictory nature and its residual capacity to bring about substantial change. The Latin American experience illustrates the complexities and limitations that grassroots movements and left-leaning governments often encounter in their efforts to drive significant socioeconomic transformation.

According to Pleyers, the third phase of the alter-globalization movement commenced with the Great Recession as an emergent element in the multipolar conjuncture besides the Latin American left [65]. Although many movements in the third wave do not explicitly align themselves with the alter-globalisation identity,

the primary actors in this wave have their roots in the struggles of the 1990s and early 2000s. The Great Recession that started in 2007-2008, ushered in the most severe global capitalist crisis since the Great Depression and set the stage for the Eurozone crisis in 2009. This period was marked, not only by the persisting relevance of the Latin American social-movement and political left, but also by a significant downturn in economic growth, escalating unemployment, and rising household debt levels in Europe, sparking a new wave of anti-austerity protests.

Austerity measures imposed by the European Union (EU) since 2010, including wage and insurance cuts, tax increases, and public service reductions, led to widespread street demonstrations. For instance, in Italy, trade unions were involved in nearly half of all anti-austerity protests between 2009 and 2014. Portugal, which had only witnessed five general strikes between 1974 and 2009, saw a comparable number in the 2010-2014 period alone. In Spain, anti-austerity protests began in 2010, with unions calling for a general strike. The following year, student strikes erupted in response to education budget cuts and high tuition fees. The movement "Juventud Sin Futuro" (Youth Without a Future) organized mass protests under slogans like "Homeless, Jobless, Pensionless, Fearless." Along with "Real Democracy NOW", they fuelled the Indignados movement, culminating in massive protests in May 2011. These demonstrations, echoing the spirit of the Arab Spring, inspired occupation movements in the U.S. and other European anti-austerity efforts. The Indignados movement propelled demands for banking regulation, housing rights, unemployment solutions, and improved social services, coupled with democratic reforms. Meanwhile, Greece was at the epicentre of Europe's anti-austerity protests. From 2010 to 2013, the country experienced at least 27 general strikes, with the working class prominently participating in massive demonstrations. The peak of these protests occurred on June 28-29, 2011, during a general strike, resulting in police repression and injuries to approximately 800 protesters [66-68].

The US Occupy Wall Street Movement, which erupted in September 2011 and rapidly expanded into a global phenomenon encompassing over 2000 cities, was significantly inspired by both the Arab Spring and the Indignados movement. However, its structural roots are deeply intertwined with the long-term exhaustion of neoliberal policies dating back to the 1980s, and the deep inequality that they caused. The US economic crisis during 2007-2008, triggered by the bursting of the subprime mortgage bubble, had a profound symbolic impact on American society. Homeownership, a core element of the globally touted "American Dream," became a source of widespread disillusionment as the crisis shattered middle-class aspirations. This economic turmoil not only affected the housing

market but also reverberated through the real economy, leading to one of the worst economic downturns in US history. The crisis resulted in soaring unemployment and homelessness rates, which were key catalysts for the Occupy movements in 2011 [69-70]. The Occupy Movement, symbolized by the slogan "We are the 99%", highlighted the emergence of the 'precariat'—a segment of the working class living in precarious conditions. This movement brought socialistic demands into mainstream discourse for the first time since the 1970s, challenging neoliberal capitalism. It also targeted the top one percent of wealth holders, associated with major financial institutions like Bank of America, CitiBank, JP Morgan, and Wells Fargo. The movement called for radical change, including abolishing the legal personhood status of corporations and ending corporate control over the U.S. political system. This widespread disenchantment and mobilization dealt a significant blow to U.S. global hegemony, strengthening the position of contender states advocating for a multipolar world order [71-72].

In the final analysis, however, the historical legacy of the alter-globalization movement has been significantly overshadowed by the backlash and surge in right-wing extremism and the electoral successes of right-wing populist leaders, which points to another emergent element in the multipolar conjuncture. This rise has been particularly evident with the emergence of Trumpism in the United States, symbolized by right-wing groups storming the US Capitol building on January 6, 2021, in their attempt to subvert the electoral results in which Donald Trump lost in November 2020. US political polarization further intensified in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic; directly or indirectly, these events fuelled a strong discourse of Sinophobia and Islamophobia, further escalating the multipolar rivalry in world politics. Such developments highlight the post-hegemonic nature of "multipolarity from the ground up," which is rife with uncertainties and contradictions. The alter-globalization movement's failure to provide a definitive roadmap, combined with the deepening crisis of neoliberal capitalism that has not been meaningfully addressed on a policy level, alongside the ongoing global refugee crisis that followed the Arab Spring and other Great-Power interventionist conflicts such as those in Syria and Ukraine, have all significantly fuelled the growth of right-wing extremism into an increasingly mainstream force.

Multipolarity in the Inter-State System: The Case of South-South Cooperation

The 2007-2008 global financial crisis marked a significant turning point, highlighting the limitations of the neoliberal paradigm and the need for fundamental reforms in hegemonic institutions, such as the United Nations (UN), the International Monetary

Fund (IMF), and the World Bank. The Great Recession damaged the viability of the American economic model and leadership. This was accompanied by US reputational military defeats in countries such as Iraq and Afghanistan, combined with repeated injuries to the US-led liberal international order, evidenced by the upheaval of European integration following the Eurozone crisis started in 2009 and Brexit (Britain's withdrawal from the EU) in 2020, and French President Emmanuel Macron's declaration of NATO's "brain death" in the face of persisting tensions with France, Germany, and Turkey. However, Russia's invasion of Ukraine in 2022 has altered this geopolitical narrative [73].

Against the backdrop of this conjuncture, the proliferation of alternative mechanisms for South-South cooperation, such as BRICS, the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO), the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO), and the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU), has been a key feature of the post-Cold War era throughout the 2000s. These mechanisms have challenged traditional Western-dominated institutions and provided a platform for emerging powers to assert their influence on the global stage. At the same time, increasing US rivalry with China and Russia has contributed to the emergence of a new Cold War discourse, with Western powers seeking to maintain their dominance in the face of growing challenges from emerging powers [74-75].

Chief among the new institutional initiatives of multipolarity is the BRICS, as mentioned above. South Africa's entry into the BRIC group in 2010 led to the formation of the BRICS. Established in 2009, this group arose in response to criticisms from leading developing countries regarding US supremacy and its failure to contain the global spread of its economic crisis. By the 2020s, the BRICS serves as a platform for leading developing countries to discuss an agenda of their own independent from Western domination, have a say in global governance, and improve South-South cooperation [76].

The 14th Summit witnessed the announcement of "BRICS Plus" in 2022, an initiative actively promoted by China. Notably, in the same year, more than a dozen countries formally expressed their interest in joining the BRICS. This surge in applications can be attributed to the accelerated process of multipolarization, which has been further propelled by the global impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and the ongoing conflict in Ukraine. Against this backdrop, the 2023 BRICS Summit witnessed a significant expansion, with six new members joining the bloc, thus forming the BRICS+6 (Argentina, Egypt, Ethiopia, Iran, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates), as of January 2024. This expanded group controls a substantial share of the global GDP and population, which

corresponds to at least 30% of the global GDP and 46.5% of the global population. Furthermore, with the inclusion of major oil-producing countries, the BRICS+6's share of global oil production has surged to 43.1%. If these countries decide to accept alternative currencies for oil trading, it can diminish the dollar's role in the global oil market [77].

The BRICS alliance is not a mere platform for debating global challenges, but also an opportunity for the group to develop its own independent mechanisms and institutions to challenge the Western-dominated global order [78]. In 2014, for example, the BRICS nations established the Contingent Reserve Arrangement (CRA) to provide liquidity in economic crises, challenging the IMF's hegemony with China contributing 41% of its resources. The New Development Bank, mainly financed by China, aims to fund infrastructure development, posing an emerging alternative to the World Bank. Additionally, to counteract U.S. sanctions and reliance on the dollar, BRICS plans to create its own payment system and has made technical preparations for a new currency, pending political agreement among members. The New Development Bank's plan to increase local currency lending further signifies the group's effort to move away from dollar dependency [79-81]. Russia, a key member of BRICS+, plays a significant role as an agent of multipolarity, particularly evident in its involvement in the Ukrainian and Syrian conflicts. It takes the lead in the collective mobilization of multipolarity through institution-building. For example, the CSTO, established in 2002 and originating from the Collective Security Treaty of 1992, is a Russia-led alliance comprising Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Russia, and Tajikistan. Its primary objective is to harmonize the security and military policies of its member states. In 2009, the CSTO established a 20,000-troop Collective Rapid Reaction Force to address threats like foreign intervention, terrorism, and natural disasters. The organization also includes a Collective Air Force, a 4,000-strong Peacekeeping Force, and a 5,000-troop Rapid Deployment Force. Its defence capabilities are supported by an integrated air and missile defence system and joint military exercises. The CSTO adheres to a no foreign military bases policy in member countries, reinforcing its collective defence framework [82].

The Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU), established in 2014, is another Russia-led regional bloc evolving from earlier economic partnerships. It promotes the free movement of goods, services, labour, and capital among member states and aims to harmonize macroeconomic policies. The EAEU's goals include creating a common market for key sectors by 2025, possibly integrating with the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) and developing a common currency. The union comprises key institutions for economic cooperation and development [83]. However, Russia's involvement

in regional conflicts and international sanctions have challenged the EAEU's effectiveness in the broader geopolitical context, which also underscores these organizations' constraints in a "post-hegemonic" context.

As another leading BRICS+ member, China emerges as the principal contender to US hegemony, notably evident in the recent technology and trade wars between the United States and the China-led initiatives aimed at de-dollarization. Evident manifestations of such inclinations are China's policies on Renminbi internationalization, exemplified by the introduction of the Cross-Border Interbank Payment System (CIPS), UnionPay, and the Digital Yuan. These strategies complement China's growing intention to conduct currency swap agreements and oil trading in non-dollar currencies [84]. Institutionally, this shift is anchored in novel frameworks such as the New Development Bank, the SCO, the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB), and the BRI. Despite certain limitations, both China and Russia's efforts for collective mobilization contribute to the institutionalization of multipolarity on a global scale. The SCO as a China- and Russia-led initiative, represents a key organization that serves the agenda of challenging the Western-led global order. The SCO is a regional mechanism for political, economic, and military security in Eurasia. Its members include China, Russia, Iran, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, India, and Pakistan. Additionally, it is comprised of observer states including Afghanistan, Belarus, and Mongolia, and dialogue partners, such as Türkiye, Azerbaijan, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Cambodia, and Armenia. In terms of population and surface area, it is considered the largest regional organization in the world, "comprising approximately 60% of Eurasia, 40% of the world's population, and 30% of the world's GDP" [85]. The historical background of the SCO is rooted in the Shanghai Five, established in 1996 with China, Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan as its founding members. The SCO was institutionalized with the primary aim of improving regional security and stability. These residual legacies from the early post-Cold War environment were later combined with emergent tendencies towards multipolarity. In the early 2000s, particularly, the SCO was increasingly seen as a means to resist the perceived wave of Western-backed colour revolutions that had spread across the region, starting with the Rose Revolution in Georgia in 2003, followed by the Orange Revolution in Ukraine in 2004, and the Tulip Revolution in Kyrgyzstan [86-87].

The SCO's significance lies in its ability to bring together a diverse group of countries that share similar interests and aspirations. It serves as a platform for regional cooperation in a range of areas such as security, trade, and energy. Its member countries are among the world's largest producers of natural resources, making

the organization an important player in the global economy. Furthermore, it has helped to facilitate the development of infrastructure projects and promote economic growth in the region. Despite its prospects, however, the SCO faces challenges posed by its enlargement process and the problem of identity in a post-hegemonic context. For one thing, the addition of dialogue partners, such as Nepal, Cambodia, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and Qatar, following the accession of Pakistan, India, and Iran raises the question of whether the increase in cultural and strategic diversity may drag the SCO into an identity crisis. The coalescence of countries with different political interests may eliminate the functionality of the SCO, whose decision-making is based on the consensus principle. Furthermore, the lack of a legally binding and institutional framework adds to the challenge of consolidating and formalizing the organization [88-90].

From the perspective of deepening multipolarity, the SCO's ambiguous institutional identity is also a crucial aspect of its character as a regional organization. Initially, it emerged as a non-aggression and consultation pact aiming to decrease mutual threat perceptions, which was later perceived by some as a collective defence organization or a military bloc. However, it is unclear whether the SCO should be considered an alliance. The organization has expanded beyond its initial five members, whereas border disputes and tensions persist, suggesting that the SCO's mission is not solely military in nature. Moreover, as part of its emergent inclinations, it seems that the SCO has been evolving to become a platform, or forum for discussion, exchange, and interaction. It bears a strong potential to increasingly become a symbolic union rather than a practical and problem-solving organization due to enlargement [91-95].

It bears underscoring that the normative framework of the SCO has been influenced decisively by China. The SCO has championed the "fight against the three evils," a China-coined term that designates the challenges of terrorism, separatism, and religious extremism [96]. Likewise, the organization has incorporated the "Asian Values" that have been championed by China. These values reject the liberal democratic values that the West tries to impose under the guise of universality, which is often used as a pretext for foreign interventions. Furthermore, the so-called Asian Values stand against the "conditionalism" of Western organizations, where financial support is dependent on the adoption of neoliberal structural adjustment policies and foreign policies adjusted to US national interests [97].

As for China, its institutional leadership has sought to attain the status of an "agenda-setter" and "norm-maker" in world politics. Notably, the inclusive and all-encompassing nature of China-

led initiatives is evident through the BRI. While the term "belt" indicates land pipelines, roads, and railways, the term "road" is used to designate offshore lines, harbours, and other maritime facilities. Launched in 2013 on China's initiative, the BRI aims at establishing broad networks related to infrastructure, natural resources, and investments in more than 152 countries across Asia, Europe, Africa, the Middle East, and the Americas. As of 2024, the BRI covers over 70 countries, corresponding to more than 65% of the world population, one-third of the global GDP, and a quarter of world trade. The BRI has thus become the most comprehensive cooperative scheme for development and trade in human history [98].

In an international context, the BRI focuses on five primary areas: intergovernmental political cooperation and consensus building, infrastructural and technological connectivity, commercial connectivity, financial integration, and people-to-people exchange for cultural cooperation. The pursuit of financial integration plays a pivotal role in China's quest for expanding its financial influence on a global scale. This objective encompasses several key aspects, including the promotion of national currencies to diminish the dominance of the US dollar, the internationalization of the Chinese Yuan, and the facilitation of financial information sharing and coordination. Backing the BRI's institution-building and inter-institutional coordination efforts is a comprehensive normative framework named the "Silk Road Spirit", which revolves around core values, such as peace, cooperation, transparency, inclusiveness, and mutual learning. This framework claims to diverge from the Western "creditor-oriented model" based on structural adjustment, liberal democracy, and conditional loans [99]. Chinese state-owned banks and the Silk Road Fund, created by the collective efforts of these banks, constitute the engine of the BRI's financial integration and infrastructure investments. The resources of the NDB and the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) are also mobilized to further support these objectives [100]. In this context, the BRI's financial framework is supported by the Beijing-headquartered AIIB, which started to operate in 2016 under China's initiative as "the world's first multilateral development bank (MDB) dedicated to infrastructure" [101]. The bank's approved projects mostly focus on the energy, water, and transportation sectors. In contrast to the hegemonic practices observed in the IMF and the Asian Development Bank (ADB), it refrains from imposing stringent political conditions on nations seeking its support [102].

In conjunctural terms, the China- and Russia-led Eurasian process of multipolarity finds its strong counterpart in Latin America's South-South cooperation, where ALBA, UNASUR, and CELAC are leading the way. In the early 2000s, the United States aimed

to extend the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA, renamed the United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement in 2018) to the entire continent through the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA), which sparked substantial protests in the region due to NAFTA's detrimental impacts on Mexico.

In response, Venezuela's then president, Hugo Chávez, led the creation of the Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of Our America (ALBA) in 2004 as a countermeasure. Founded with 11 member states including Antigua and Barbuda, Bolivia, Cuba, Dominica, Ecuador, Grenada, Nicaragua, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, and Venezuela, ALBA represents a form of social justice-oriented regionalism, contrasting with the security-focused Eurasian regionalism and economically-driven BRI [103]. ALBA has implemented various strategies to counter U.S. global dominance and support multipolarity. These include establishing *grannacionales* – state-owned corporations in key sectors as alternatives to foreign multinationals – and introducing the Peoples' Trade Treaty for fair trade standards. ALBA also extends Venezuela's social missions continent-wide to address poverty and improve public services. The ALBA Bank, with \$1 billion in initial capital, primarily from Venezuela, funds these initiatives and various investments. Economically, ALBA encourages barter trade and the use of the *Sucre* currency to reduce reliance on the U.S. dollar. It also established the ALBA School for Defense and Sovereignty, supported by Iran, and UNIALBA, a network of universities promoting academic collaboration. To offer an alternative media perspective, ALBA created *TeleSur*, countering American media conglomerates like CNN [104-105].

Similar to ALBA, the Unión de Naciones Suramericanas (UNASUR), or Union of South American Nations, epitomizes Latin America's South-South cooperation. Inaugurated in 2008 under Brazil's leadership, it encountered a hiatus following Brazil's 2016 civil coup, which led to the impeachment of Dilma Rousseff. However, with the resurgence of left-wing politics in Brazil in 2023, UNASUR is likely to experience a revival. UNASUR prioritizes socioeconomic and infrastructural development, with initiatives like the Banco del Sur and the Regional Infrastructure of South America aimed at improving regional connectivity through investments in transportation and border infrastructure. The Bank of the South, with an initial \$20 billion capital, supports these efforts and offers an alternative to IMF and World Bank influences. The Health Council focuses on public health independence, disease control, training health professionals, and research networks, particularly in areas like HIV and cancer. The South American Institute of Government in Health supports these health initiatives, demonstrating UNASUR's dedication to holistic regional development and cooperation [106].

Finally, another exemplar of Latin America's South-South cooperation is the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC), which was formally established in 2011 with the signing of the Declaration of Caracas. Its primary aim is to foster integration and development among its member states, originating in the Rio Group and the Contadora Group, which sought negotiated solutions to Central American civil wars during the Cold War, independent of the Soviet Union and the United States. CELAC represents the first regional organization to include all countries in Latin America and the Caribbean region, without the participation of external powers like the United States, Canada, or others. This development highlights a post-hegemonic shift from previous US-dominated projects like the Organization of American States (OAS) and the Ibero-American Community of Nations, which excluded English-speaking countries. CELAC thus represents a move towards greater autonomy from dominant global powers and multipolarity, establishing itself as a vital platform for political dialogue in Latin America and beyond, including China and the European Union [107-108].

Brazil and Mexico play key roles in CELAC's shared leadership structure. The founders of CELAC originally aimed to incorporate Mexico and the Caribbean, particularly Cuba, into regional integration. Therefore, CELAC was conceived as a forum for political coordination and promotion of South-South cooperation. A notable achievement of CELAC's external relations has been its engagement with China and the European Union (EU), leading to the establishment of the CELAC-EU Summit in 2013 and the CELAC-China Forum in 2015. The region's relationship with China was further enhanced in the second CELAC-China Forum in 2018, where China invited all 33 CELAC countries to join the BRI. Mexico hosted the 6th CELAC summit in 2021 during its rotating presidency. The forum's prospects for strengthening improved significantly with Brazil's return under President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, who assumed office on January 1, 2023. This change prompts consideration of how the institutionalization of the China-CELAC Forum might expand the region's autonomy in negotiations, based on an expanded model of South-South cooperation and multipolarity, in tandem with a policy of active non-alignment [109-110].

Conclusion

Multipolarity has undeniably emerged as a dominant force in global politics, which underscores the need for a deeper understanding of this phenomenon. Both conceptually and empirically, it is thereby essential to grasp the nuances and complexities that multipolarity introduces to the international system. From a methodological point of view, a conjunctural rereading of the current global scenario

is particularly instrumental in this pursuit. Such an approach facilitates a more nuanced comprehension that transcends conflict- and state-centric interpretations. It allows us to make sense of the pivotal role of bottom-up initiatives and international cooperation besides geopolitical conflicts. These elements act as catalysts in shaping the dynamics of a multipolar world, where the BRICS serves as an interregional bridge, encompassing members from Latin America and Eurasia, in which the bottom-up and top-down dynamics of multipolarity are interconnected, with the China-CELAC Forum being another example.

The alter-globalization movement, with its focus on creating an alternative to neoliberal capitalism and the US-centric world order, embodies the emergent characteristic of this conjuncture. From a bottom-up perspective, it represents a growing global consciousness and a collective effort to envision a world guided by inclusive, equitable, and sustainable models of development that are not dominated by a single superpower. These grassroots movements have been anchored primarily in civil society. As an extension of this process, Latin America has witnessed the expression of some of these movements, influencing governments or winning state power directly, since the turn of the twenty-first century. But the journey of both grassroots, bottom-up movements, and leftist governments in Latin America towards realizing their full potential is not without challenges.

One significant hurdle to the actualization of emergent models by bottom-up movements and left-leaning governments is the residual elements inherited from the neoliberal era, notably extractivist policies. All-too-often, leftist governments have continued their dependency on the extraction of natural resources as their prime source of tax revenues, confronting themselves with communities affected by such projects, as has been the case, especially in Ecuador. Despite these challenges, the overall influence of these movements and governments on multipolarity should not be underestimated. They have opened spaces for new voices and perspectives, paving the way for a more multipolar world where power is more evenly distributed and diverse viewpoints are more readily acknowledged and respected.

The ascent of popular movements has coincided with significant transformations at the inter-state level, where contending states like China and Russia are actively challenging the US-led global governance system, which is currently in a state of flux. This emergent process is notably marked by the rise of South-South cooperation and the emergence of new initiatives in global governance. South-South cooperation represents a shift in the traditional dynamics of international relations, emphasizing collaboration and partnership among developing countries. This

movement towards increased cooperation and mutual support among nations of the Global South indicates a move away from a unipolar world and towards a balanced, multipolar global order. Despite these developments, however, it is important to recognize that these initiatives still face challenges in providing a coherent alternative to the residual legacies of neoliberalism and militarism. Neoliberal policies and ideologies, deeply ingrained in the global economic system, continue to influence international relations and economic practices, creating hurdles for new forms of governance and cooperation.

Regarding militarism, the United States, as the predominant global power, exerted influence through a combination of diplomatic strategies, economic strength, and, all-too-often, military interventions during the post-Cold War era. In the bipolar environment of the Cold War, furthermore, both the USSR and the United States employed coercive strategies, demanding that developing countries align themselves with one side or the other. This coercive legacy seems to persist under multipolarity. Particularly, the persistence of coercive competition compels major players to engage in a zero-sum game over the diminishing dominance of the United States. This dynamic is further intensified by the weakened state of grassroots civil society organizations and participatory democracy within the major competing powers in Eurasia, reinforcing the perception of a zero-sum struggle.

When combined with the bottom-up dynamics of multipolarity, these transformations within the inter-state system reflect the post-hegemonic character of the interregnum global order, as a dominant feature of this conjuncture, highlighting its profound contradictions and uncertainties. As Gramsci put it, "the old is dying and the new cannot be born." And the new will not be born until a positive, clearly defined alternative to a merely U.S. "post-hegemonic" order can be articulated. In this conjuncture, two potential future scenarios can be foreseen. One can be labelled coercive multipolarity. Here, multiple powers, such as Russia, China, and other emerging nations or collective groups of countries in the West, adopt an increasingly coercive approach that rules out any possibility of developing constructive models beyond neoliberal capitalism.

In this "coercive multipolarity," power is distributed but with no genuine societal progress and a coercive competition among the major players contending in a zero-sum game for the declining dominance of the United States. This scenario could also reinforce a chaotic environment encouraging right-wing extremism. Its likelihood could increase due to the widespread presence of authoritarian political systems in Eurasia and the continued promotion of non-liberal values within Eurasian intergovernmental

organizations. However, a more positive and hopeful scenario, infused with the famous Gramscian dictum of "pessimism of the intellect, optimism of the will," can also be envisioned. Call it consensual multipolarity, based on persuasion and freedom of association. Collaboration and diplomacy become more central in global affairs, with grassroots civil society organizations and participatory democracy playing vital roles. Rather than a zero-sum game, the logic of this scenario would be one of positive game in which growing interactions among emerging powers result in win-win outcomes for all.

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FROM NORMATIVE POWER EUROPE TO NORMATIVE POWER EVERYWHERE: TO- WARDS A GLOBAL NORMATIVE IMPERATIVE

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Abstract

The legend of the EU's founding tells the tale of European nations uniting after World War II to overcome the destructive nationalism of the 20th century, and to maintain peace by pooling resources and interests on the continent. Ian Manners' 2002 concept of "Normative Power Europe" draws upon this narrative, suggesting that due to the EU's distinctive historical context, hybrid governance, and political-legal constitution, the EU is a normative power, behaves as a normative power, and ought to be a normative power. This paper presents Manners' theoretical framework, exploring conceptual issues and critically evaluating its three dimensions – ontological, positivist, and normative – to reveal a tendency towards European and EU exceptionalism in the discourse. Furthermore, by comparing NPE with the normative power concepts of the United States and China, the paper highlights the unsuitability of the EU model for global application. While various authors have written about various European biases at the heart of this theoretical framework, this paper hopes to contribute to this space by systematically explicating how these prejudices have infected and corrupted each aspect of the NPE concept; and how different scholars have begun to overcome these obstacles to re-work the NPA into a theory of normative power that is applicable to a modern and globalized world.

Introduction

For those raised or educated in Western Europe, the legend of the EU's founding is as ingrained as the belief in the European project itself. Having lived through the indescribable horrors of World War II—as history classes recall—the nation states of war-torn Europe were determined to overcome the hateful nationalism of the 20th century by pooling resources (and interests) to maintain peaceful relations on the continent.

To accomplish these lofty ideals, the EU developed into an unprecedented entity characterized by its transcendence of Westphalian conventions and its blend of sub- and supranational governance structures. Demonstrating a historical continuity with supposedly common European values, this new entity was founded on the constitutional norms of peace, liberty, democracy, rule of law, and human rights which remain enshrined in the constitution

and other documents of the *acquis communautaire* to this day [1]. When Ian Manners changed the course of European studies in 2002 by introducing the concept of "normative power Europe" (NPE), it was upon precisely this post-war success story that he drew as corroboration. Essentializing the concept, Manners argues that it was the EU's particular configuration of historical context, hybrid polity and political-legal constitution which "accelerated a commitment to placing universal norms and principles at the centre of its relations with its Member States and the world" [2].

In a broad sense, NPE discourse must be understood as nestled into a wider discourse pertinent to the existence and relevance of normative power in International Relations. This article will use the terminology of the normative power approach (NPA) to describe such theories of power. Even though a NPA framework should, in theory, have global application, its application has been limited. Thus, this paper will examine the concept's exclusive European focus to expose the Eurocentrism and EU-centrism inherent in the discourse's theoretical foundations and practical applications, in part by comparing NPE to the United States' and China's conceptions of normative power when appropriate. While various authors have written about various European biases at the heart of this theoretical framework, this paper aims to contribute to this space by systematically explicating how these prejudices have shaped—even corrupted—each aspect of the NPE concept. Furthermore, this analysis reviews how different scholars have started to overcome these obstacles and re-work the NPA into a theory of normative power that is applicable to a modern and globalized world. For normative power approaches to be productively incorporated into the International Relations canon, scholars of this field must develop a deep awareness of the issues inherent to its foundational texts; this necessitates a thorough examination of these texts' biases and shortcomings, enabling scholars to proactively address and tackle them.

Theoretical Foundations: NPA and NPE

At its most basic, normative power is the "ability to shape conceptions of 'normal' in international relations" [3]. This form of power stands in contrast to traditional great powers that derive their status from military capabilities, and civilian powers which primarily exert influence through economic means such as trade agreements and developmental aid [4]. As both power types focus on material capabilities and understand the state as the exclusive object of analysis, the NPA was developed as a means to decentre conventional state structures in European studies and place the EU's "*idée force*" and identity at its centre [5]. In application, Manners has used this theoretical framework to formulate three distinct dimensions of NPE: ontological, positivist, and normative.

While such a multifaceted articulation of normative power has opened up various new research streams in EU studies, this definitional ambiguity also complicates the purpose, content, and objectivity of the NPE discourse. In this iteration, the EU is both a normative power by virtue of its ontological normative basis and difference, but also an empirical normative power as it behaves normatively on the world stage.

Privileged in the discourse, the ontological and positivist dimensions of NPE have engendered numerous studies on the EU's normative foundations and especially its norm-driven foreign policy [6-8]. Less theorized, though implicit in all dimensions, is the concept's normative dimension characterized by the belief that the EU ought to behave normatively and ought to spread its norms. While this paper's primary aim is exposing the Eurocentric and EU-centric principles and biases at the root of Manners' NPE framework, Helene Sjursen has raised a number of conceptual issues which must be considered to understand the concept's perimeters holistically. In particular, she stresses the need for a more robust definitional and theoretical framework of NPE which incorporates a set standard of criteria and indicators based on empirical research to evaluate its normative dimension [9]. For example, how can NPE encompass both "power" which connotes "coercion", but also "normative" which connotes "legitimacy"? Furthermore, if legitimacy is already implicated in a definition of NPE, how can scholars determine the legitimacy or normativity of the EU's foreign and security policy? Another question arises when considering definitions of NPE based on the dichotomy between "hard" (coercive or military) and "soft" (normative or civilian) power instruments.

While scholars like Karen Smith have squared this circle by defining civilian and normative powers in terms of their lack of military means, [10] Sjursen challenges this assumption, asking if an incapacity to marshal a punitive, even military, response in the face of norm and right violations should disqualify any claims to normative leadership [11]. Criticisms of the EU's inability to act during the Yugoslav Wars would suggest this dimension is essential to perceptions of normative authority [12]. Conversely, even though soft power instruments such as sanctions may be considered non-coercive and less hostile, they can indiscriminately hurt civilians in targeted states. This further calls into question a definition of normative power by ways of military capacity and highlights the problematic ambiguity of normative power's projection mechanisms. The conceptual weakness of NPE's framework is worth keeping in mind during the exploration of EU-centrism below as these issues partly arise from conceptual ambiguities and inconsistencies within Manners' explanations.

Ontological dimension

Oft quoted, Manners notes that the EU's role on the international stage is primarily defined not by "what it does or what it says, but (by) what it is" [13]. While a realist analysis like that of American neoconservative policy adviser, Robert Kagan, contends that the EU's normative power emerges not from conscious choice but from the absence of a robust military arsenal [14], Manners' ontological argument attributes the EU's normative difference to its historical context, hybrid polity, and political-legal constitution [15]. Yet, even after rejecting the highly contested "Hobbesian"/"Kantian" dichotomy, a closer look at the Union's inception reveals inconsistencies in Manners' reasoning. Firstly, even though NPE proponents point to post-nationalist and pacifist sentiments among post-war European leaders to explain the bloc's integration, this interpretation conveniently neglects Europe's long history of colonialism and global warfare which undermined any European claim to normative authority throughout the 20th century [16].

Moreover, structuralist scholars like Adrian Hyde-Price emphasize the mediating influence of systemic dynamics and external factors in the EU's origins and *modus operandi*. Building on Hedley Bull's assessment that "the power of influence exerted by the European Community (...) was conditional upon a strategic environment provided by the military power of states, which they did not control" [17], Hyde-Price identifies the end of the Cold War, the consequent development of American unipolarity, and a balanced multipolar power distribution in Europe as the key drivers of the EU's particular configuration of security and defence policies [18].

Hence, Manners' historical account disregards geopolitical realities like the expansion of NATO and the American security umbrella without which European integration would have remained impossible. Instead, the EU's development must be understood as a series of pragmatic and geopolitical decisions rather than as a normative and even pacifist miracle [19].

Beyond historical context, Manners also draws on the EU's political-legal constitution to explain the Union's predisposition towards acting normatively. While the European focus of the normative power discourse would suggest that this factor is unique to Europe, the EU's constitutional origin story echoes the founding myth of the United States in several ways. Not only did the nascent American nation espouse similar "ideals of liberty, equality, natural and civil rights, and responsible citizenship" [20], but both entities also enshrined the centrality of the rule of law in their founding papers and placed such binding documents at the centre of their political and legal structures [21].

Table 1: SEQ Figure * ARABIC 1 Diffusion theory mapped onto Normative Power Europe (NPE)

	Diffusion mechanisms	Type of EU diffusion	Means/ channels of diffusion
Military Power	Coercion	Material, active	Military imposition, threats (negative conditionality)
Civilian Power	Rewards	Material, active	Trade and cooperation agreements, technical and financial assistance (positive conditionality)
	Competition	Material, passive	Large, well-integrated domestic market
Normative Power	Socialization	Ideational, active	Cooperation agreements, political dialogue, technical assistance
	Emulation	Ideational, passive	"Successful" integration: discourse/ narrative, symbolic representations

Source: Tobias Lenz, "EU Normative Power and Regionalism: Ideational Diffusion and Its Limits," *Cooperation and Conflict* 48, no. 2 (2013).

Contrary to NPE's scholarly conventions, the EU's development was neither purely normative, nor was its political-legal constitution historically unique. The almost mythical retelling of the EU's beginnings and its influence on contemporary European identity once again mirrors the American quality of idolizing its historical origins and thereby reveals a comparable but distinct European exceptionalism in the academic discourse [22]. These biases also invalidate Manners' and Thomas Diez's argument that Europe's "ordinariness" qualifies it as a normative power while the US' exceptionalism disqualifies it. The difference between the EU and the US, Daniel Hamilton argues, instead lies in how each perceives their exceptionalism. While both understand themselves as normative powers which espouse values of democracy, liberty, rule of law and human rights, rooted in each's own history of "escape from despotism and the escape from nationalism", and share a similar tradition of political-legal constitution rooted in treaties and agreements, Kalypso Nicolaïdis notes that the key difference is that "US exceptionalism is a national project; European a postnational one" [23]. Following this logic, Tobias Lenz asserts that the EU is the "only global actor that actively and systematically promotes the norm and practice of regional integration around the world", and thereby identifies the bloc's hybrid polity as the only justifiable source of the EU's ontological difference [24]. Employing diffusion theory, Lenz categorizes Manners' material/ideational distinction of power projection by their diffusion mechanisms to demonstrate how the EU has promoted regional integration through mechanisms of socialization and emulation (see Fig. 1). As anecdotal evidence of how the EU utilizes socialization, Lenz points to exchanges between EU experts and the Mercosur working group on agriculture which was tasked with integrating member states' agricultural markets in the 1990s. According to personal accounts, the European experts were able to

convince members of the working group that an EU-style system of mutual recognition would be better suited than a strategy of harmonization. Moreover, the adoption of the Southern Common Market in 1991 mirrored both the economic jargon of the EU common market and its terminology of continental bridge-building in a region of historical rivalries. In this example, the power of narrative comes to the fore as it was ultimately a conception of the EU as a successful peace- and community-building project that led to emulation by Mercosur. The analysis above indicates that examinations of the EU's supposedly norm-driven historical context and political-legal constitution inevitably run into issues of EU-centrism and European exceptionalism. Nevertheless, Lenz's work demonstrates that by delineating and isolating the study of the EU regional model's ideational diffusion channels, there are ways to study the bloc's ontologically derived normative power while still avoiding EU-centric pitfalls inherent in the normative ontology scholarship. Similar work has been done by Farrell and Walker on the EU's ideational diffusion of policies concerning trade liberalization, agriculture, and the environment [25-26].

Positivist dimension

Moving beyond ontology, Manners insists that the Union also behaves normatively and "acts to change norms in the international system" [27]. Following this line of argumentation, NPE scholars have established a new point of reference based on the "core idea (is) that normative powers pursue norms even if they are not in their interest" against which EU foreign policy is measured [28]. Inescapably, this assertion has engendered criticism from a wide range of scholars who argue that even in the EU, foreign policy emerges from strategic calculations and material interests which frequently supersede norms and values [29-30]. In their comparison of how EU policy developed on the death penalty, and on minority rights protections, Marika Lerch and Guido Schweltnus find evidence for both sides of the argument. The death penalty functions as an apt illustration of how NPE is imagined: Since 1998, the EU has become a vocal supporter of abolishing the death penalty, adopted abolition as a universal priority objective of the EU, and followed through on this policy by issuing demarches, initiating multilateral dialogues, funding the European Initiative on Democracy and Human Rights, and regularly sponsoring resolutions against the death penalty in the United Nations Commission on Human Rights [31].

To argue this point, the EU has drawn on universal rights-based arguments (the universal human right to life), value-based arguments (coherence between EU policies on the abolition of the death penalty), and utility-based arguments (the death penalty is ineffective for fighting crime) [32]. Critically, Manners draws on

this case study to demonstrate that the EU has stood up for its values even when this runs counter to its interests, in this case, closer ties with its main security partner, the US [33]. Beyond demonstrating argumentative coherence, the EU's position on the death penalty adheres to the coherence principle as the EU's external policies reflect the internal policies of all member states.

Importantly, this is not the case for minority rights protections. While the EU has elevated this policy issue to the level of "value", the bloc still does not adhere to a uniform standard on minority rights protections, nor does an explicit legal mandate outline the competencies of the EU in this area [34]. Yet, the EU actively promotes the norm of minority rights protection, insisting that prospective members adopt both non-discrimination and group-specific measures to protect minorities. These conditions, however, Pentassuglia finds, are weighted differently depending on whether an applicant's treatment of minorities constitutes a reputational issue or a security concern and are thus a reflection of "pragmatic concerns for internal and external stability" [35]. Based on these findings, Lerch and Schweltnus conclude that the EU does not act normatively by nature but that "its normative power depends heavily on the interaction between its policy goals, means and justifications, and therefore varies between different issue areas" [36]. Jennifer Erickson finds that when examining which countries the EU trades arms with, not only do the EU criteria of human rights, democracy, and conflict not correlate with what would be expected from a normative power, instead, poor human rights laws, GDP per capita, and oil production are correlated positively with increased arms transfers [37]. She concludes that "results for human rights, democracy, and conflict are potentially improving but still non-compliant even in the most optimistic reading" [38].

Table 2: SEQ Figure * ARABIC 2 Drivers of U.S. policies in eight case studies

Normative: Intended	Normative: Unintended	Realpolitik: Intended	Realpolitik: Unintended
Creating the WTO dispute settlement mechanism, 1995-2007	US sanctions against and targeted assistance to Belarus	US policy towards Iraq, 1980-84	US position on the International Criminal Court, 2002-07
Imperial: Intended	Imperial: Unintended	Status Quo: Intended	Status Quo: Unintended
US invasion of Panama, 1989	US invasion and occupation of Iraq, 2003-07	US policy towards Taiwan, 1978-2007	US and South Africa, 1948-90

Source: Daniel S. Hamilton, "The United States: A Normative Power?". SSRN Electronic Journal, 2008.

While these findings will leave any proponent of NPE feeling pessimistic, they also do not come as a surprise to a seasoned (or even novice) follower of global politics. Instead, the claim that any player in the international arena would exclusively act in line with normative ambitions over material interests seems unrealistic and naïve at best, and hypocritical and manipulative at worst. Yet, it would also be too simplistic to disregard NPE's entire positivist dimension solely on examples as competing case studies like that of the death penalty can be utilized to make the opposing argument. Rather, this calls into question NPE's selectivity in choosing supporting evidence for its positivist dimension, and the overall neglect of examples to the contrary. While difficulties in separating EU policy from individual member states' policy and questions over whether normative power should be projected through active export or domestic example partly explain this disparity, the almost wilful exclusion of contradictory evidence is indicative of an attempt to craft a narrative of ethical EU foreign policy and further confirms EU-centric prejudices in the empirical application of normative power to the EU [39].

The problems with NPE's positivist dimension do not end there. Once again, a look at the US can help shed light on the conceptual problems of Manners' articulation of the concept. Tracing American foreign policy from 1948 to 2007, Hamilton identifies multiple instances of American foreign policy – intendedly or unintendedly – being driven by norms, *realpolitik* thinking, imperial ambitions, or maintaining the status quo (see Fig. 2). By demonstrating that the US at different times throughout this period promoted both normative and non-normative goals via both normative and non-normative means, this analysis invalidates claims by some NPE scholars that the US may have been a normative power in the inter-and post-war period but is not anymore [40].

More than that, it substantiates the fact that consistently and wholly pursuing "normative aims (as opposed to self-interested material gains) through predominantly normative means (as opposed to predominantly military and economic)" [41] with "normative results" [42] is a practical impossibility in the realm of foreign policy. The epistemological uncertainty that allows researchers to attribute an actor's behaviour to either norms or interests depending on their argumentation and resolve inconsistencies by citing competing norms and means of realizing these, is partly to blame. More crucially, however, is the theoretical impossibility of separating norms from interests as they fundamentally implicate and shape each other [43]. In promoting "deep trade" norms at the Uruguay Round (1986-1993) and the Doha Development Round (2001-), for example, is the EU exporting a progressive agenda of multilateralism and development or minimizing trade frictions, or both [44]? Here, Richard Youngs's analysis of the

interaction between strategic and normative dynamics in the EU's human rights promotion is particularly insightful. Youngs sees human rights aid as "arguably the most significant component of European strategy" [45].

The EU commonly practices human rights promotion through a gradualist approach of supporting local rights-based consultative groups with developmental projects, advancing universal education on human rights, and linking state-capacity building to human rights provision. The goal of these measures is to build a nation's democratic prospectives and instil in the populations a sustainable commitment and adherence to human rights. While such measures cannot be deprived of their normative dimension, the EU has strategically linked promoting human rights to security objectives such as combating international instability, managing migration patterns, mitigating anti-Western nationalism, and minimizing regional fragmentation [46]. The EU's utilization of human rights conditionality correlates most closely to "the incidence of serious instability resulting from human rights abuse" [47]. This has notably impacted nations in sub-Saharan Africa, such as Côte d'Ivoire, where EU and French sanctions intensified after the 1999 coup, and restrictions by Laurent Gbagbo led to renewed conflict and violence. Similarly, despite human rights abuses increasing in Zimbabwe over several years, the EU and UK only took action after the issue of land reform became a security concern. As in the cases of Lukashenko in Belarus, Mečiar in Slovakia, and Kuchma in Ukraine, the EU's human rights conditionality has also occasionally been conditioned by a national government's uncomfortable authoritarian or anti-EU positions. Additionally, the largest share of human rights funding benefits European, pro-Western NGOs, while funding for Africa and the Middle East has been denied to religious or clan-based organizations, and human rights groups with Islamist affiliations [48].

As these cases demonstrate, foreign policy cannot be conceptualized as entirely value- or interest-driven. Instead—as Hamilton argues—these mixed records should invite scholars not to analyse if a given entity is a normative power, but rather, to question the degree to which an actor acts normatively [49]. Diez further builds on this critique by suggesting that normative power be conceptualized as hegemony. Rather than adhering to a neorealist definition of hegemony which emphasizes the importance of hard power capabilities in enforcing and maintaining hegemonies, Diez draws on Antonio Gramsci to construct the EU's normative hegemony as "a relation, not of domination by means of force, but of consent by means of political and ideological leadership" [50]. Essentially, Diez contends, whoever accepts the EU's normative hegemony, agrees to a shared understanding of society, norms, and norm violations. On this view, Gramsci's hegemony mirrors

normative power's ability to shape what is normal. Yet, by accepting that "norms shape interests; interests shape norms", this conception of normative power overcomes the norms/interest divide and preserves the inviolability of ideational and material elements by accepting that no political body works "against its interests", by understanding uncertainties as a conceptual part of normative power, by refocusing attention on the contestation between different norms and different interests, and by inviting critical inquiry into the recognition and acceptance of norms by third-parties [51]. While such an analysis precludes a black-and-white evaluation of the EU's normative power, it represents a more holistic and honest picture of the workings of normative power and additionally allows researchers to disconnect the study of normative power from the discourse's inherent EU-centric value judgements discussed in the next section.

Normative dimension

To complete the trifecta, Manners lastly asserts that in addition to being normative and behaving normatively, "the EU should act to extend its norms into the international system" [52]. Alongside its descriptive purposes, Manners hereby instils the concept of normative power with a moral judgement of the EU's principles. Not only does this complicate matters by broadening the definition of normative power to include both a realizable resource and an ideal to strive for, but it also innately skews the NPA scholarship towards considering the EU a "force for good" with universal values on the international stage [53]. Yet, this position is not without its advocates. Axel Honneth, for example, asserts that the dissemination of democratic norms and practices alongside increased transparency and public access to information, has transformed the moral relationship between governments and the governed, and provided civil society an increasingly independent role in international affairs [54].

While it might still be impossible to agree on transcultural norms and values under these altered circumstances, Erik Eriksen and Jarle Weigard argue this might not be the case for rights (higher order norms which claim universal validity) like "equality, freedom, solidarity, self-realisation and human dignity" as these arise from "a deontological principle" which is "concerned with what we are obliged to do when our actions have consequences for others" [55]. From this perspective, criticism of the universalism of human rights "belongs to the antiquated heritage of the counter-Enlightenment" [56]. Extending this approach, one would expect a normative power to act to transform the practices of power politics, the legal status of human rights in international law, and advocate for the strengthening of international and cosmopolitan law. EU policies of this kind include its support for the International

Criminal Court, the inclusion of a human rights clause in trade agreements since 1992, and the adoption of the human rights charter in the Constitutional Treaty [57].

However, since such a position contrasts with the EU's vocal support for multilateralism—which itself rests on external sovereignty—Sjursen concludes that "based on this standard, it is not altogether straightforward to conclude that the EU is a 'normative' power." [58]. Moreover, while De Zutter allows that an assumption of normative universality is required for an actor to be a norm-diffuser, she also warns that this universalism implies the superiority of one own's norms and consequently dictates the replacement of other norms with one's own [59]. In practice, the European presumption of universal norms and moral superiority has expressed itself in the forceful inclusion of the rest of the world in European structures like the Westphalian system through, for example, the violent subordination of other regions during colonialism. Despite this cautionary tale, the NPA discourse continues to privilege a Eurocentric perspective of normative power in both theory and practice to the extent that "the very premise of normative power is that Europe is uniquely positioned to guide humanity to a better future" [60].

In "Worlding the Study of Normative Power", Emilian Kavalski and Young Chul Cho accuse the International Relations mainstream of suffering from "Columbus syndrome" when encountering non-Western concepts and approaches: "either it recognizes them as narratives about world politics but does not acknowledge that they are different; or acknowledges that they are different, but refuses to admit that they are part of IR" [61]. As a result, International Relations imposes and reproduces "imperialistic epistemologies" such as a purely European conception of normative power and derides everything outside this bubble as primitive and illegitimate [62]. Increasingly, however, these outdated ideas are being challenged by the rise of new powers. While China, for example, has been a receiver and adopter of so-called international values for a long time, the ascension of Xi Jinping has seen China reject this asymmetrical power relationship and embrace a norm-setter role through which it practices a competing model of normative power [63]. Whereas NPE adheres to a linear understanding of normative power based on *acquis communautaire* and strives for identity change and norm internalization in others, normative power China's (NPC) understanding of contextual normativity expresses itself as "an ongoing commitment to act in accordance with social demands and expectations (...) engendered by the practice of unlimited exchange of favours and underpinned by reciprocal obligations, assurances, and mutuality" with the goal of maintaining long-term relations in the framework of *guanxi* [64].

Norms, values, and treaties which provide the basis of the EU's normative power, act as flexible and contextual factors in China's calculations. By providing an alternative legitimate framework of normative power in this way, NPC exposes the exclusivity and unsuitability of the European model of normative power for the rest of the world. At the same time, NPC's emphasis on relationality provides a way to move the NPA discourse beyond its Eurocentric frame. By rejecting an understanding of normative power that is rooted in Eurocentric theory and application and measured against an EU-centric ontology, foreign policy, and value system, and instead embracing a definition of normative power that "depends on the kind of interactions it engenders in specific contexts and the way such interactions frame the responses of its interlocutors," the relationality approach allows for more global application of the NPA located in the interactions of multiple worlds and cultures with one another [65].

Conclusion: Is NPE's Columbus Syndrome Curable?

In conclusion, this paper has argued that EU-centric biases and European exceptionalist rhetoric haunt both the theoretical underpinnings and empirical exercise of both the NPE and NPA discourse. Ontologically, a re-examination of the EU's geopolitically driven development and a comparison to the US' similar political-legal constitution have disproven claims of the first being normative in nature and the latter being distinct in nature, thereby disqualifying both as constitutive factors in the EU's normative difference. Instead, the Union's hybrid polity and the ideational diffusion of facets of the EU model of regional integration have been established as the most relevant ontological source of the bloc's normative basis. Concerning the positivist dimension, the exclusion of contradictory, interest-based foreign policy examples corroborate a deliberate attempt to cast Europe in a normatively distinct and positive light. More generally, this section has called into question whether any power on the international stage, be it the EU or US, is able to practice an exclusively norm-driven foreign policy and if the epistemological separation of norms and interests is theoretically possible. Finally, an assessment of NPE's normative dimension has shown that the assumption of universality prescribed to EU norms risks moral superiority not only theoretically but has historically resulted in the forcible expansion of European values and systems. Beyond that, Kavalski's examination of NPC's normative power model has shown that while privileged in the NPA discourse, the EU-centric model of normative power lacks global application potential and relegates non-Western concepts to outside the International Relations mainstream. By exposing these "common themes that refer to the EU's distinctiveness and normativity" within the NPA and NPE discourse, this paper hopes to contribute to a decentring

of Europe from this theoretical framework and move the NPA scholarship towards a more holistic conception of normative power with global potential [66].

Taking account of how the theory of normative power has evolved in the decade since its inception, Ian Manners finds "that there is now a broader international interest in using the NPA to attempt to explain, understand and judge the EU in global politics by rethinking the nature of power and actorness in a globalizing, multilateralizing and multipolarizing era" [67]. And while most writing on normative power still originates in Europe, a growing body of the NPA literature is coming out of non-European spaces, including the USA, Canada, Israel, Australia, Japan, and China. This is the result of a concerted effort by academics like Emilian Kavalski to decolonize and "re-world" the field of normative power, starting with the assertion that "non-Western normative orders are just as legitimate as Western ones" and accepting "alternative and oftentimes contending conceptualizations of political goods in global life and the appropriate way(s) for their attainment" [68]. Yet some obstacles remain in this endeavour, such as a lack of interest by non-European scholars to engage with normative power due to the perceived complexity of the EU, and a lack of effort by European scholars to adapt their terminology for non-EU actors and contexts. These issues can partly be traced back to the pervasive influence of the EU and the marginalization of area studies within International Relations.

Fortunately, scholars of the NPA have not let these challenges stop them and have succeeded in engaging the field beyond the putatively unique role and agency of the EU, thereby pioneering a pluralistic approach to envisioning and practicing global politics within the disciplinary field of normative power that includes previously overlooked alternatives from both historical and contemporary perspectives and broadens the scope of analysis to include a diverse range of actors whose international influence can now be meaningfully comprehended and elucidated [69]. By directing International Relations to look closer at the role of norms in international politics and foreign policy, a re-worlded NPA engenders "productive openings for bringing into a meaningful conversation a wider range of cosmologies, power relations, and vulnerabilities than are typically accounted for by the narratives of IR" [70]. This is particularly important for the relevance of a normative power theory in a world of rising normative actors which are increasingly non-European and non-state. Here, we particularly see a rise of normative investigations into great powers and regional blocs of the Global South such as China, India, Japan, and ASEAN, Mercosur, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, respectively, which add non-Western experiences of normativity and normative power to the NPA canon [71-73].

Ultimately, the rise of interest in the concept of normative power follows from an increased interest in combating the dominance of hard power theories. In this vein, normative power's "conceptual sibling", soft power, captures the power of persuading others to endorse viewpoints and stances they did not previously embrace [74]. Normative power, on the other hand, extends beyond mere co-optation and involves actors and entities seeing themselves as pursuing their own objectives and values rather than someone else's. Consequently, delineating the consequences of the normative encompasses a more extensive form of leadership in international affairs than merely aligning others with similar goals. Hence, the strength of the normative power concept lies in challenging traditional dichotomies of hard power versus soft power by introducing an ideational/normative aspect to the discourse. In this vein, further research could be done in the direction suggested by Sjursen on how different actors on the international stage work and influence others to change the normative basis of the international legal system beyond power politics and towards increased cosmopolitanism and human rights. This is one of many fruitful avenues that leave much to be explored. Since his invention of the normative power concept, Ian Manners has participated and contributed to the practice of reconceptualizing, redefining, and re-worlding normative power.

Particularly, efforts to re-world normative power have driven a need to reconceptualize impractical or problematic aspects of NPE and the NPA. Within EU studies, Manners has broadened the concept to three new dimensions: *puissance*, *pouvoir*, and normative *puissance* [75]. The first facet is concerned with the question of "how we judge and justify truth claims in social science", while *pouvoir* is "is focused on hegemony as a form of power that combines material (economic) and discursive elements", and the ideal type *puissance* is developed "as a means of analysing ideal types of normative *puissance* actors by comparing them with existing ideal types (e.g. great powers or civilian powers), with other normative powers, or with the historical discourse of powers" [76]. Already such a framework is conceptually clearer and theoretically broader than the original formulation of normative power, and allows for an analysis of normative power that recognizes non-Western frameworks and actors as equal but different to the EU's configuration. Yet, contestation and disagreements over how exactly to define normative power, what norms should be and should not be included in the normative power term, where scholars should be looking, and how norms are spread and received, etc., remain. These questions, and hopefully many more, will continue nurturing this growing field in the years to come, and provide a space for scholars and practitioners to have conversations and arguments about the role of normative power in international politics.

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MULTIPOLARITY AND NORTH KOREA'S NEW GRAND NARRATIVE

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Abstract

The leadership of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) develops grand narrative to legitimate the state, the Workers' Party, its monolithic leadership, ideology, and strategic lines. Discourse on the DPRK's external affairs is critical in this process. This paper examines, primarily through the lens of speeches by the DPRK's supreme leader, the evolution of the DPRK's discourse on external affairs following Kim Jong Un's failure to reach agreement with President Trump at the Hanoi Summit in March 2019. It addresses the DPRK's resumption of hostile portrayal of the US, heightened negativity towards the Republic of Korea, maintenance of strategic communication with China, increasing alignment with Russia, and rejection of supranational authority. The paper suggests that despite the DPRK leadership's claim to be following a 'new path' after Hanoi, many elements of its current narrative concerning external affairs are familiar from its discourse prior to 2018, and indeed from the Cold War. Central to its current narrative is the assertion that the DPRK faces an existential nuclear threat from an allegedly imperialist, neo-colonialist, hegemonic US. This conception features in the DPRK's recent closer alignment with Russia. The paper examines the DPRK's incorporation into its own narrative of elements of Russia's discourse on multipolar order. While multipolarity may facilitate the DPRK's avoidance of dependence on any single large country, and the DPRK's discourse explicitly recalls its manoeuvring between Russia and China during the Cold War, its primary narrative presents polarization with the US in stark, binary, disruptive terms.

Introduction

For the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's (DPRK's) Workers Party of Korea (WPK), 'grand narrative' (Lyotard's critical term for a totalizing ethico-political discourse legitimating ideology and authority) is of existential importance [1]. The revolutionary WPK, under the monolithic leadership system headed by and embodied in Kim Jong Un, is required to provide guidance and guidelines for the state and its organs covering all affairs. The subordinate role of the government is to implement the policies formulated by the party. The WPK's avowed goal is 'socialist construction',

characterized as building socialism through self-reliance in all fields, based on principles of 'Kimilsungism-Kimjongilism.' Guidance is conveyed not just to every organ but to each citizen through party meetings, or through the mass organizations to which every citizen must belong, as well as through state and party media and propaganda. Each citizen is not only expected to memorize and understand the WPK's guidance, but to live it. The WPK's narrative is aimed not just at the authorized depiction of reality, but at its creation.

As well as directing the organisational life of DPRK citizens, the WPK's narrative is intended to analyse and govern the DPRK's external relations, to legitimate the regime and its choices. The WPK continues to follow lines on external affairs developed during the Kim Il Sung period, including the mythology or pseudo-history of guerilla struggle against the Japanese, and 'victory' over the United States (US) in the war that the US is held, by the WPK, to have instigated in 1950. On top of this is overlaid the narrative of the US posing a permanent nuclear threat to the DPRK's survival, a threat which can only be held off by the DPRK's military might, in particular its own nuclear weapons capability. These lines resemble Soviet and Eastern bloc narratives concerning the US threat from periods of the Cold War, from which they were partly derived.

During the period of outreach towards the Republic of Korea (RoK) and the US which Kim Jong Un initiated in 2018, the DPRK set aside for a period its habitual expression of hostility towards the US and repudiation of the RoK and the RoK government's legitimacy, replacing these with more emollient lines. Although it is doubtful whether Kim Jong Un ever intended to give up nuclear weapons (despite his expressed commitments during this process), he was undoubtedly seeking to reset the DPRK's relationship with the US and obtain an improved situation for the DPRK on the peninsula and beyond. Kim's miscalculation at the February 2019 Hanoi Summit with Donald Trump, and his consequent failure to reach agreement and secure the sanctions relief that he sought, was for him a major setback, following which the DPRK leadership resolved that it needed to follow 'a new path' entailing a new narrative. This paper examines developments following the Hanoi Summit, as viewed through the lens of the DPRK's own pronouncements. It covers the DPRK's treatment of relations with China and with Russia, as well as with the RoK and the US.

The DPRK's leadership has developed its new lines during a period of increasing polarization and tension between the 'West' and China and Russia. As the paper shows, the DPRK has viewed these tensions as advancing its own interests, including its avowed, long-standing policy of maintaining independence and avoiding dependency on any external power. It has begun to adopt the

concepts of 'multipolarity' and 'a new cold war' into its strategic orientation, and in doing so has been aligning itself particularly with Russia. The Russian Federation has described multipolarity as based on the principle of sovereign equality and non-interference and has stated a commitment to 'eliminate the vestiges of domination by the US and other unfriendly states in global affairs, [and to] create conditions to enable any state to remove neo-colonial or hegemonic ambitions.' The DPRK has adopted the same perspective, but while Russia has spoken of achieving strategic parity and peaceful coexistence with the United States, the DPRK's current narrative towards the US is more overtly hostile. The Russian Federation's presentation (even if not its actions) refers to the creation of a new multipolar order, but this paper suggests that the DPRK's discourse is more binary, and that it may seek to benefit from incipient disorder [2].

Kim Jong Un's return to Pyongyang from the failed Hanoi Summit was followed by a period of silence concerning the DPRK's intentions. He broke this with a speech delivered on April 12, 2019, 'On Socialist Construction and the Internal and External Policies of the Government of the Republic at the present stage' [3]. The speech set out the role of the WPK as a revolutionary party exercising leadership over and guiding all state activities. It reiterated that the goal of the WPK was the construction of a socialist state through the thorough application of Kimilsungism-Kimjongilism, and that this was to be carried out by implementing the line of independence. Kim noted that the DPRK was beset by hostile forces, but also suggested, opportunistically, that 'the contradictions and confrontations among the great powers in their pursuit of hegemony are worsening on a regional and worldwide basis'. He noted that the DPRK had adhered to self-determination, self-reliance, and independence even when the socialist camp existed and that this was a basic principle of the WPK and the State. He made no reference to nuclear weapons (other than referring to the discontinuation of nuclear tests and the test-fire of intercontinental ballistic missiles as measures which the DPRK had taken voluntarily) but committed to build up the DPRK's 'political and military might'. He urged 'the south Korean authorities' to implement the north-south declarations from 2018. As for the DPRK and US, he suggested that 'both sides should give up their unilateral terms and seek a constructive solution that meets the other's interests' and that 'it is needed above all for the United States to approach us with a new way of calculation after putting aside the current one'. It therefore appeared, at this point, that Kim Jong Un had not ruled out some continuation of US-DPRK negotiations. Indeed, Trump and Kim met once more at the DMZ in late June 2019 and agreed to the resumption of talks, but after that there was to be no more mention from the DPRK of movement by both sides. When DPRK and US officials met at

'working level' in Stockholm in early October, the talks broke up without issue as DPRK officials walked away (as perhaps they had intended) declaring that there was no change to the US viewpoint and attitude. US officials claimed otherwise, but to no avail [4].

By the end of 2019, in the absence of any progress in negotiations with the US (which was entirely to be expected, given the absence of any DPRK willingness to negotiate), Kim Jong Un had settled on 'a new path' (as forewarned), which he announced in a speech to the Central Committee of the WPK reported by the Korean Central News Agency (KCNA) on 1 January 2020 [5]. Kim stated his conclusion that the political and military threat from the US would never cease, and that if the nuclear issue were removed the US would still find fault with some other DPRK action. According to Kim, the 'stand-off' between the DPRK and the US had boiled down to a stand-off between self-reliance and sanctions. As it was, he said, a *fait accompli* that the DPRK would need to continue to live under sanctions, it must rely on and develop its own strength, even if this meant more 'belt tightening'. The DPRK should seek to break through sanctions with a 'head-on offensive' to achieve self-reliance on the economic front. It should push ahead more vigorously with the development of strategic weapons, maintaining at constant readiness its nuclear deterrent to contain the alleged US threat and guarantee the DPRK's security. There would, he said, be no denuclearization on the Korean Peninsula and the DPRK would steadily develop its strategic weapons until 'the US rolls back its hostile policy and a lasting and durable peace mechanism is in place.' The ink was hardly dry on the printed speech, when, confronted with the burgeoning Covid-19 epidemic in China, the DPRK closed its borders on January 22, 2020, in an eventually unsuccessful attempt to forestall infection. While the motivation was epidemiological, for any hard-line advocates of self-reliance and central control, it was ideologically opportune.

One year on, the new path had been thoroughly paved. Kim Jong Un's nine-hour long report at the Eighth Party Congress was not published in full by KCNA, but the elements and summary that KCNA published on January 9, 2021 included a detailed review of the period since the Seventh Congress in May 2016, and clear future orientation [6]. In the period since the 7th Congress, Kim claimed that self-reliance had been developed into an offensive economic strategy for defeating sanctions. Even though the DPRK had, he said, failed (badly) to meet the goals of its Five-Year Economic Plan, it had, so Kim claimed, laid a foundation for future self-supporting economic development. In the period to 2017, the DPRK had succeeded in its struggle to consolidate its nuclear war deterrent and self-reliant defence capabilities, allegedly 'putting an end once and for all to the era in which big powers attempted to make bargain with the interests of [the DPRK]'. The report

stated that by making a bold switch-over in its lines in 2018, the WPK Central Committee under Kim Jong Un had created an atmosphere of dialogue accepted by the international community and organized and led external activities including opening a new chapter in DPRK-China relations, and unprecedented one-on-one talks between the top leaders of the DPRK and the US. Turning from retrospection to forecast, Kim said that national defence capacity should be strengthened continuously. The DPRK should develop its nuclear and ballistic missile capabilities. As for the field of external work, Kim said,

'It should wage offensive diplomacy to smash the attempts of the hostile forces to violate [DPRK] sovereignty and defend [the DPRK's] rights to normal development. It should orientate external political activities with the main emphasis put on prevailing over and subjugating the US, the fundamental obstacle to the development of [the DPRK's] revolution and [the DPRK's] principal enemy' [7].

Furthermore, in adopting its strategy towards the US, the DPRK 'should steadily expand solidarity with anti-imperialist, independent forces'. Through this speech, Kim Jong Un set out the approach towards the US that the DPRK has subsequently followed, as well as enumerating nuclear, ballistic missile and other defence technologies which it has since developed and launched. On January 1, 2023, KCNA's reporting of Kim Jong Un's 2022 year-end speeches to the WPK Central Committee gave central place to the DPRK's nuclear weapons capability. Kim declared that the DPRK's September 8, 2022 Law on the State Policy on Nuclear Forces, which had set out modifications to the DPRK's nuclear doctrine including a lower threshold for pre-emptive strike, was a demonstration of the DPRK's independence and self-defence and, he said, of greater significance than any political event in steering change in the world political structure. Kim pointed to the two missions declared for the DPRK's nuclear weapons as deterrence and, if that should fail, warfighting. He called for an exponential increase in the DPRK's nuclear arsenal, including tactical nuclear weapons (for targeting against South Korea) and an additional ICBM system (for targeting against the US), as well as the launch of a military satellite. In addition to characterising arms build-up and military moves in the RoK as 'a confrontational challenge', and the deployment of US 'nuclear strike means' to the RoK as 'increasing the level of military pressure on the DPRK to the maximum', Kim also referred to triangular cooperation between Japan, the RoK and the US and asserted that under the signboard of tightening alliances, the US was seeking to establish a new military bloc that was an Asian version of NATO. In this speech as on other occasions when DPRK propaganda has referred to US alliances or alleged the creation of an Asian version of NATO, the

DPRK proposed to respond by redoubling its own military build-up, rather than reciprocally triangulating its alliance with China and partnership with Russia [8]. Kim has stated explicitly that it would have been a fatal mistake for the DPRK to rely on the nuclear umbrella of another state (by implication, unlike the reliance of RoK and Japan on extended deterrence by the US), and that it had been essential for the DPRK's survival to develop its own nuclear weapons [9]. Nevertheless, the January 1, 2023 report also refers to a "'new cold war' system", and increased cooperation between the US and its allies may in fact have been a spur for the DPRK's closer engagement with Russia in 2023.

Kim Jong Un's diplomatic initiative in 2018 involved marked changes in engagement with China as well as with the RoK and the US. These were not comprehensively signalled at the start of that year, when Kim's 2018 new year speech contained an overture to the RoK in respect of participating in the Pyeongchang Winter Olympics but no sign of any warming towards China or outreach towards the US, while the speech also contained a commitment to increase production of nuclear weapons [10]. DPRK-China relations were at this point at a historically low ebb, with the DPRK declining even diplomatic exchanges in 2017, and the two sides reduced to communicating by public megaphone through their state-controlled media, through which China warned the DPRK that their bilateral 1961 Treaty of Friendship, Co-operation and Mutual Assistance provided for China's military assistance only if the DPRK was attacked and not if it should launch an attack, and the DPRK accused its 'big neighbours' (China and Russia, but particularly China) of betrayal [11].

The immediate cause of friction was China's criticism of the DPRK's nuclear testing and ballistic missile development and launches in 2016 and 2017, and China's agreement in the UN Security Council to increasingly broad and deep sanctions resolutions in response. The deterioration in relations predated 2016, however, with the DPRK's execution in 2013 of Jang Song Thaek, the DPRK leader closest to China, and following this Xi Jinping's choice in 2014 of the RoK rather than DPRK for his first Presidential visit to the Korean Peninsula. The negative views were mutually reinforcing, with Chinese officials speaking of the replacement of fraternal party-to-party ties with the DPRK in the form of standard state-to-state relations [12].

It took the initiative of both sides to bring about the improvement in DPRK-China relations seen in 2018, ahead of Kim's summit meetings with Moon Jae-in and subsequently Donald Trump in Singapore. Xi Jinping invited Kim Jong Un to make an unofficial visit to Beijing in March 2018, but Chinese officials had for some time before that wanted direct engagement with the DPRK's

Supreme Leader, so the decisive change was that Kim, who had sent messages of congratulation to Xi following the 19th Communist Party of China (CPC) Party Congress, chose to accept. The official Chinese report of the visit said that it was the strategic choice of both sides to develop and maintain the traditional, friendly relations between the two countries and the two parties, and they would not let sustained cooperation be derailed by any single event [13]. The two leaders referred to each other as comrades, each referring supportively to their respective parties and socialist systems. They agreed to maintain leader-to-leader contact through direct meetings, special envoys, and messages and letters. They committed to continue the tradition of party-to-party strategic communication. Xi emphasised his support for peace, stability, and economic development in the DPRK and throughout the region. The Chinese report recorded that 'Xi said that China sticks to the goal of denuclearization of the peninsula, safeguarding peace and stability on the peninsula and solving problems through dialogue and consultation' and that Kim responded that "[i]t is our consistent stand to be committed to denuclearization on the peninsula, in accordance with the will of late President Kim Il Sung and late General Secretary Kim Jong Il". Three more summit meetings in the same vein took place in China up to January 2019, and Xi Jinping visited Pyongyang in June that year. Kim and Xi both had their reasons for shoring up DPRK-China and WPK-CPC relations and ensuring personal 'strategic communication' before Kim launched his diplomatic offensive with the leaders of the RoK and the US, and indeed for sustaining the ties after the failure of the US-DPRK Hanoi Summit (and then despite the DPRK resiling from its apparent commitment to denuclearise).

Following the development of relations with the RoK and China, Kim's initiative in 2018 to approach the President of the United States through officials of the Republic of Korea was a bold one that required a rapid adjustment to DPRK's state media and propaganda presentation of the United States. Donald Trump may have 'turned on a dime' in his reciprocal spin from the rhetoric of fire-and-fury to bromance, but the DPRK's cumbersome propaganda machinery requires more extensive reprogramming. Since at least the 1950s, the US had usually been portrayed as the DPRK's essential enemy (though also with past intervals of rapprochement). In 2017, not only was the state media full of diatribes against the US and the threat it allegedly posed to the DPRK, accompanied by abusive references to Donald Trump, but throughout the country there were anti-US propaganda posters including images depicting DPRK missile strikes on Washington, and the population had been mobilised in repeated anti-US rallies and loyalty pledging sessions. Almost all this anti-US propaganda was swiftly removed during 2018 (though some isolated examples did remain). References to the US as an enemy in state media and

public displays were avoided (though the longer-standing historical enemy Japan was promoted to take its place). Public reference to the nuclear and ballistic missile programme was dropped (or appeared only obliquely, as in references to the DPRK's 'treasured sword') [14], and President Trump was no longer characterised then or subsequently as 'a dotard' (though Kim Yo Jong has since referred to his successor, President Biden, as 'in his dotage') [15].

Given the difficulty for diplomats of canvassing opinion in Pyongyang without putting North Koreans at risk, it was hard as a diplomat to get much sense of what citizens made of these changes in representation of the US. There had been surprisingly little obvious sign of genuine tension (as opposed to factitious government and WPK generated displays) in Pyongyang for much of 2017, though there were signs of higher levels of public anxiety around September of that year. If citizens were surprised by the positive turn during 2018 in the portrayal of the US, this did not obviously manifest itself in public expressions. By contrast, the level of interest in North-South rapprochement was visibly high, with citizens congregating spontaneously around the stands where state and party newspapers were posted, waiting for news of summit meetings. There were requests to diplomats, who unlike ordinary DPRK citizens had access to international news media, for information in advance of the DPRK's own controlled TV, radio, and press reporting. It is likely that the WPK and the government even responded to public pressure by starting to announce Kim's overseas visits in advance and accelerating the reporting of outcomes. Given the hopes pinned by ordinary DPRK citizens on a breakthrough in North-South relations, the failure of the Hanoi Summit probably caused real disappointment and concern among citizens on that score (even if the consequences of the failure at Hanoi for North-South relations were not immediately knowable), as well as possibly over the maintenance of sanctions and the returning shadow of possible future conflict.

Although Kim Jong Un had turned to China in 2018, he did not turn to Russia until after the failure of the Hanoi Summit, when he travelled to Vladivostok in May 2019 to meet President Putin. This might be seen as a meeting on the rebound, but it was not presented at the time by either party as an alternative to DPRK-US engagement [16]. Kim was reported to be keen that what he said to Putin should be conveyed to Trump, and Putin said that he would discuss the summit with US leadership, as well as with his Chinese counterparts. It was not clear at this stage, apparently even to Kim Jong Un, that the summit-level negotiation process with the US was finished. Commenting on the substance of his discussions with Kim Jong Un, Putin suggested that the DPRK was likely to require some regional security assurances if there were to be a peaceful, diplomatic process towards denuclearisation. No

agreements were announced following the 2019 discussion, but DPRK state media subsequently suggested that the meeting in 2019 provided a basis for elevating the DPRK-Russia relationship to a higher level in 2023. Since Russia has abandoned professed adherence to socialism, and there is no direct equivalent in DPRK-Russia relations of the unitary party-to-party relationship that exists between the WPK and the CPC, the question arises whether a relationship between the DPRK and Russia can have an ideological dimension that transcends good neighbourliness and cooperation or will remain essentially transactional. At least to a degree, given the role of the supreme leader as the head of the DPRK's monolithic leadership system, personal summit-level relations can for the DPRK substitute for party-to-party ties, particularly in setting a strategic direction.

Both before and after Kim Jong Un's September 2023 visit to the Russian Far East and summit with Putin (indeed, before the visit was announced), DPRK state media in 2023 commemorated visits to Russia by Kim Jong Il in 2001, 2002 and especially his last visit in 2011, as well as Kim Jong Un's own visit of April 2019. They also recalled Putin's visit to meet Kim Jong Il in Pyongyang in July 2000, when the DPRK and Russia overcame the breach during the Gorbachev and Yeltsin eras caused successively by the ending of all preferential trade, the collapse of the Soviet Union and the non-renewal of the 1961 Treaty of Friendship, Cooperation and Mutual Assistance between the Soviet Union and the DPRK which had mirrored the DPRK's Treaty with China. Commemoration of these visits in advance of the announcement of Kim's September 2023 visit signalled to some that a visit was impending. Kim Jong Il's strategic orientation towards Russia, especially in the last months of his life, together with the agreements and declarations made, including the July 2000 Treaty of Friendship, Good Neighbourliness and Cooperation, set the imprimatur on Kim Jong Un's 2023 move to strengthen ties with Russia [17]. When assessing prospects for a 'socialist legacy triangle' between China, Russia and the DPRK, Gilbert Rozman wrote in 2022:

"... as China and Russia boost their relationship with prospects of reaching out to North Korea too, they are making progress in shifting from what was long seen as a pragmatic bond without ideology to an ideological bond in opposition to the US "Cold War" mentality. For now, the ideological bond remains weak, and it barely exists with North Korea. The direction of change is toward renewal of the socialist legacy, but it poses serious challenges" [18].

In 2023, we have seen emphatic presentation by the DPRK of the existence of an ideological bond between the DPRK and Russia, built on the DPRK's support for Russia's war aims and action in

Ukraine, and the asserted common cause of opposition to alleged US imperialistic hegemony. What in 2021 were described in DPRK state media as 'friendly and cooperative relations' with Russia were in 2023 described variously as 'militant friendship and solidarity' and 'invincible comrade-in-arms relations' marked by 'special comradeship between Comrade Kim Jong Un and Comrade Putin'. DPRK pronouncements have also made references to a tradition of 'mutual support' or 'mutual assistance' that appears to look beyond the DPRK Treaty of Friendship, Good Neighbourliness and Cooperation of 2000 to the 1961 Treaty of Friendship, Good Relations, and Mutual Assistance between the DPRK and the Soviet Union, raising the question of whether there has been discussion of a new mutual defence agreement. Gilbert Rozman accurately noted that 'the history dimension, which is often a surrogate for the ideological dimension, looms large in the special bonds in both Beijing and Moscow' [19-20]. In 2023, DPRK state media has repeatedly commemorated the Soviet Union's role in the defeat of Japan and the liberation of Korea, as well as the Soviet Union's backing for and involvement in the Korean War. The historical experience is presented as a continuous, living tradition with the two countries still engaged together in common cause and struggle:

"The two countries of the DPRK and Russia will ensure continuity of the long and ingrained tradition of fighting side by side against a common enemy. They will further strengthen strategic and tactical cooperation on the united front to frustrate the imperialists' military threats and provocations, and their high-handed and arbitrary practices. Since the beginning of the outbreak of the Ukrainian crisis the DPRK has supported, and still supports, Russia's military operation as a righteous struggle for defending its strategic security and interests" [21].

Viewed from a Western perspective, it was not inevitable that the DPRK would give Russia its unwavering support for Russia's war in Ukraine. The DPRK maintained diplomatic relations with Ukraine until these were severed by the latter in July 2022, after DPRK accorded diplomatic recognition to Donetsk and Lugansk. Russia's so called 'special military operation' in Ukraine could be seen (as it is in the West) as displaying all the elements that the DPRK excoriates in alleged US activity: imperialistic hegemonic aggression, violation of sovereignty and of territorial integrity. Instead, the DPRK has accepted and regularly repeated Putin's contention that the war is entirely the result of expansionism by the US and its NATO allies, threatening Russia's own strategic security and interests. In rapidly reaching this conclusion, it is likely that the DPRK's leaders were guided more by their conceptions (or their strategic framing) concerning the US and geopolitics, and their assessment of the DPRK's own interests, than by the facts on

the ground or principles of international law. The DPRK's leaders see the war, and the opportunity it provides for drawing closer to Russia, as advantageous for the DPRK's external environment, while offering potential economic and other benefits through bilateral relations. The DPRK's conspicuous pattern of voting in support of Russia over Ukraine at the UN General Assembly, may reinforce Russia's backing for the DPRK in the Security Council and other UN fora (including the Human Rights Council).

Although DPRK propaganda frequently endorses Russia's position that its war in Ukraine is entirely the fault of Western expansionism, references to Putin's argument that Russians and Ukrainians were originally 'one people – a single whole' are considerably less prominent [22]. It is likely that the DPRK leadership sees a broader analogy between Russia's war in Ukraine and the DPRK's position on the Korean Peninsula. During the period of summit-level engagement with President Moon Jae-in and President Trump, Kim Jong Un and DPRK state media appeared to acknowledge the legitimacy of the RoK and its government. Following the breakdown at Hanoi, however, they began to revert to past, delegitimizing practice. This DPRK tendency became increasingly pronounced following the assumption by Yoon Suk-yeol of the RoK Presidency in May 2022, both in the DPRK's autonomous statements and in DPRK responses to the statements and actions of the conservative administration in Seoul. In 2023, DPRK propaganda routinely referred to the President, government and armed forces of the RoK as 'traitor Yoon Suk Yeol and his group', 'the political and military gangsters of the "Republic of Korea"', 'the puppet group' and 'the puppet army'. In August 2023, in response to joint US-RoK exercises, Kim Jong Un inspected a 'training command post' of the Korean People's Army. As KCNA reported it:

"To cope with the present situation in which the U.S. and the "RoK" military gangsters have staged extremely provocative and dangerous large-scale joint exercises simultaneously stimulating an all-out war against the DPRK, the KPA General Staff launched a command drill involving the entire army on August 29.... He [Kim Jong Un] acquainted himself with the plan of the drill staff, which is aimed at occupying the whole territory of the southern half by repelling the enemy's sudden armed invasion and switching over to an all-out counterattack..." [23].

The KPA exercise was presented as simulating an invasion of South Korea in response to an invasion of North Korea, rather than as a pre-emptive action. But that, of course, is how the DPRK falsely presented, and still falsely presents, Kim Il Sung's invasion in 1950 of the RoK. Whatever the significance of Kim Jong Un's end of 2023 announcement that the DPRK would no longer seek reunification with the 'RoK authorities' for as long as the latter

sought 'unification by absorption' or 'unification under liberal democracy', this did not represent a change from the position of August 2023. Kim Jong Un neither recognised the legitimacy of the RoK's government (which he referred to as a 'strange clan' and 'puppets') nor of the RoK state itself (which he described as 'nothing but a hemiplegic malformation and colonial subordinate state'). He implied that should the US and the RoK attempt a military confrontation with the DPRK, the DPRK would use its nuclear weapons and the Korean People's Army would act 'to subjugate the whole territory' [24]. The DPRK continues to assert that there are circumstances under which its annexation of RoK would be legitimate. Russia's 2023 Foreign Policy Concept does not refer to the DPRK by name but does include regional security commitments from which the DPRK would seek to derive benefit, including 'supporting allies and partners in ensuring defence and security, suppressing attempts of external interference with their internal affairs' and 'developing military, military-political and military-technical cooperation with allies and partners' [25]. Russia's leaders have elsewhere expressed their strong appreciation of the DPRK's support over its war in Ukraine. This appreciation may be genuine and based on more than Russian self-interest, but there appears to be a degree of expediency in Russian responses to DPRK communication and engagement. Russia may have moved away from socialism, but its senior officials likely still retain a bred-in-the-bone knowledge of the operation of Leninist party and state structures and of how the propaganda machinery of state socialism functions. In their dealings with the DPRK, they have appeared at times to pander to the DPRK's interpretation and construction of history and global affairs, for example, on the 2023 anniversary of the signing of the armistice in the Korean War on July 27, 1953, sending congratulations using the DPRK's terminology to mark the 'Day of Victory in the Great Fatherland Liberation War'. Foreign Minister Lavrov provided an egregious example in a speech he gave in Pyongyang on October 18, 2023:

"To our great mutual regret, events in recent years have shown that Japanese militarism and US hegemony have not disappeared. Western colonialism remains the main goal and focus for European, American and Japanese. In these circumstances, our solidarity relying on historical and fraternal ties has taken on special importance. Comrade Minister just mentioned the war that the West, led by the United States, has unleashed against the Russian Federation with the direct involvement of an overtly Nazi Ukrainian regime..." [26].

Lavrov has characterised the DPRK's outspoken and invariable support for Russia's war in Ukraine as a mark of the DPRK's rare independence, knowing as he does that the DPRK conceives of independence as an essential quality in its external relations.

Even though Lavrov is self-serving in his assertion that the DPRK's voting in support of Russia in the UN General Assembly is a mark of independence, this may nevertheless be correct in the sense that the DPRK has taken its decision to align with Russia for its own anti-US ends. While DPRK propaganda does tacitly acknowledge a degree of Russian thought-leadership in the analysis of geopolitics, quoting with approval remarks by Putin and Lavrov on the challenge to unipolarity and the rise multipolarity, it still presents the DPRK as the global leader in opposing alleged US imperialism and drive for global hegemony, with Russia and China portrayed as recent converts to the cause. Although the DPRK is impoverished, through its own economic policies, resource allocation priorities and COVID-19 border closure as well as because of sanctions, and although the decision to align with Russia is probably economically expedient, this does not mean it was born of necessity. If Kim Jong Un is to be believed (as perhaps he should be in this, though not in everything), he will not sacrifice his conception of the DPRK's long-term security interests for immediate or even long-term commercial benefit. This general stance has been reinforced in specific declaration that the DPRK will not be suborned into foregoing its nuclear weapons either by President Trump's blandishment of 'a bright future' of economic development led by international investment, or by the promises of President Yoon Suk-yeol's 'audacious initiative' about which the DPRK's state media has been entirely dismissive.

The DPRK has shown a similar disposition in relation to China. DPRK state media has usually blown cold about Chinese-style reform-and-opening (including, in 2017 and at other times, explicit rejection of the approach), though it has blown somewhat hotter when Kim Jong Il or Kim Jong Un have made overtures to China, as the DPRK's leaders appreciate that this is welcomed by their Chinese counterparts. Since the DPRK's current alignment with Russia is conceived by the DPRK's leaders as involving no concession on their nuclear and ballistic missile programmes while ameliorating the DPRK's external environment, they are ready to entertain plans for more bilateral economic cooperation, including in fields such as the extraction of minerals and precious metals where Chinese companies and regional governments have previously sought to arrange contracts, and apparently with no regard by either side for UN Security Council sanctions resolutions. What then are the likely implications for the DPRK's relations with China of the establishment of closer DPRK ties with Russia, which at his summit meeting with Putin, Kim Jong Un described, at least in English translation, as 'his first priority'? Writing about the history of DPRK-Russia relations, Andrei Lankov has observed:

"Ever since the 1950s, North Korea has sought to play off its two primary allies for political gain. This began as an attempt

to shake off the shackles of Soviet control by boosting ties with Beijing. While much has changed in the decades since, this period established a basic dynamic which continues to this day, as Pyongyang remains wary of becoming too dependent on any other country – even its nominal friends” [27].

Reducing dependency on Beijing may be part of the DPRK's leadership's motivation in boosting relations with Russia. Kim Jong Un may also recognise, with Russia's engagement in a European war and with its economy on a war-footing, that he may secure more material and geopolitical support from Russia, in kind and in degree, than China is currently willing to provide. It is, though, unlikely that the approach towards Russia is intended to provoke any rupture with China. Some of the expressions now used to characterise DPRK-Russia relations (comrades-in-arms, for example), have traditionally and recently been used in respect of China, with continued acknowledgment by the DPRK of this relationship as 'forged with blood' through shared historical experience. The DPRK's state media continues to mark close China-DPRK ties through the reporting of the exchange of greetings between leaders, and in other ways including the reporting of official visits. The DPRK's state media in 2023 frequently sided with China on issues such as relations with Taiwan, or US economic measures targeted at China, and its references to the advent of 'a new cold war' imply that China as well as Russia is, like DPRK, aligned against the US. Its approach does, as Lankov has noted, resemble DPRK practice throughout the Cold War, with the DPRK manoeuvring between China and Russia during the Sino-Soviet split, without alienating the other party.

Returning to the matter of the WPK's incorporation of the concept of 'multipolarity' into the DPRK's narrative lines, what exactly does the DPRK leadership mean by multipolarity or the multipolar order? Is it what might be termed (though not by the DPRK) 'bipolar disorder' or is it rather a disposition that is genuinely multipolar? While, as noted, multipolarity offers the DPRK scope for avoiding dependency (as well as potentially for disrupting or splitting opposing alliances), the fundamental principle for the DPRK is opposition to the notion of unipolar global supremacy by the US. This is referenced in terms of binary oppositions, for example between 'justice and injustice' or 'progress and reaction' as in the following extract from a reported speech by Kim Jong Un at a dinner with Putin on 13 September 2023.

"Comrades, this visit is taking place at a time when a fierce competition between progress and reaction, between justice and injustice is gaining momentum on the international stage, and where the rise of the multipolar world is preceding thanks to the common will and combined strength of independent forces" [28].

In the passage above, in this Russian translation into English, the reference is to 'competition'. In the KCNA translation of another speech by Kim Jong Un, this time domestic, reported on January 1, 2023 (cited above), the same binary oppositions are referred to as 'contradictions':

"Comrades, the present international system shows that the contradictions between justice and injustice and between the progressive and the reactionary, especially the power structure surrounding the Korean peninsula, have become obvious and the change from a unipolar world advocated by the US to a multipolar world is being accelerated significantly."

The same passage continues:

"Our Republic will develop foreign relations proactively in line with the development trend of the current international situation and its position as a powerful independent country. The future of external affairs should invariably hold fast as the formal mission of the diplomacy of the Republic to the defence of the dignity of our Party, the enhancement of national prestige and championing of national interests and settle issues arising in international relations in the interests of our revolution. It should develop external relations in a many-sided way as it further expands and develops friendly and cooperative relations with neighbouring countries" [29].

The DPRK's presentation of multipolarity makes use of concepts and lexical terms familiar from earlier socialist practice. The expressed aspiration, however, is for nations to unite in a global struggle in defence of sovereignty and against alleged US imperialism, aggression, and hegemony, rather than the engendering of a supranational proletarian struggle. In the extract above, though this is not always the case, defence of the WPK is placed above the national interest, and this reflects the actual hierarchy of power in the DPRK, where the WPK under Kim Jong Un exercises control and oversight over all organs of government and the state.

The aspiration is at once for the global struggle to be united, but nevertheless for the DPRK to maintain 'many-sided' external relations, to preserve its independence. The expressed objective for this 'external work' is to create a favourable environment for the Korean 'revolution' (where it is not clear from context whether the term 'our revolution' refers to revolution accomplished in North Korea or, additionally, to revolution still to be accomplished throughout the entire ty of the peninsula), as well as for the party and state, as encapsulated in the following extract from the report dated January 9, 2021 (cited previously):

"It stressed the need for the field of external work to further develop the relations with the socialist countries, consolidate unity and cooperation with the revolutionary and progressive parties aspiring after independence, and launch a dynamic joint struggle against imperialism on a worldwide scale so as to make the external environment of our state ever-more favourable" [30].

Although DPRK's party and state propaganda sometimes refers, in discussion of the rise of multipolarity, to the creation of a new global order, should the struggle of others against the United States in the meantime give rise to disorder, this might nevertheless provide a favourable external environment for the DPRK and thereby serve the WPK's objectives. There is often a journeyman-like aspect to the construction of DPRK and Workers' Party propaganda, as its draughtspersons recycle well-worn idioms year after year. There has been, for instance, a repetitive low hum of reports of meetings of overseas Juche or Kimilsungist-Kimjongilist friendship groups. These have almost no plausibility, at least for a non-DPRK readership, in suggesting widespread external support or sympathy for the WPK and its guiding philosophy. The references to cooperative relations with revolutionary and progressive parties are not, however, entirely empty. The Party's external propaganda work includes the continuous reinforcement of ties with, among others, Iran and Syria (whose own narratives frequently resemble the DPRK's anti-US discourse), as well as Cuba. The expression 'parties aspiring after independence', which harks back to anti-colonialism (though the DPRK does not regard this as an obsolete concept, including in the context of the Korean peninsula), now refers essentially to the aspiration for sovereign independence from alleged US interference and military threat. As we have seen, the DPRK's line has, paradoxically perhaps, been re-invigorated by Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

In the last quarter of 2023, the DPRK announced the closure of several embassies or consulates as it began to restructure its overseas diplomatic representation. While there is speculation about the motivation behind the closures, part of the impetus is likely to be economic. The DPRK's access to foreign currency has been constrained by sanctions and its own Covid-19 lock-down, most likely resulting in less available funding. The DPRK's overseas missions have, additionally, long been expected to cover their own costs and contribute to the state's coffers, often by means of activity which is now contrary to UN Security Council sanctions as well as to the provisions of the 1961 Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations. Many of the announced closures are in countries where DPRK sanctions evasion has been the subject of international investigations, including by the UN 1874 Panel of Experts which reports to the Security Council and its 1718 Committee.

This exposure, and the consequent loss of income sources, may be a larger factor in the closures than the DPRK's overall financial position. In a December 2023 commentary piece, Ruediger Frank assessed the likelihood that there is also a policy rationale for the closures, and suggested, *inter alia*, that '[t]he DPRK can be expected to maintain and even enhance its presence in international organizations that experience an internal shift of power in favour of China and Russia' [31]. The assessment that there may be a redistribution rather than simply a reduction in diplomatic resources overseas is plausible and consistent with the DPRK's own statements. The DPRK is already increasing its visibility within the UN, taking advantage of Chinese and Russian backing in the Security Council.

The DPRK has long rejected the legitimacy and validity of UN sanctions against its nuclear and ballistic missile programmes, but it has only recently returned to the Security Council chamber, after a long absence, to assert its arguments in Council sessions. The DPRK's Permanent Representative has appeared increasingly assured in presenting his country's position that these sanctioned programmes are part of the DPRK's right as a sovereign state to self-defence, and that the measures taken by the Security Council are themselves illegal, the result of a US-led conspiracy that violates the principles of sovereign equality and non-interference set out in the UN Charter (The Charter provisions most relevant to this claim are Article 2(1) and Article 2(7), but they are expressly qualified. The UN Security Council and the UN Secretariat did not respond to repeated requests by the DPRK in 2017 for the Secretariat to convene a meeting of jurists to consider the legality of the UNSC's sanctions resolutions). The DPRK's challenge is not just to the application of the measures against it, but to the 'supranational' powers accorded to the Security Council by the Charter to determine for itself when there exists a threat to international peace and security and to determine measures to be taken in response. This challenge is knowing and intentional. As well as seeking alleviation and redress from sanctions, the DPRK wants to undermine the existing international order. It argues that the US should be excluded from any emerging new order, a point it made recently in propaganda condemning the US's veto in the Security Council of resolutions concerning Gaza.

The DPRK does not require the individual backing of Russia or China for it to participate in UN sessions which concern its actions, though it does require the formality of an invitation from the rotating President of the Council. Nevertheless, the fact that the DPRK can be confident that China and Russia (who regularly refer to their joint draft resolution that, if agreed, would accord DPRK the sanctions roll-back that Kim Jong Un sought in Hanoi) will block additional sanctions resolutions or designations, will (in

somewhat differentiated ways, with Chinese statements tending to be more even-handed) suggest that US actions are the root-cause of tensions on the Korean Peninsula, and that they will not take issue with DPRK interventions during discussion, are all factors which support its return to the Security Council chamber. The DPRK also makes use of UN platforms to challenge any suggestion that the DPRK's nuclear programme is in violation of, or constrained by, the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), from which it announced its withdrawal in 2003, as in this statement from August 2022:

"A long time ago, the DPRK pulled out of the NPT through the legitimate procedure under the relevant article stipulated in the NPT. Accordingly, nobody has the right or justification to accuse the DPRK, a nuclear possessing state outside the NPT, of its exercise of the right to self-defence" [32].

There is international disagreement about the validity and legal effect of the DPRK's withdrawal from the NPT, but again the challenge by the DPRK is not just to any constraint on its own behaviour, but to the non-proliferation framework itself. Despite Russia's long-standing support for non-proliferation, it is now prepared in official review of the NPT to align with the DPRK's stance, and to cast blame on the US for the lack of progress in denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula [33]. Russia's disregard for the principles of the UN Charter in its invasion of Ukraine (though of course Russia rejects this criticism) may constitute its most profound challenge to the UN and the role of the UN Security Council in upholding peace and the security, but its endorsement of the DPRK's strategic line, whether rhetorically or complicitly through joint evasion of UN Security Council sanctions, also undermines the credibility of the UN and other institutions. Any consideration of DPRK discourse can be expected to raise fundamental questions. Is it likely that the DPRK's leadership really believes its own narrative lines? Do they really believe, as they state, that the US wishes to destroy the DPRK with nuclear weapons and is deterred from doing so only by the DPRK's own nuclear arsenal? Perhaps not, but they probably do believe in the value of a nuclear deterrent for preserving their sovereignty, as well as the utility for domestic control of portraying the US as an enemy kept at bay. Do they really believe in the possibility of total self-reliance, including economic autarky? Perhaps not, but they do believe in maintaining independence and as far as possible avoiding any external dependency. They place the security and survival of the Kim family, the so-called 'Paektu bloodline', the monolithic leadership system, the WPK and the State as constituted, above the economic wellbeing of the population.

As it pursues its strategic lines, can the DPRK rely on the support of China and Russia in all circumstances? This is unlikely. There

is distrust and resentment on all sides for historical reasons, and these are not in either case 'no-limits' partnerships. At present, however, it appears that they will stay aligned, and that the DPRK will continue to receive backing and support (of different kinds and in different measures) from both. China has its own strategic rationale for supporting the DPRK up to a certain point, but while Xi may accuse the US and the West of 'containment, encirclement and suppression'[34], this is not (yet) equivalent to the hostility in relations between Russia and the West, with potentially more to be lost by both sides than might be gained from further deterioration. China also remains neuralgic about any resumption of nuclear testing.

Is the DPRK's grand narrative likely to persuade others? There may be acceptance among middle-ground states of arguments about sovereign equality, equal rights in self-defence, and even the DPRK's claims that it faces US hostility or provocation. There may also be concern about risks from the RoK's and from Japan's changing defence postures and increasing defence expenditure. Even so, for most states there can be little attraction in siding with the DPRK over nuclear proliferation. But another factor is international weariness with an apparently unresolvable issue, coupled with anxiety (upon which Russia and China play) that while sanctions have failed to prevent the DPRK from continuously developing and expanding its nuclear and ballistic missile armoury they have a negative impact on the lives and livelihoods of powerless North Koreans. It is, unfortunately, all too likely that the DPRK's leadership does genuinely believe that the geopolitical environment, including internal challenges affecting the international credibility and capacity of the US as well as the numerous external challenges which the US and its allies face, are increasingly propitious for the eventual achievement of its own objectives, which include the positioning of the DPRK as a nuclear power in a multipolar world. The DPRK narrative maintains that time is on the DPRK's side. Sadly, in this regard, that may be right.

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ADAPTING TO UNCERTAINTY: UK STRATEGY MAKING SINCE 1990

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Abstract

The United Kingdom's series of post-Cold War strategic reviews reveal policymakers' assumptions about international relations. Explanatory grand narratives such as Cold War, the War on Terror and multipolarity play a role, but are not all-encompassing. The US alliance, a shrinking resource envelope, and legacies of the Cold War are more significant drivers. Incremental improvements in the method of British strategy-making mean the remit of strategic reviews has broadened, especially since 2015. Since 1990, British strategy has moved from a Eurocentric focus to a concentration on Middle East counter-terrorism to the Indo-Pacific tilt announced in 2021. Russia's 2022 full-scale invasion of Ukraine led to the return of a prioritization of the Euro-Atlantic area in the 2023 refresh of the 2021 review and will likely be reaffirmed in the next review, expected after the 2024 UK general election. Analysis of strategic review documentation and subsequent spending decisions reveal the assumptions in UK strategy making and the role grand narratives play.

Keywords: Grand strategy; grand narrative; international relations; assumptions; end of history; clash of civilizations; counter-terrorism; national security, UK government; Ministry of Defence; Strategic Defence Review; SDSR; Integrated Review; refresh; Cold War; Kosovo; Sierra Leone; Afghanistan; Iraq; Libya; Ukraine; Russia; China; India.



Fig. 1 – Front cover of the 2021 Integrated Review (Cabinet Office)

This paper uses a publicly available series of documents termed 'strategic reviews' to assess international relations theory and grand narratives' influence on UK strategy-making. They show that the influence of grand narratives has been minimal, that the UK's incremental approach to strategy-making has enabled a balancing of ends, ways and means in an uncertain international environment. Since the end of the Cold War UK strategy has adapted from a continental focus to humanitarian intervention in the 1990s, to counter-terrorism following September 11th, 2001 to a refocus on Europe in response to Russian aggression against Ukraine. This period has been characterised by uncertainty, in sharp contrast to before 1990. In the Cold War the who, what, where, how and why questions on any future conflict were known. Only when the war would start remained a mystery.[1] The underlying existential terror of the Cold War has gone, but uncertainty has dramatically increased. UK strategy has not anticipated strategic shocks, including the end of the Cold War itself. The reviews react to the global environment rather than anticipating it. Nevertheless, the emphasis in the 1990s on flexibility and a global approach while avoiding isolationism has reaped dividends. In place of predictive strategy-making in anticipation of changes to the global system, keeping UK options open has preserved subsequent decision-makers' freedom of response. Humanitarian interventions in Kosovo and Sierra Leone, and counter-terrorism operations after September 11th, 2001, show this flexibility in action. Although criticised as 'muddling through', the incremental approach has sustained the UK's global position and ensured consistency through changes of governing party.

There are three schools of thought when analysing strategic reviews. Firstly, the documents can be viewed as a serious postulation of British government strategy-making. They set out threats to national security and make long-term commitments to face them. They should therefore be studied in detail. Secondly, there is a declinist narrative. The first recognised defence review in 1957 dealt with legacy demobilisation, surplus equipment, decolonization and raw material and worker shortages in the economy. The 'Sandys Review' (named for the then Conservative Secretary of State for Defence Duncan Sandys) cut costs and downsized the armed forces, setting the tone for the rest of the twentieth century. Almost without exception, each subsequent review has planned to reduce defence spending with recent reviews also including cutbacks and rationalisations of foreign aid and diplomatic budgets [2-3]. Lastly, these reviews can be seen as communication exercises rather than genuine strategy-making. Internally, a review allocates budget and importance amongst the departments involved in national security and sets out the

governing party's foreign policy agenda. Externally, a review communicates UK strategy to allies and adversaries [4].

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This paper argues that strategic reviews are worth studying because of what they can tell us about British government strategy. The cross-government approach since 2015 means a focus only on the military instrument of national power is outdated. Now that the scope of these reviews encompasses the full range of British national security tools, cost-cutting is no longer the dominant theme. Furthermore, for the first time since the Second World War, the 2023 refresh of the 2021 Integrated Review included an 'aspiration' to raise UK defence spending to 2.5 per cent of Gross Domestic Product [5]. There is a time lag between changing theoretical understandings of international relations, real world events and government strategy-making. This is the reactive quality of these reviews at work. For example, the 1998 Strategic Defence Review was re-issued in 2002 with a New Chapter following the September 11th, 2001 terrorist attacks on the United States. The 2021 Integrated Review was refreshed in 2023 following the February 24th, 2022 Russian invasion of Ukraine. Still, as this paper will show, British strategy-making has been adaptable, preserving flexibility in the face of significant post-Cold War uncertainty. The process is more responsive to a changing world than the infrequency of reviews would suggest. Now that a strategic review is mandated every five years with mechanisms to refresh in between, the government has the ability to adjust UK strategy to address changes in international relations.

The Making of British Strategy – The Review Process

The governance of Britain is replete with published strategies. In foreign and security policy, overarching direction is found in the National Security Strategy (NSS), the first of which was published in 2008 [6]. In 2010 the role of the UK National Security Council was formalised with the publication of the NSS alongside that year's Strategic Defence and Security Review (SDSR). Since 2015, the NSS and SDSR have been combined. This broadening of scope makes the documents worthy of study. Despite these caveats, they are the best publicly available source of UK strategy [7]. Although these documents are published, the actual process of producing them is only recently becoming more widely known, for example through the work of Professor John Bew, seconded into government as the Prime Minister's advisor on foreign policy and defence [8-10]. However, detailed commentary on review production, especially the bargaining between departments or between armed services, is often only revealed years later (press leaks notwithstanding). What we do know is that political direction is paramount; by nature these reviews are top-down rather than bottom-up and follow the political cycle. Before 2010,

when the process was regularised to match the proposed Fixed Term Parliaments Act, a review would usually take place after a change in governing party. For example, the 1981 'Nott' review (named for Secretary of State for Defence John Nott) followed the May 1979 Conservative general election win; the 1998 Strategic Defence Review (SDR) followed the May 1997 Labour victory.

Enduring Themes

Before discussing the extent to which strategic reviews adapt to changing assumptions about international relations, some enduring themes must be noted. These are the constants but also the constraints for policymakers. In the post-Cold War period, UK strategy has been driven by:

1. Alliance with the United States;
2. A constrained resource envelope;
3. Legacy strategic decisions made during the Cold War.

Firstly, the UK's geographic position on the Atlantic edge of Europe and a shared language with the United States mean the transatlantic alliance has always been important. With the Cold War a fixed point in international relations and NATO architecture well-established, pre-1990 reviews dealt with the ebb and flow of the UK contribution to an potential war against the Soviet Union. As in the latter stages of the Second World War, this war effort was overwhelmingly American. For instance, one of the Royal Navy's key roles would have been to keep the North Atlantic sea lanes free from the threat of Soviet Navy submarines to ensure NATO ground forces could sustain a central European front supplied by sea from North America [11]. In the post-Cold War world, British strategy-making has held onto this transatlantic primacy, referred to as the 'special relationship' after Winston Churchill. The alliance has practical implications, e.g. for defence procurement and intelligence sharing. Within the NATO alliance, the special relationship also constitutes a vital security guarantee under Article V of the North Atlantic Treaty. The close alliance with the United States (and a shared language) means predominant American international relations theories have significant influence in Britain. A good example is the reintroduction of the possibility of state-on-state warfare in strategic reviews. US doctrine introduced the term 'Great Power Competition' in 2018 with origins in academic literature in the 2010s [12-13]. The 2021 UK Integrated Review terms the same phenomena 'geopolitical and geoeconomic shifts: moving towards a multipolar world' and 'systemic competition [in] a more contested international environment' [14].

Secondly, resource constraints constrain UK strategic choices. Rather than take the declinist view that retrenchment is the essence of strategic reviews, limited resources act as a reality check

on UK strategic ambition. They are a driver, a constraint, rather than the goal of the endeavour. Successive British governments have chosen to reduce national security spending, particularly on the armed forces, seeking a 'peace dividend' for the post-Cold War UK. The UK industrial base shrank during this same period. For military equipment, the UK must now join a queue for US military sales and/or embark on lengthy and complex multilateral projects.

Lastly, Cold War strategic choices affect present day strategy due to legacy structures and capabilities. National security spending is long term and high value; no review can start from a zero-based budgeting approach. This means policymaking naturally tends towards incremental change rather than the radical shift a grand narrative explanation may prescribe [15-16]. Strategic reviews concentrate on capital spending and new capabilities, but a majority of national security spending still goes on maintaining existing capabilities and workforce across intelligence, defence, foreign policy and development. Some of Britain's capabilities can be understood as legacies from the Cold War period adapted for the twenty-first century. For example, the Typhoon interceptor was designed in the 1980s as an air-superiority fighter, now extensively modified to operate against ground targets as required for counter-terrorism and counter-insurgency operations [17].

Revealed Assumptions in British Strategy

With these constraints in mind, we can turn to a more detailed study of the strategic review documents and the influence of grand narratives upon them. Working chronologically, the first review to consider is *Options for Change* published in 1990. The document's title reveals an awareness of an historic moment at the end of the Cold War, followed by the end of communism in Europe. However, the legacy driver of British strategy was at work - the armed forces and alliance structures remained in their Cold War forms such that there could be no restarting of British strategy [18]. Furthermore, the unexpected 1982 Falklands War was still in the memories of many government and military policymakers. That conflict's reversing effect on the cuts planned in John Nott's 1981 defence review acted as a brake on any general post-Cold War disarmament. The net result was a significant scaling back of the mass of the armed forces whilst adjusting the posture of the remainder for contingency preparedness [19]. British military commitments to Bosnia (1992) and additional infantry deployed in Northern Ireland showed this approach in action [20].

The *Options for Change* decisions were largely vindicated in the 1990s. Cold War mass, especially of armoured vehicles, was deployed effectively in Operation Desert Storm in 1991 toward the ousting of the Iraqi army from Kuwait. Mobility and flexibility,

outlined as the probable future role of the armed forces in Options for Change, were proven in operations in the Balkans, particularly Kosovo in 1999. The 'peace dividend' was partly realised through support function rationalisations, contractorization and amalgamation promulgated in the interim defence costs study *Frontline First* in 1994 [21]. From NATO's own figures, UK defence spending by 2000 had fallen to 2.4 per cent of GDP from an average of 5.2 per cent in the 1980-84 period [22]. The 1990s clearly show the resource constraint and Cold War legacy drivers at work in British strategy-making. The government identified that savings could be made in national security spending now that the Soviet threat had disappeared. Nevertheless, there was no abandonment of the need for some residual hard power as a wholesale subscription to a simplistic 'End of History' grand narrative might suggest [23]. Britain's national security strategy never fell into parsimony or approached isolationism. The Labour government carried out a Strategic Defence Review in 1998, building on work by civil servants in the Ministry of Defence before the 1997 election [24]. From here on, reviews expanded in scope beyond defence. The 1998 SDR had a 'scene setter' preface prepared by Foreign and Commonwealth Office officials [25]. The first chapter stated the underlying assumption behind the focus on expeditionary capabilities which developed through the decade: 'There is today no direct military threat to the United Kingdom. Nor do we foresee the re-emergence of such a threat' [26].

Threat-free grand narratives, particularly Francis Fukuyama's 'End of History' thesis were swiftly jettisoned following the September 11th, 2001 terrorist attacks in New York and Washington, DC [27]. In July 2002, a new chapter was added to the 1998 SDR to reflect this strategic shock. The 2002 New Chapter outlined the threat from terrorism and explained the role the armed forces would play overseas in its defeat. British 'soft power' was also specifically mentioned, showing the trend of an expanding definition of security through the canon of reviews. Foreign aid and UK diplomacy had an important role combatting the conditions for terrorist recruiting [28]. The modernisation and rationalisation of the armed forces in the 1990s meant Britain was relatively well placed to focus on counter-terrorism. The scale of counter-terrorism operations, even the substantial commitment to Afghanistan, was not of the same magnitude as the Cold War intra-German border garrison, or even the armoured division assembled for Desert Storm. Mobility and flexibility, foresight from Options for Change in 1990, had been implemented. British troops were on the ground in Afghanistan from October 2001 with the start of regular battle group deployments under Operation Herrick from June 2002. Yet the limited scale and tactical-level nature of counter-terrorism meant the strategic vacuum left by the end of the Cold War remained unfilled [29]. There were attempts at grand

narratives to describe this post-Cold War world, from President Bush's 2002 'Axis of Evil' of rogue states to the lingering influence of Samuel Huntington's 1993 'Clash of Civilizations' thesis [30]. Yet as a bottom-up phenomenon, terrorism defies grand narrative explanations; Bush and Huntington's analyses have not stood the test of time. As Lawrence Freedman writes:

"Lumping together all groups that might be called terroristic misses their distinctive forms of leadership and the nature of their constituencies. It leads to such misconceived notions as President George W. Bush's 'global war on terror', which involved far too many potential targets and soon became incoherent, especially when it led to the invasion of Iraq" [31].

Terrorism and rogue states, though vital security threats, were not existential ones. Counter-terrorism was an operation rather than a strategy. Fatigue with overseas military operations, sometimes termed 'wars of choice', caused a stricter assessment of Britain's strategic needs by both Parliament and public. Involvement in Libya in 2011 was limited to naval and air forces within a strictly NATO construct. On August 29th 2013, Parliament voted not to attack Syria to punish Bashar al-Assad for using chemical weapons [32]. The Bush doctrine of pre-emptive counter-terrorism had failed to replace the Cold War as the grand narrative in British strategy-making. In the 2010 Strategic Defence and Security Review, the resource constraint driver proved particularly powerful following the 2008 global financial crisis. As funding for the campaign in Afghanistan drew heavily on the UK current account, many capital spending projects were scaled back or elongated. Pre-1990 equipment was scrapped, e.g. the Harrier fighter-bomber and the Type 22 frigate. Operation Herrick had become an all-out counter-insurgency campaign against the Taliban. The Ministry of Defence (MoD) refocussed the campaign in the form of 'Operation Entirety' in 2009 [33]. Anti-submarine warfare helicopters were deployed to Helmand Province and a mock Afghan village was constructed on Salisbury Plain for training. This was a symptom of resource-stretch in the MoD rather than an indication that the War on Terror had become the grand strategic narrative for the UK.

For the first time since 1990, the 2010 SDSR acknowledged that the UK would be unlikely to act overseas outside an alliance. This combination of the assumed American alliance and resource constraints can create inefficiency and overreach in British national security [34]. The UK has maintained a full spectrum of military capabilities rather than specialize in one particular area like some smaller NATO partners [35-36]. The American alliance allows Britain to sustain full spectrum capabilities and global coverage within US constructs [37]. The clearest example of this phenomenon is the Trident submarine launched ballistic missile

supplied by Lockheed Martin but fitted with British-made nuclear warheads. Similarly, the RC-135 'Rivet Joint' reconnaissance aircraft, a fleet of just three aeroplanes in British service, operate in a US Air Force consortium arrangement [38]. The 2010 coalition government introduced quinquennial regularity to the strategic review process. The combined National Security Strategy and Strategic Defence and Security Review 2015 was a threat-led review (as opposed to Treasury-led review), an attempt to adjust British national security strategy to the new realities of international relations and balance ends, ways and means. In 2014 Russia annexed Crimea, using 'hybrid warfare' or 'grey zone' tactics. These features of the annexation, superficially related to counter-insurgency operations, obscured the underlying grand narrative of a revisionist Russia, and confused the overall strategic picture for several years in the UK and US [39]. Nevertheless, in 2015 Russia was considered a less formidable adversary than today; 'near peer adversary' was common nomenclature [40]. Nevertheless, the acknowledgement of 'the resurgence of state-based threats and intensifying wider state competition' is an important shift from earlier post-1990 reviews [41]. UK strategy had moved on from the counter-terrorism phase. New technologies somewhat confused the distinction between ends, ways and means, but a focus on state threats gave more clarity in 2015 than in 2010. Practical steps followed: the Security Service (MI5) formed the Joint State Threats Assessment Team in 2017 [42]. The National Cyber Security Centre opened in 2017. 2015's review contained another assumption, reliance on a Rules Based International Order: "we sit at the heart of the [RBIO]"[43]. Justification for Britain's central role was its membership in international fora, including the European Union. However, this does not explain how the RBIO benefits British security; believing in it is not the same as benefitting from it. Subsequent actions by the UK government, especially planning to break international law over Northern Ireland trade policy have challenged the claim that Britain unreservedly supports the RBIO. Nonetheless, in international politics actions speak as loud as words and generally Britain's support of the RBIO remains strong. For example, Britain supports UN sanctions on states such as North Korea for nuclear infractions and conducts Freedom of Navigation patrols through international waters claimed by China. Continued reliance on the RBIO remains a cornerstone assumption of British strategy even if the RBIO's very existence is mainly due to its declaration in documents such as the 2015 NSS and SDSR.

Assumptions and grand narratives in British strategy

The most recent review, 2021's Integrated Review was refreshed in 2023. These documents taken together represent current British strategy as of 2024 [44]. Assumptions on the permanence of the

US alliance within NATO and belief in the RBIO remain. Further integration between the different levers of national security policy is manifested in the amalgamation of the Department for International Development with the Foreign and Commonwealth Office. During operations in Afghanistan, these three arms of British foreign policy (development, foreign and defence) had worked together on nation-building—now they are integrated in both strategy and bureaucracy. The 'Indo-Pacific tilt' announced in the Integrated Review was conceived before Russia attacked Ukraine. It can be seen as an attempt by the government to address growing state threats. Russia is 'the most acute threat to our security' but the Integrated Review warns that China poses an 'increasing risk to UK interests' [45]. This is a remarkable change from the previous review in 2015 where the aim had been to build a 'deeper partnership' with China, probably as a result of Treasury influence aiming for economic benefits with a growing Chinese economy. This shift shows a degree of cross-government uniformity emerging in the intervening period as China's position in British strategic thinking shifted from economic competitor to security competitor. The stance on China also follows the American lead under both Presidents Trump and Biden. In the 2021 review Iran and North Korea are destabilising influences whose nuclear ambitions must be thwarted, but only within their respective regions [46]. On the friendly side, India and Japan are essential security partners in Asia with whom more security work should be done to counterbalance China [47]. Besides the invasion of Ukraine, between the publication of the 2021 Integrated Review and its 2023 Refresh, British and American troops withdrew from Afghanistan. The withdrawal (Operation Pitting in the MoD) closed the door on decades of boots-on-the-ground commitment for both the US and UK. As British forces were leaving Kabul, an aircraft carrier task force deployed to the Western Pacific (Operation Fortis)—a manifestation of the Indo-Pacific tilt. This multi-regional approach contrasts starkly with the Euro-centrism of the second half of the Cold War; 'Global Britain' rather than a continental commitment. The 2021 Integrated Review acknowledges that the open, free trading global economy is threatened by resurgent state threats, and with it the cherished RBIO the UK asserts is in its best economic and security interests. Indeed, 2021's review is 'integrated' in the way it acknowledges the linkages between the health of the British economy and national security. Competition refers not just to the cultural appeal of a Western-led world but also the ability of British firms to perform better than their international rivals. There is no longer a neat line between foreign and domestic policy.

The 2023 Refresh is analogous with 2002's New Chapter to the 1998 SDR after September 11th, 2001. After Russia invaded Ukraine on February 24th, 2022, the foreshadowing of state-on-state warfare

in 2015 became reality. Implicit in the acknowledgement of the return of state-based threats is a rejection of the comfortable assumptions from the 1998 review of 'no direct military threat to the United Kingdom.' If Russia were to attack a NATO member, Britain would be militarily threatened as Article V of the North Atlantic Treaty would oblige Britain to confront Russia directly. In this more threatening but also less certain international environment, good strategy-making is even more important. National security has once again entered the public consciousness, mainly due to Russia's aggression against Ukraine but also the possibility of Chinese action against Taiwan [48-49]. Increasingly, national security is defined more broadly than in a military sense. The broadening of the levers of national security beyond defence will likely continue in the next review. The strategic review process is also about institutional learning and strategy-making. Some of the reviews mentioned above have included outside consultation, while others have been carried out by a closed circle of senior government advisors and politicians. In general, a longer review process with more consultation is agreed by commentators to produce more coherent strategy, with the 1998 SDR held up as a gold standard. The SDR process lasted 14 months and included consultation with academics, retired civil servants and military officers, trade unions, the Opposition, and consultants from McKinsey & Co. on defence procurement [50-51].

What to expect in the Future

Britain must have a general election by January 28th, 2025. As per the pattern throughout the post-Cold War period and the quinquennial standard, the next strategic review will likely follow that election. 2021 and 2023's review documents reveal strategic assumptions of resurgent state threats and retain British faith in the transatlantic alliance and the RBIO. A continuing Russia-Ukraine War will likely necessitate maintaining focus on defence and security as essential components of government spending through 2025; there is upward pressure on national security spending. It is difficult to overstate how significant a reversal of the downward trend in British defence spending this represents, in challenge to the declinist narrative. Members of Parliament regularly criticise the 'hollowing out' of Britain's armed forces whilst some call for a threat-led (rather than savings-led) Review after the next election [52]. Nevertheless, significant new military equipment programmes are unlikely. Deployments to Asia will likely become more routine, particularly submarines under the AUKUS partnership. Technology, especially the nascent National Cyber Force will absorb significant resources as will recapitalising the nuclear deterrent through the Dreadnought submarine programme approved in the 2015 SDSR. On the non-defence side, the intelligence contribution to the Ukraine war effort would

safeguard the size and scope of the Single Intelligence Account. The 2024 US Presidential election matters for UK security, as it does for other NATO states and those around the world. Some reduction in American power is something British strategy already faces, with its emphasis on the strength of alliances like NATO and AUKUS. However, the assumption is still of at least American participation if not leadership (as in Libya in 2011). If this assumption were to fail, the UK could be left without a core pillar of its national security architecture. Some work to address this possibility should be included in the next strategic review, including engagement with European partners on national security [53]. The UK-led sub-NATO Joint Expeditionary Force, started in 2014 and operational by 2018, is a tentative move in that direction [54].

Conclusion

Bipolarity and focussing on the Soviet threat in Europe fell away suddenly in 1989-91, leaving a strategic vacuum. Nevertheless, the modernising and repositioning of British defence in the 1990s provided the tools for the expeditionary operations which reinforced Britain's role as a force for good in the world (Kosovo 1999 and Sierra Leone 2000) [55]. Paradoxically the 1990s now look like a time of greater strategic clarity than the years after September 11th, 2001 when a confusion of ends, ways and means led strategy to be steered by tactical level counter-terrorism and counter-insurgency (COIN) to the detriment of appreciating changes in international relations. Some analyses of that period, such as hybrid warfare and grey zone tactics proved to be illusory trends. From the perspective of 2024, the War on Terror period now looks like one of strategic uncertainty. The illusory trends appealed because of a superficial meshing with the drivers of British strategy, especially tight resources. In particular, high technology hybridity is more appealing to the economiser than preparing for state-on-state warfare.

Evidence in this paper from the strategic reviews and revisions in 1990, 1994, 1998, 2002, 2010, 2015, 2021 and 2023 shows that the feed-through from changes in international relations to government strategy is approximately five years. For example, facing a new resurgent and revisionist Russia was foreshadowed by the short 2008 Russian-Georgian War. In 2014 Russia annexed Crimea from Ukraine. In the 2015 SDSR 'Russian behaviour' is a problem requiring NATO readiness and by 2021 Russia 'is the most acute threat to our security.' Britain's national security apparatus was better able to respond to the 2022 invasion of Ukraine with this preparation than without. Other NATO countries have supported Ukraine by following the lead of the Alliance. Britain's acknowledgement of the Russian threat in its sovereign strategy was a contributing factor to its swift response to aid Ukraine from

the war's outset. The drivers of British strategy have remained constant (the US alliance, resource constraints and decisions taken during the Cold War) yet do not represent a straitjacket for policymakers. Strategy-makers have considerable freedom of manoeuvre to respond to a changing world, as shown by these strategic reviews. Although the irregularity of strategic reviews suggests cumbersomeness, trends in international relations are long term in nature. As such, British strategy-making has responded in a timely manner to changes in international relations.

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LESSONS FOR NIGERIA FROM SOUTH KOREA'S EXPERIENCE IN TECHNOLOGICAL LEARNING

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Abstract

In 1960, Nigeria and The Republic of Korea (hereafter South Korea) were underdeveloped countries undergoing unprecedented change. Nigeria achieved independence and was working to find its feet as a former British colony. South Korea faced political instability following the April 19 Revolution. Both fledgling democracies experienced high inflation and minimal technological advancement. In the United States, President Lyndon B. Johnson, his Council of Economic Advisers, and the US Congress labelled both nations as 'Less Developed' countries in their 1967 Annual Economic Report. In 2020, the World Bank listed South Korea as a high-income economy with a GNI per capita $\geq$ \$12,696. The same ranking lists Nigeria as a lower-middle-income economy with a GNI per capita of \$1,046 - \$4,095. South Korea's economic development is often described as a miracle; the government's policies to implement technology and innovation have seen real GDP grow by approximately 5.45% annually between 1988 and 2019 [1]. In comparison, Nigeria continues to be plagued by underdevelopment. This paper assesses South Korea's progress and answers the question—what lessons can developing countries take from South Korea's experience in technological learning? By focusing on Nigeria, this paper further assesses how emerging economies—especially in Africa—may promote economic growth and sustainable development through technological innovation. Finally, this paper defines two key lessons to aid developing countries like Nigeria adopt and adapt foreign technology to encourage domestic advancement. In the context of the recent 2023 Nigerian elections, it is additionally crucial to map out how the state may achieve growth after approximately eight years of economic malaise and political tension.

Introduction

In 1960, Nigeria and The Republic of Korea (hereafter South Korea) were underdeveloped countries undergoing unprecedented change. Nigeria received independence and was working to find its feet as a former British colony [2]. South Korea faced political instability following the April 19 Revolution [3]. Both countries

were experiencing high inflation, low technological advancement, and fledgling democratic governance. In the US, President Lyndon B. Johnson, his Council of Economic Advisers and Congress labelled both countries as 'Less Developed' countries in their 1967 Annual Economic Report [4]. South Korea began implementing Five-Year plans to promote economic growth and development. A primary goal of the plans was to encourage the use of technology to improve the global competitiveness of South Korean goods and service providers. Lim finds that by 1966, the South Korean Institute of Science and Technology (KIST) actively worked with developed nations like the US to import and adapt various technologies [5]. This investment in technological learning led to economic and social development in South Korea. In 2020, the World Bank listed South Korea as a high-income economy with a GNI per capita $\geq$ \$12,696. The same ranking lists Nigeria as a lower-middle-income economy with a GNI per capita of \$1,046 - \$4,095. South Korea's economic development is often described as a miracle; the government's policies to implement technology and innovation have seen real GDP grow by approximately 5.45% annually between 1988 and 2019 [6]. In comparison, Nigeria continues to be plagued by underdevelopment. It has also been diagnosed with 'Dutch Disease,' whereby its possession of natural resources hinders its economic growth and stability [7].

This paper assesses South Korea's progress to ascertain lessons developing countries can learn from South Korea's experience with technological development. Next, by focusing on Nigeria, this paper assesses how emerging economies in Africa can deploy technological learning to facilitate economic growth and sustainable development. Finally, this paper defines two key lessons to help countries like Nigeria adopt and adapt foreign technology while encouraging domestic advancement. In the context of the 2023 Nigerian elections, it is additionally crucial to map out how the state may achieve growth after nearly eight years of economic malaise and political tension. Malerba defines technological learning as how technological capability—the skills and experience needed to learn and innovate—is accumulated [8]. Six variations of the learning process can be combined depending on the country and its systems. These range from learning via interaction, searching, using, doing, along with inter-industry spillovers and advancements in science and technology. This paper argues that South Korea was able to develop its economy by combining all six varieties of technological learning. This framework can be adopted by other developing countries that score below average in global development metrics.

Developed and developing countries make up the global development and economic landscape. Developed countries refer to advanced economies like Germany, leading in technological

development and innovation. Developing countries are those whose economic and technical advancements lag behind their developed peers; they are latecomers to development. This group can be subdivided into two sets: successful latecomers and frontier economies. Successful latecomers are countries like South Korea which have effectively caught up with developed countries, closing the development gap using indigenous innovation and adopting appropriate foreign technologies. Conversely, frontier economies are those that continue to lag behind per these criteria, unable to close the existing gaps and continue to experience low development rates and economic growth. Nigeria is one such example.

This paper details the development of South Korea's economy, followed by an analysis of the lessons which frontier economies such as Nigeria may draw from its experience in technological learning to improve their economic and industrial prospects. A history of technological learning in South Korea will follow this introduction, focusing on how technological learning has driven development. There will then be a discussion of the lessons Nigeria can learn, focusing on South Korea's growth, and how Nigeria can adopt similar policies. Finally, the paper will summarise the key points and lessons for developing countries like Nigeria. There are two key lessons countries like Nigeria can learn from South Korea's experience in technological learning: the development of a technically skilled workforce, and the improvement of the absorptive capacity of firms throughout the country. These lessons will allow Nigeria to catch up and potentially leapfrog developed economies. However, there are some caveats, as seen in the circumstances that led to South Korea's 1997 financial crisis. Nevertheless, technological learning is essential for frontier economies like Nigeria because it provides an opportunity to reverse their development and trends of stagnation.

The History of Technological Learning in South Korea

Inequality within the global development landscape featured three critical technological advancements. The first is the Industrial Revolution which began in Britain in the early nineteenth century. Second, advancements in transportation and telecommunications technology, which helped the United States develop nationwide railroad and telegraph infrastructure, and finally, the internet, pioneered by the American military. These advancements have subsequently driven economic and social development in developed countries. However, they also exacerbated divergences in global per capita incomes—the contribution to global GDP by developing countries declined by approximately 2% from 1820 to 1950 [9]. The end of the twentieth century has narrowed such deviations in some regions. Successful latecomers like South Korea began to follow the lead of their developed counterparts by adapting their

technologies and innovating to drive growth at home. In charting this growth, Park [10] divides South Korea's development into four phases: (1) the 60s were focused on laying the foundation for a self-sustaining economy and indigenous innovation, (2) the 70s witnessed upgrades to industrial technology and rural development in the country, (3) during the 80s, South Korea transitioned to a more liberal economy, and (4), between the 90s and the present, South Korea has substantially globalized and implemented structural adjustments.

The South Korean government used detailed five-year plans focused on technological learning during each phase of its development. In 1962, Chairman Park Chung-hee and other senior South Korean government members presented the first five-year plan to promote economic growth and encourage domestic and foreign investment. It was clear that South Korea did not have the technology to execute this plan. The country's engineers did not have the skills, and the technical systems in place would not suffice to build the proposed world-class industries. Assistant Minister Song Jeong-Beom was responsible for developing a plan to acquire and learn the requisite technology. He worked with William Weems, the head of technology training at the United States Operations Mission (USOM), to execute his role. This process led to the "five-year plan for technology promotion," which would stimulate the acquisition, learning and use of science and technology [11]. This plan for technology promotion aimed to encourage technological learning by upskilling the workforce and boosting the efficiency and competitiveness of South Korean companies. Bell [12] defines technological learning as the acquisition and utilization of technological skills in service of development. South Korea focused on learning by interaction, and from advancements in science and technology at this stage.

Existing literature about development catch-up and leapfrogging through technological learning dates back to the early 1900s. Development catch-up is the process whereby a latecomer economy may narrow the development gap between itself and more advanced economies. Veblen posits that developmental backwardness gives latecomers an economic and political incentive to catch up [13]. That is, the wider the gap, the stronger the incentive. Strong incentives promote accelerated development and leapfrogging since latecomers can learn from previous errors and adapt technology at an accelerated rate. As a result, latecomers can avoid the high costs of research and development typically required for innovation.

Furthermore, Lee and Lim [14] find that leapfrogging allows latecomers to skip some levels ahead or foster more productive technical advancement, thus becoming more technologically

advanced than their developed counterparts. Leapfrogging enables a latecomer to chart its own development path; they do not have to follow the same trajectory as advanced economies. There is the potential to skip stages or try new ideas while benefitting from knowledge and lessons from existing advanced economies.

In theory, every developing country could catch up and leapfrog by simply learning the technological systems of developed nations. However, this is not an easily accessible solution because technology transfer in this manner is not without conditions and costs [15]. A latecomer's ability to learn and adopt new technology is linked with—or dependent upon—the suitability of the technology, indigenous innovation, and absorptive capacity. When its first five-year plan was implemented, South Korea's workforce lacked the relevant skills to compete in the global economy. Consequently, South Korean companies struggled to learn, absorb, and effectively operationalize novel technologies. This situation limited indigenous innovation; the ability to not only successfully acquire new foreign technology, but to transmit this knowledge in perpetuity, depends on the quality of absorptive capacity and indigenous institutions (i.e., applying domestic knowledge to develop appropriate technologies within the country). Cohen and Levinthal [16] define absorptive capacity as the ability of firms to identify the value of novel foreign technologies and learn to use them. To improve absorptive capacity and encourage indigenous innovation, the South Korean government created national and public research institutes to upskill the workforce and boost local research and development.

One such institute is the Korean Institute of Science and Technology (KIST). Rhee, Ross-Larson and Pursell [17] found that domestic South Korean research and development began to minimize dependence on imported technology with indigenous innovation surpassing foreign technology in traditional sectors like food processing and clothing. Eun-Joo et al. [18] additionally concludes that South Korea's Hyundai and Samsung became global powerhouses due to their increased absorptive capacity, allowing them to quickly learn and assimilate novel technologies in the production process. High absorptive capacity was thus attributed to the state's investment in science and technology through the KIST, which encouraged indigenous innovation and matured the existing technological capabilities of South Korean firms. This promoted knowledge linkages with South Korean companies to tap into a more productive labour market, thus promoting inter-industry spillover and encouraging domestic invention. In addition, this investment in the workforce deepened levels of development regarding indigenous innovation, which South Koreans applied in conjunction with foreign technologies.

By 1996, South Korea was on its seventh five-year plan. Domestic innovation and learned foreign technology were well-integrated—making it the most innovative country globally, according to the Bloomberg 2021 Innovation Index [19]. South Korea has been at the top of the index seven times. Nigeria can learn from South Korea's experience in technological learning by focusing on indigenous innovation and improving absorptive capacity. Nigerian policymakers must apply these lessons at the state, firm, and individual levels.

Lesson 1 – Upskilling the Workforce

Human capital is a critical feature of industrial development [20]. In 1965, South Korea's secondary and tertiary education rates were 10.9% and 2.6% [21]. This low education rate meant limited indigenous innovation meaning the technology used in South Korea was mainly imported. Most of the workforce were employed in manual roles and had limited potential for learning complex, imported technologies. As a result, the Korea Advanced Institute of Science (KAIS) was created with help from the Battelle Research Institute of the United States. By 2020, secondary and tertiary enrolments were 90.3% and 70.4% [22]. Institutes like KAIS helped the workforce access elite training in science and technology. This training created an optimal environment for indigenous innovation and learning new foreign technologies.

Figure 1 shows employment rates for graduates at varying levels of education. For example, in 1973, 44% of South Koreans working in a given industry were elementary school graduates, while less than 5% were junior college and college graduates. The data below describes these relative percentages by year (1973-1992).

Table 1: South Korean employment rates by education level

	Whole Industry	Elementary School Graduates	Middle School Graduates	High School Graduates	Junior College Graduates	College Graduates
1973	100	44	35	16	0.9	4.1
1974	100	41	36	18	1.1	4.3
1975	100	36	40	19	1.1	4.4
1976	100	32	42	19	1.2	5.2
1977	100	30	40	22	1.3	5.9
1978	100	28.1	42.7	22.1	1.3	5.7
1980	100	22.6	46.6	23	1.7	6
1981	100	18.8	45.1	26.5	1.9	7.6
1982	100	16.9	44.4	31.1	2.5	5
1983	100	13.5	44.4	34.1	2.8	5.1
1984	100	12.2	43.3	37.1	2.8	4.5
1985	100	10.7	42	39.5	2.9	5
1986	100	8.9	37.2	45.4	3.2	5.2
1987	100	8.5	34.4	47.6	3.6	5.7
1988	100	7.3	32.2	50.1	3.9	6.3
1989	100	7.2	28.3	50.9	4.8	8.7
1990	100	7.6	25.4	52.7	5.5	8.6
1991	100	7.6	22.2	53.9	6.4	9.6
1992	100	7.2	20.5	56.3	6.3	9.5

Productivity gains and innovation are highly correlated with the number of individuals educated to or above the high school level [23]. In other words, the higher the number of high schools, junior colleges, and college graduates in the workforce, the more significant the innovation. South Korea could drive employment and technological learning by educating more people and making the workforce more employable. By 1992, South Korea had more employed graduates educated to and above the high school level in its workforce. This upskilling increased productivity and inspired indigenous innovation, making it easier to assimilate foreign technology. This provides a blueprint for Nigeria's approach to technological learning. Data from UNICEF shows that as of 2016,

Nigeria had the largest number of children of secondary school age not in school, at 10.5 million [24]. The data also shows that Nigerians' education quality is subpar, even at the university level. Many students never complete their education due to systemic issues like teacher strikes. Statista further notes that Nigeria has allocated a decreasing amount of its total federal budget to education from 2015 to 2019 [25]. The gross enrolment ratio in upper secondary schools also fell from 48% in 2012 to 36.7% in 2018 [26]. This is an alarming trend that Nigeria must reverse, given that technological learning requires a highly skilled and educated workforce, as seen in the case of South Korea.

There is some evidence that the Nigerian government has begun to implement policies to improve workforce quality. For example, in 2013, the West African Vocational Education (WAVE) Academy was set up to train Nigeria's youth and help prepare them workforce. By early 2018, approximately 2,000 Nigerians were under the tutelage of WAVE, and the academy had successfully placed 31% of them in the education, financial technology, media, and logistics sectors [27]. The government has also created N-Power, an initiative to train and empower university graduates. The initiative is part of a plan to turn Nigeria into a knowledge-based economy; in its first two years of operation, 200,000 Nigerians have benefitted from the program [28]. While these efforts are commendable, they need to be scaled up further to reach more of Nigeria's youth, who number in the tens of millions [29].

The need for scalable industry training directly ties into Nigeria's economic landscape. Many companies operating in Nigeria have had to import labour to meet their business needs. The lack of qualified technicians has led several construction companies to import labour from the Philippines, Togo, and the Benin Republic [30]. Such a shortage of skilled labour means more advanced foreign technology cannot be adopted and absorbed quickly. On this issue, Atkinson and Stiglitz suggest that foreign technologies may not be appropriate in developing countries due to capital, technical, and human resource limitations [31]. Developed countries tend to build technology that requires high levels of technological expertise. Deploying these technologies to developing countries could prove prohibitive due to the lack of requisite skills and insufficient human capital development needed for successful implementation. To be considered appropriate for a country's development, technology must not exceed the state's existing technological capabilities [32].

South Korea's ability to successfully learn foreign technology was due to its educated and trained labour force, which was qualified to understand the novel imported technology. For Nigeria to catch up, there exists a minimum threshold of skills required from the

labour force for technological learning to be successful [33]. This creates additional urgency for Nigeria to upskill its workforce as it currently does not meet this threshold.

Creating a National Innovation System (NIS) is one avenue for this. Freeman describes this as a network of institutions in the public and private sectors that train the workforce and provide a path for learning and diffusing new technologies [34]. Innovation, in this instance, is the ability to gain and apply knowledge creatively to meet economic and social demands [35]. Adeoti finds that creating a NIS is crucial for a developing country because it offers an opportunity to upskill the workforce [36]. In addition, it generates strong linkages across various institutions relevant to development. It also ensures that the government and private institutions have a framework for distilling and receiving economic and technological knowledge.

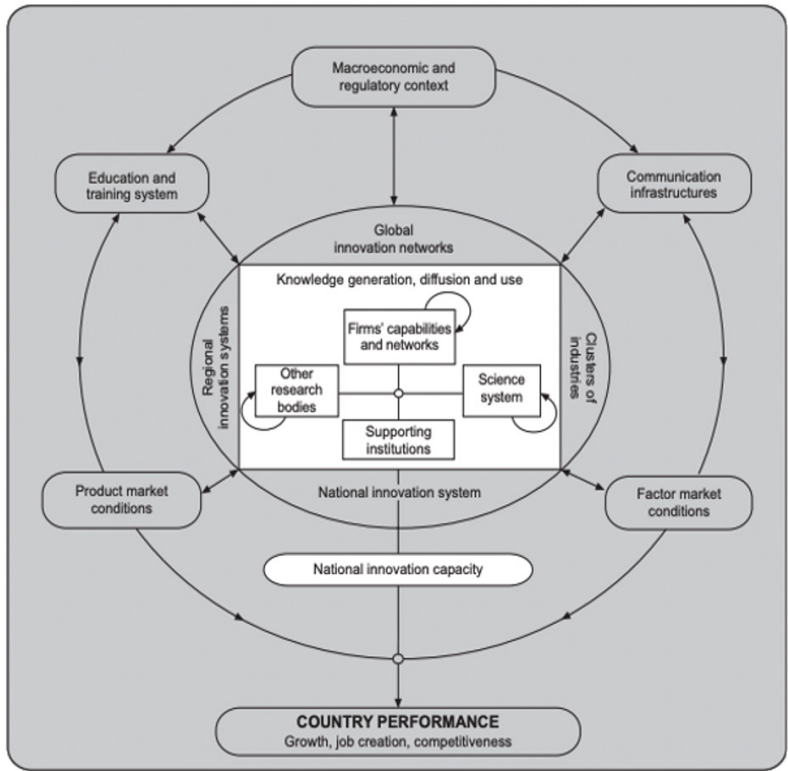


Figure 1: Actors and Linkages in a National Innovation System (NIS). Source: OECD Managing National Innovation Systems

Figure 2 maps out how a NIS would drive development in a developing country like Nigeria. Firms, individuals, governments, and research institutes must work together for a successful NIS.

The level of interaction and funding among these actors will differ by country. Governments provide the financing to build scientific and technological infrastructure in frontier economies and improve their weak technical capabilities. From 1980 to date, South Korea has fostered a successful NIS by ensuring effective and productive collaboration between its firms, research institutes, individuals, and organizations. Investing in firms, creating a successful state bureaucracy, and improving the skills of its workforce have led to economic growth, job creation and development in South Korea [37]. Nigeria has made several attempts to create national innovation systems, but they have been unsuccessful due to inadequate equipment, infrastructure, and disciplinary focus in key learning institutions [38]. The Nigerian Council for Science and Technology (NCST) was established in 1990 as part of a national innovation system. However, the NCST has struggled to achieve its purpose due to Nigeria's bureaucratic inefficiencies (corruption) and a weak public-private sector link. The performance of a NIS depends not only on how individuals and institutions perform separately but also on how they interact with each other [39]. Creating and successfully running a NIS for Nigeria is compulsory for catch-up and future leapfrogging. Therefore, concerted efforts must be made to revive the NCST and ensure strong institutional linkages. Nigeria's path to development using technological learning will involve investing in its workforce and improving its firms' capacity. A clear and sustained commitment to upskilling the workforce will drive Nigeria towards long-term development.

Lesson 2 – Improving the Absorptive Capacity of Firms

Van Den Bosch et al. define absorptive capacity (hereafter AC) as having three components; how firms identify the value of knowledge, their ability to embrace it, and their capacity to apply it to improve business output [40]. Schmidt identifies two requirements to improve AC: improving the workforce's existing skills base and increasing investments in research and development [41]. Setting up the institutes and educating the workforce in South Korea helped improve AC. Lim finds that a strong NIS increases indigenous innovation and improves the ability of firms to learn and integrate the technology into their workflow. They eventually used this to increase profits and efficiency [42]. As the government created more research institutes, the number of technology firms in South Korea grew because firms could tap into a more qualified talent pool that ensured indigenous innovation. As a result, more firms in the country invested in research and development; there was an increase in South Korean firms applying for patents. Figure 3 shows the number of patent applications in South Korea from 1980 to 2018. The number of patents applied can be used as a proxy for the level of R&D in a country because creating new technology requiring patents necessitates significant R&D investments.

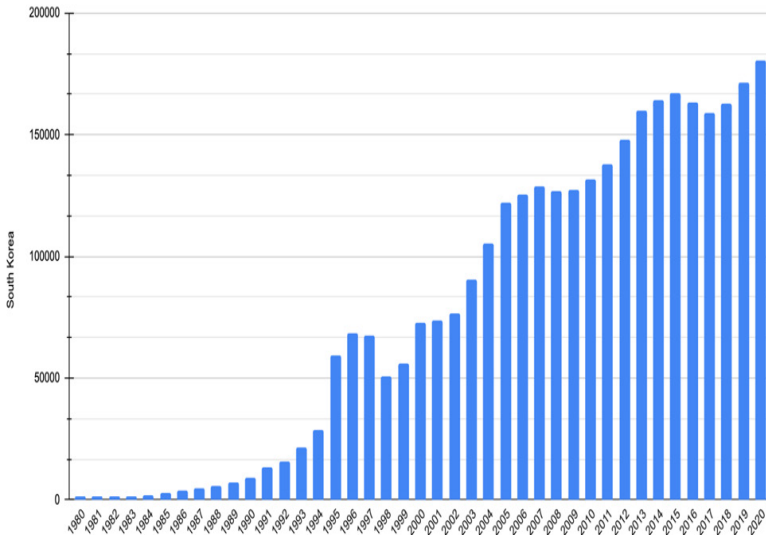


Figure 3 - South Korea patent applications by year. Source: The World Intellectual Property Organisation

As of 2018, patent applications in South Korea were approximately 175,000 (figure 3). In comparison, the number of patent applications in Nigeria in 2018 was 120 (figure 4). Subrahmanya supports the data in the figure by finding that innovation in Nigeria is limited, and there is no indigenous innovation [43].

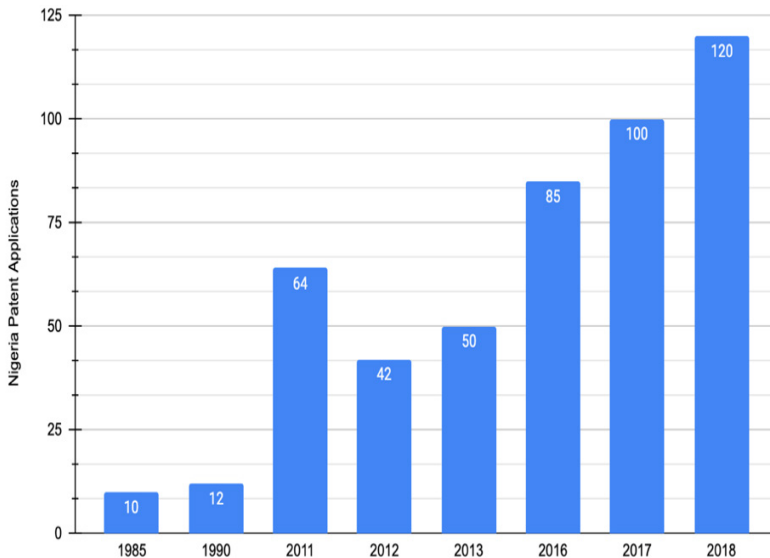


Figure 4 - Nigeria Patent Applications with Data from The World Intellectual Property Organisation

Branstetter, Fisman and Foley find that a rise in patent applications increases revenue and royalties as firms could license their technology for external use [44]. Evidence shows Nigeria can adopt this kind of technological learning by increasing R&D expenditure. This will encourage innovation and result in more patent applications and issues. Ukpabio, Adeyeye and Oluwatope find that product innovation and development in Nigeria directly correlate to firms' absorptive capacity [45]. This would improve the AC of firms and encourage technological learning. Increasing investment in R&D will boost indigenous innovation as it will provide local firms with the funding to develop and implement appropriate technology. This is important because even if Nigeria imports technology as part of its plan for technological learning, importing advanced foreign technology will not promote development if it is not appropriate [46].

In 2000, South Korea implemented the Technology Transfer Promotion Act. This legislation created incentives for technology commercialization by firms and research institutes. Technology transfer refers to transferring new technology from the creator to another user to earn a profit [47]. It is an essential element in a successful NIS. South Korea's experience with technology transfer offers a path that developing countries like Nigeria can adopt. Nigeria must implement measures to promote technology transfer between firms and institutes carrying out R&D and firms needing technology for growth.

As Nigerian firms benefit from increased investment in research and development, there will be potential for technology transfer and spillover benefits from foreign companies operating in the country. This can also provide an avenue for technological learning in Nigeria since foreign firms can bring in new technologies without concern for labour force skills. As mentioned, foreign firms in Nigeria have had to import labour which has impeded their willingness and ability to bring in new technologies. Such structural barriers prevent Nigerian firms from receiving the full benefits of technology transfer and any resultant spillovers from imported technology. On this matter, Saggi finds that increased foreign direct investment in indigenous firms can foster social and economic development by providing an opportunity to import more efficient technology [48].

One interesting element of South Korea's growth has been the presence and role of the *chaebol*. The *chaebol* are Korean family-owned empires that emerged as part of South Korea's economic development [49]. In South Korea, chaebols are business conglomerates with global reach. Those who run *Chaebols* represent the elite of South Korea whose power derives from their wealth. Samsung, Hyundai, and LG Group are some of the

most well-known international *chaebols*. The government of South Korea provided financial subsidies and policy assistance to these firms to encourage indigenous innovation and global growth. As a result, these firms began to work with foreign firms operating in South Korea to promote technology transfer. They have gone on to build global branches to earn revenue worldwide, and by 1997, R&D investment in South Korea was driven primarily by the chaebol [50]. This focus on supporting large domestic companies and encouraging investment in R&D has boosted technological learning in South Korea.

Over the last three decades, chaebols have driven growth in South Korea by diversifying into new product lines and developing new technologies [51]. Diversification reduces the likelihood that a firm will experience lower performance, so firms can adapt to avoid performance fluctuations [52]. Additionally, diversification allows for a concentration of capital in innovation which will drive economies of scale and build brand recognition. Several Nigerian firms can play a similar role in Nigeria's present development. Building businesses of this nature in Nigeria will encourage scale and scope economies and accumulated knowledge and experiences in many business fields. Firms like the Dangote Group, BUA and others have the potential to become globally dominant if they can channel the subsidies they receive from the government and promote indigenous innovation. A commitment to investing in research and development through these firms would increase absorptive capacity while upskilling their workforce. For Nigerian policymakers, there is room to learn from chaebol diversification and their dynamic capabilities.

Caveats

While developing countries like Nigeria can learn many lessons from South Korea, there are some caveats. In 1960, when the South Korean government began implementing plans to promote development, the chaebols were assigned the role of industrialization agents. Chaebols received several policy and budgetary tools to help them offer jobs to the populace while achieving increased profits. However, while this process helped achieve industrial deepening in South Korea, it also increased wealth and income inequality. Data from the Bank of Korea shows that South Korea's Gini Coefficient (an index used to measure income inequality) rose from 0.26 in 1990 to 0.31 in 2015. AMRO's 2018 Annual Consultation Report on Korea also found an increase in the income gap between corporations and households, signifying a growing concentration of income in corporations [53].

The policy of providing long-term subsidized loans to the chaebols led to these firms having high debt-equity ratios, partly leading to

the 1997 financial crisis in Asia. After the 1997 crisis, approximately 15 of the 30 existing chaebols had become insolvent. Those still in operation had to undergo extensive, high-cost restructuring funded by the South Korean taxpayer. This significantly impacted the broader economy as interest rates rose and stifled the growth of smaller firms unable to access government funding. While firms like Samsung and LG eventually returned to pre-crisis growth levels and became global brand names, this development strategy caused high market volatility and reduced trust in financial markets. Chaebols account for over half of South Korea's exports and help bring in most foreign capital. This makes them "too big to fail" in the eyes of the government and policymakers [54]. Nonetheless, critics of the Chaebols argue that they hinder the advancement of small and medium-sized businesses. While the South Korean government has made several attempts to restrain the power and influence of chaebols, these efforts have met with mixed success [55]. As such, the 1997 crisis and the wider socio-economic history of South Korea provides a clear lesson regarding the risks of state enmeshment with, and overreliance on, chaebols (and similarly structured entities) to Nigerian policymakers.

This speaks to a larger issue regarding the proper relationship between the state and private enterprise. Park notes that South Korea's development and experience with technological learning have been driven primarily by state influence [56]. This means that any issues with state bureaucracy will affect outcomes. The Hanbo Scandal, also known as Hanbo-Gate, is evidence of this—its legacy reduced trust in the South Korean government and its financial activities. Hanbo Steel was a chaebol that had received unfair preferential treatment from senior government officials who had been bribed [57]. This helped it grow to become South Korea's second-largest steelmaker [58]. Some pundits see this scandal as one of the causes of the 1997 financial crisis, which exposed some of the weaknesses and corruption in South Korea's development plans. Once exposed, Hanbo eventually went bankrupt, and thousands of South Korean employees lost their jobs. By 1998, international investors were leaving South Korea, and various politicians were convicted and later imprisoned [59]. This shows that while South Korea's technological learning provided astounding development and economic growth rates, it increased income inequality, contributed to the 1997 financial crisis, and led to political scandals. Developing countries like Nigeria must pay attention to these potential pitfalls. Nigeria's history of corruption makes it susceptible to the worst elements of political scandals, which could undermine confidence in the government and its plans for economic development. Therefore, policymakers must implement development policies to curb excesses alongside technological learning.

Technological learning provides a path to development by allowing developing countries to learn and assimilate novel foreign technologies, accelerating growth rates. However, for technological learning to be successful, the domestic workforce must be upskilled. Policymakers must also commit to improving the absorptive capacity of local firms. Upskilling the workforce will ensure indigenous innovation and make assimilating foreign technology easier. As a successful latecomer, South Korea has developed its economy and become a renowned region for innovation and economic progress. The South Korean government implemented several five-year technology plans to focus its learning and development policies; these plans helped train the workforce and improve firms' absorptive capacity. First, South Korea built successful national innovation systems (NIS) by supporting interaction among various actors, including firms, research institutes and individuals. The existing literature shows that a functioning NIS is needed to encourage development through technological learning. Second, institutes like the KAIS and KIST in South Korea provided an opportunity to upskill the workforce and ensure indigenous innovation. This created a bedrock of highly skilled domestic technological capability, making it easier to assimilate foreign technology. Third, South Korea improved the absorptive capacity of its firms by encouraging investment in research and development which led to an increase in patent applications. Finally, the government pushed to attract foreign direct investment to boost technology transfers.

Nigeria currently ranks poorly on global development metrics; there is an urgent need to catch up and reverse this trend. There are several lessons Nigeria can learn from South Korea's experience with technological learning. First, Nigeria can start by upskilling its workforce and ensuring high education and technical training. The Nigerian NIS should be rebuilt and structured to ensure efficiency and smooth interaction among various actors in the chain. Previous attempts have failed because of corruption and a lack of required skills. There is also a need to improve the absorptive capacity of Nigerian firms so that technology transfers with foreign firms looking to operate in Nigeria. For technological learning to succeed in Nigeria, the technology must combine domestic research and development with foreign advancements. By exploiting the lessons from South Korea's experience with technological learning, Nigeria can catch up and even leapfrog.

South Korea's path to development using technological learning has caused some issues despite the growth it has triggered. For example, the 1997 Asian financial crisis was partly caused by the rapid and unsustainable growth of several major South Korean

institutions that received government policy and financial assistance. There has also been a marked increase in income and wealth inequality in South Korea, with a growing concentration of wealth in corporations. Heavy state involvement in policy and funding has often meant that issues with state bureaucracy have an outsized influence on economic outcomes. There have been several corruption scandals which exposed corruption and resulted in an outflow of foreign investment. Therefore, as developing countries like Nigeria attempt to learn from South Korea's experience with technological learning, they must pay attention to the potential pitfalls of their development strategies.

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DOUBLE DOUTCH DISEASE: EMIGRATION AS A HUMAN RESOURCE CURSE ON THE SUDAN

James Morton

Abstract

Sudanese structural adjustment began in 1978, but no real devaluation or effective liberalisation was achieved. Declining exports and persistent inflation did not solely result from Sudan's lax fiscal policies, distorted markets, and structural weaknesses. Sudanese emigration to OPEC countries and the Dutch-disease effect of the emigrants' hard-currency remittances had a greater impact, one which was reinforced by an inherited service-sector bias to the Sudanese state. These factors rendered powerless the standard prescriptions of devaluation and market liberalisation. An extensive debate over those policies between the IMF, Sudanese economists, and others was irrelevant. Even if the government had shown greater capacity to implement a coherent policy of fiscal and economic reform, the loss of up to two-thirds of the skilled labour force and remittances—equivalent to 2% of GDP—would have nonetheless driven the Real Exchange Rate up and productivity in tradeable sectors down. A standard model of booming sector economics is used to develop a theory for this special form of Dutch Disease and the way the effects were compounded by its direct impact on the government. This model may bear lessons for other countries which have experienced mass labour emigration. Those lessons are political as well as economic. The hollowing out of Sudanese state capacities which began in the 1970s has ended, in 2024, with Sudan's collapse into civil war.

Brain Drain and Capital Flight

A close neighbour of Saudi Arabia and the Gulf nations, culturally as well as geographically, Sudan was uniquely exposed to those countries' sudden acquisition of wealth after the 1973 oil shock. Drawn by the economic prospects, Sudanese workers sought to migrate. For the Gulf states, Sudanese labourers were in demand due to their reputation as hard-working, skilled, pleasant, and Arabic-speaking Muslims. By 1986, it was estimated that two-thirds of Sudan's professional and skilled workforce was overseas, largely in the oil exporting states of the Arabian peninsula [1].

There have been various estimates of the total number of Sudanese nationals working abroad: 45,000 in 1979 up to 200,000 or even 500,000 by 1983. In the mid-1980s, 350,000 was a conservative estimate. Such figures indicate that, "Sudan's recorded and

unrecorded remittances together would have been sufficient to support three times the value of imports." [2].

These estimates raise numerous questions regarding the internal dynamics of the Sudanese economy. Why, if those vast sums were remitted, could Sudan not pay for its imports and why were import supplies so restricted? Why was the Sudanese pound under constant pressure? Why did inflation continue to run at high levels? Why did government revenues continue to decline? According to Brown, the answer lay in grossly distorted markets that allowed the extraction of rents which were then lost in capital flight. Sudan's balance of payment problems were not, therefore, the result of excess demand for imports, reflected in the current account, but of excess demand for foreign assets on the capital account. After the coup in 1985, it was estimated that some \$15 billion (USD) of capital had been exported from Sudan between 1978 and 1986: as much as a quarter of all capital exports from Sub-Saharan Africa. "The estimated unrecorded export of capital from Sudan in 1983/84 comes to \$2.6 billion, or more than twice the level of the country's net foreign borrowing in that year... In reality Sudan is a net exporter of capital" and "Sudan ceases to be a net debtor in that the estimated value of its privately held foreign assets far exceeds the recorded value of its publicly held foreign debts." [3]. The extraordinary nature of this conclusion bears emphasis: the biggest debtor of the international community in Africa, the country with the largest single outstanding debt to the IMF, was in fact a net exporter of capital.

After reviewing policy debates which took place at the time, this paper uses a standard Dutch Disease economy model to review what was happening to the Sudanese economy in the ten years after OPEC. It is argued that the government of Sudan was relatively powerless to resist the economic effects of emigration. This made the policy debate around devaluation and structural adjustment largely irrelevant. These are conclusions which may be applicable in other undeveloped economies facing the combined effects of mass emigration and large flows of remittances.

A Service Sector Bias

In 1976, the International Labor Organization (ILO) completed a comprehensive study of the Incentives for Resource Allocation in the Sudanese economy. At that time, its position was as follows:

- Exchange rate: £1 = \$2.87 (with a tax/subsidy rate of \$2.5 allowed since 1972 on all transactions except the export of cotton and gum arabic).
- Export duties between 5% to 9%, except meat, which had a 20% duty (i.e., eliminating the exchange 'subsidy').
- Sudanese Nationals Working Abroad (SNWA) allowed an

exchange premium on remittances of 60% (in addition to the 15% general subsidy).

- Import duties at 26 different rates from 5% to 600%. In 1970/71 the average was 43% CIF value. It was difficult to identify any clear policy distinction between the rates for raw materials/equipment, and for consumer goods.
- All imports licensed by both the Bank of Sudan and the Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning had a tendency to give priority to investment goods, thus choking the supply of inputs to existing capacity. They lacked a clear appraisal mechanism by which "firms making chronic losses [could] receive allocations at the expense of efficient firms"[4].
- A Nil-Value licensing scheme for imports by SNWA was suspended in 1976 due to "abuse" (only to later return).
- Three major export crops, cotton, gum arabic and oilseeds, were controlled by monopoly marketing corporations.
- Domestic prices of manufactures were controlled ex-factory by the Ministry of Industry on a cost-plus basis. As the producers supplied the cost figures, this proved a procedure with "serious limitations," but ex-factory price control was relatively effective.
- Minimum crop prices set by the Ministry of Finance as well as into-mill prices for the import substitutes of wheat and sugarcane.
- Retail price controls on 20 odd consumer items which were "generally ineffective" except where the government also controlled supply (e.g., sugar).
- Trade profits were also controlled, ineffectively, at rates between 2% to 25%.
- By the end of 1973, 36 industrial products were protected by outright import bans, alongside six by quota.
- Industrial enterprises were eligible for tax holidays, cheap utilities and infrastructure, and duty-free imports of machinery, spares, and raw material. However, they were subject to licence from the Advisory Committee for Industrial Development where "decisions are of an ad-hoc nature and the process does not act as a screen based on considerations of social profitability" [5].

It was estimated that this tax/subsidy regime yielded a pronounced anti-export bias, in particular with respect to agricultural exports, of between 35% and 40%. Bias against exports and agriculture was not, however, the critical dimension. Sudanese industry was performing little better than agriculture, if at all. The tendency to allocate foreign exchange to yet more investment, persistent utility and infrastructure breakdowns, ex-factory price controls and licensing restrictions all eroded the apparent incentives. Instead, the commercial sector benefitted. "Weak control of wholesale and

retail prices has not only left the commercial sector with excessive profits but by fostering the illusion of control distracted attention away from the rich premia being earned in trade" [6].

One conclusion argued that devaluation would not reduce the anti-export bias and that it would be "no substitute for fiscal reform." The other key conclusion concerned management, suggesting that Sudan's policy structure was not so much incorrect unto itself as ineptly run. To be successful, the existing system required "a well elaborated plan, a pervasive and rapid information-monitoring system and a coordinated decision-making process. None of these conditions is met to any significant degree by the present administrative structure in the Sudan"[7]. Therefore, the primary case for market liberalisation rested on the need to find policies that were within the state's administrative capacity to implement.

The ILO's perceptive analysis does not appear to have been noted in the debate—two years later—on the first IMF package of adjustment reforms. Nevertheless, Sudanese academics sceptical of the IMF package took a similar view. "The Sudanese economy, despite the distortions that characterise it, is not suffering from a fundamental disequilibrium as the IMF/IBRD proposals purport to show. The Sudanese economy, we believe, is rather suffering from a crisis of economic management" [8]. For this reason, the government's own Consultative Panel to the Minister of Finance, Planning and National Economy recommended that cotton taxes should be reduced, and that government expenditures, especially wages and salaries in parastatals, should be cut. Instead of devaluation, import duties should be raised to allow a measure of selectivity. Lastly and most surprisingly of all, development expenditure should be cut as "there are already clear signs that the rate at which new development projects are contracted and executed is by far greater than the economy can absorb"[9].

The Supply Side Case for Devaluation

It is difficult to see anything in this rather harsh self-analysis with which the IMF could disagree, apart from the rejection of devaluation. Indeed, the IMF's case for devaluation was based on the argument that the distortions of the Sudanese economy meant that neither exports or imports were likely to respond as needed to changes in the exchange rate. This reflected a view that the standard Purchasing Power Parity case for devaluation as a response to current account deficits was not valid for developing countries. In their case, public sector dominance of productive sectors, a range of market failures, and dependence on a limited basket of agricultural export commodities meant that "exchange reform must be tailored specifically to the cost structure of the major export and import substitutes, to shift resources toward

traded goods, and to foster structural change." In short, the IMF agreed that Sudan's problem was essentially one of economic management. In their view, however, devaluation would provide part of the solution: "whereby the exchange rate in conjunction with a number of corrective measures applied to the price and cost distortions becomes a major instrument of export promotion and structural change" [10].

It is possible that this argument was partly aimed at an internal IMF audience. It served to justify the fund's continued involvement in Sudan and, crucially, further balance of payments support. Not coincidentally, it also supported the case for continued development lending by the IMF's sister organisation, the World Bank. Where Sudanese economists saw the country as being at the limit of its absorptive capacity, bank lending grew rapidly through the late 1970s and early 1980s. Perhaps because it was the only real point of disagreement, the subsequent debate revolved almost entirely around the question of devaluation and the IMF's Supply Framework for Exchange Rate Determination. This argued that a rate should be set which would ensure that the major Sudanese export crops were competitive. Central to the analysis was a judgement that policy distortions meant resources were being misallocated to crops in which Sudan did not have a comparative advantage. The IMF case was based on estimates of the comparative advantage of Sudan's major agricultural crops. Each crop's International Value Added (V) was calculated. This paper has simplified the IMF paper's original formula, removing the unnecessary and confusing complication of converting International Value Added to £s and then converting back to \$, and the new formula is as follows:

$$V = (P_x X - P_m T)$$

Where:

- X = Exportable Output
- P_x = World Price of Output
- T = Imported Input
- P_m = Imported Input prices

The following formula was then used to estimate a coefficient of competitiveness (C). This calculated the return in International Value Added (\$) per unit of Domestic Input (£s) as follows:

$$C = V/P_d.D$$

Where:

- D = Domestic Inputs
- P_d = Domestic Input Prices

	1972/73	1976/77
	C	C
Cotton Long Staple	3.25	2.69
Medium Staple	2.75	2.22
Sugar	3.95	2.57
Groundnut	1.92	2.46
Wheat	1.05	1.10
Groundnut-Rainfed	-	3.22
Sesame	-	2.68
Sorghum	-	2.08

In essence, C represented the exchange rate at which each crop would be competitive on international markets. On that basis, the IMF argued in 1978 that a devaluation from \$2.5/£s to \$2.0/£s was needed to put the exchange rate "at the margin of competitiveness of medium staple cotton and rainfed sorghum" [11].

This analysis drew substantial criticism. First, it was pointed out that the drop in the coefficient of competitiveness between 1972 and 1976 was the result of falling productivity, not any change in the relative value of the Sudanese pound. At 1972 productivity, C was little changed in 1976. Second, the coefficient is a relative indicator. If the figure for rainfed sorghum is low, this may merely suggest that resources should switch out of that crop, not that the exchange rate should be adjusted to match it [12]. There was nothing to indicate that rainfed sorghum was the truly marginal enterprise. A much larger devaluation might have made even the industrial sector competitive. Would that have been justified?

Despite this, the IMF prevailed and the exchange rate was duly cut in May 1979. A further criticism was that the impact of devaluation on C was not unambiguous. It would depend on three factors: the price elasticity of supply of exportables; the extent to which the devaluation would be "passed through" to producer prices, and the inflationary effect on domestic prices (*Pd*). Econometric analysis of four major export crops between 1969 and 1980 showed that "a combination of a low elasticity of supply and a high elasticity of foreign and domestic prices to exchange rate devaluation leads to a loss of foreign exchange earnings per unit of domestic input" [13].

Hussain and Thirlwall's analysis is also open to criticism. They use quarterly data when the crops concerned are annual. Quarterly price movements are unlikely to be a strong determinant of output. They use Nashishibi's figures which show imported inputs for groundnuts and sesame that are equal to or higher—as a percentage of output value—than for cotton. This seems unlikely for rainfed crops. The elasticities of supply that the model estimates are low: 0.5 or less and in one case negative. This may

be compared with the real (i.e., corrected for inflation) price elasticities estimated for rural producer markets during the 1970s and 1980s of 0.64 for groundnuts and 3.22 for gum Arabic [14]. These were estimated from annual data representative of rural market prices and hence closer to the market prices upon which producers based their decisions.

Hussain and Thirwall's conclusion was that Sudan was altogether a typical "rigid country" dependent on agricultural exports and on imported intermediate inputs, and correspondingly unresponsive to devaluation. Other authors have suggested that for smallholder producers, inefficient markets, and poor transport infrastructure are particular factors in this rigidity. Evidence has been presented that trader, processor, and exporter margins in the oilseed sector increased over the period 1962 to 1979 [15]. Once again the data is not without its weaknesses. It could be argued that 1979 was too early to assess the impact of the major devaluation and no account is taken of possible increases in the costs faced by the traders.

An Alternative Model of Events

For all the doubts, the fact that IMF inspired devaluations failed to stimulate exports and had minimal impact on the real exchange rate (RER) appeared to support the argument that the Sudanese economy was rigid. Figure 1 charts the RER between independence and 1984 (a fall in the graph marks an appreciation in the real exchange rate, and vice versa). After appreciating quite sharply after independence, the RER fell back again during the early 1960s and was then relatively stable up to 1973. At that point, the RER fell sharply (i.e., appreciate), a trend which was barely slowed by devaluations in 1976 and 1979, and only partially and temporarily reversed by much larger devaluations in 1981 and 1982.

Whether or not the Sudanese economy was structurally rigid, there were two other more probable causes for the minimal real impact of devaluation. One was weak fiscal control and consequent inflation driven by government borrowing from the banking system. There is no doubt that fiscal control was very weak indeed [16]. Critics of the IMF package on this flank argued this was inevitable. Government would find it impossible to reduce its commitments in real terms. With its tax revenue both lagged in time and relatively inelastic to income, the devaluation would feed directly into the government deficit and thence into inflation [17]. The way government expenditure and deficits ballooned in the adjustment era supports this argument very strongly [18].

The second more probable cause was emigration. This outstanding characteristic of the Sudanese economy in the 1970s received little attention in policy discussions. As the figures quoted at the

outset show, migration to the booming Gulf nations rapidly came to dominate the national economy. The period covered by the devaluation debate coincided almost exactly with the first impact of that boom; as did the rapid appreciation of the RER. In the four years between 1973/4 and 1976/7 official remittances rose seven times to \$172 million, equivalent to 2.86% of GDP. In the mid 1980s they were to peak at over 5% of GDP. It is estimated that remittances through unofficial channels were four times higher, giving total remittances in 1976/7 of \$757 million [19].

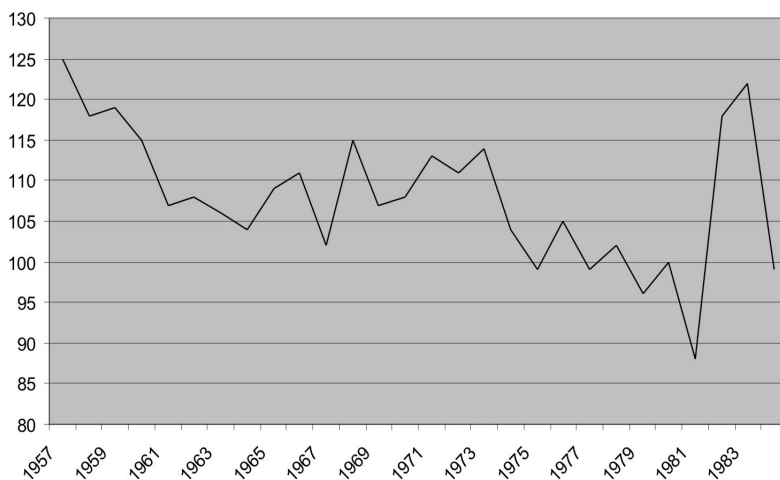


Figure 1: Sudan Real Exchange Rate (RER) (Macedo & Branson, 1987, redrawn)

One justification for devaluation was that it would bring the large underground flows of remittances to the surface and that migrants would be encouraged to repatriate their earnings rather than hold them overseas. What was not considered was the impact devaluation would have on domestic wage levels and on the "migrant wage", (i.e., the incentive to migrate, and hence on the numbers of migrants). If there was any export commodity for which devaluation was likely to increase competitiveness, it was labour, if only because the cost of imported inputs is nil. Time series data on migration is scarce and it is impossible to analyse these effects statistically, but the probability must be that any real devaluation would have encouraged migration and, by raising domestic wages, directly affected export crop production. But there was no real devaluation. The twin inflationary pressures of labour emigration and remittances overpowered any changes in the nominal exchange rate. It is possible to develop a theoretical analysis of the impact of Sudanese emigration using a model which has become standard in the literature on Dutch Disease. A re-working of some of the IMF's and other data even allows a simple, non-statistical test of the model's predictions. Dutch Disease, or

booming sector economics analyses the impact of a sudden shift in an economy's resource endowment; as in the classic Dutch case where the discovery of natural gas led to an appreciation in the real exchange rate and a decline in manufacturing. The following summarises the synthesis presented by Corden [20].

The economy consists of three sectors: a Booming Tradeable Sector (B), a Lagging Tradeable Sector (L) and the Non-Tradeable Sector (N). Whether through the discovery of natural resources or a sudden increase in prices or productivity, a boom in B raises factor incomes in that sector causing two things to happen:

- The Spending Effect: increased B incomes spent on non-tradeable goods raises the price of N relative to tradeable goods (P_n), (i.e., the real exchange rate). This will also draw resources out of L and into N.
- The Resource Movement Effect: the boom in B draws in labour from L. This creates direct de-industrialisation. B also attracts labour from N, reinforcing the Spending Effect and further raising the price of non-tradeables. The increase in P_n means that L also loses labour to N creating indirect de-industrialisation. In non-industrial countries, agriculture may be the lagging sector, with de-agriculturalisation, the equivalent of de-industrialisation.

The Spending and Resource Movement Effects both reduce the economic rent on any factors specific to L and raise wages relative to that sector's output. What happens in the non-tradeable sector N will depend; in the classic Dutch Disease case of a natural resource boom, B can be near enough to an 'enclave sector' with limited links to domestic factor markets. Here, the Spending Effect will dominate and production and factor incomes in N must rise. However, if B is not an enclave and it attracts domestic factors, from N as well as from L, production of non-tradeables and factor incomes in N may fall. While there is usually only one booming sector, the lagging sector L comprises the range of different industries producing exportable and importable goods. The effect on each industry will depend on its exposure to domestic demand, and on its capital and labour intensity relative to other L industries.

In the case of Sudan, emigration and the flow of remittances constitute the booming sector, B. It is noted that the Dutch Disease literature considers the case of immigration into a booming sector, but not the special case of emigration as a standalone booming sector [21]. Separately, agriculture, as the main source of Sudan's exports and import substitutes, constitutes the principal lagging sector L. Although it only receives a passing mention in the IMF's text, the impact of emigration can be clearly seen in its data. Table 1 below analyses how the distribution of returns from long staple cotton production shifted between 1972 and 1976. Reduced

yields were more than offset by a near doubling in the world price. However the lion's share of the 60% increase in total return was captured by labour, including the Gezira tenant's share as part of the wage, and by non-traded inputs: trade margins, storage and handling. Government's share, in the form of charges for land, water and administration and the Gezira scheme profits, fell sharply. To the extent that it reflected reduced inputs and labour effort by the tenants, the reduction in yield was also attributable to an increased labour wage.

These changes are entirely consistent with the Dutch Disease model's predictions of what happens in a lagging sector L. Rents to sector specific factors - land and water charges plus excess profits - fall sharply. Wages, in the form of the labour and tenant shares, go up equally sharply. The largest percentage rise of all is in the share going to non-tradeables. The fall in the IMF's index of competitiveness, C, as the result of an increase in the price of domestic inputs, Pd, is also consistent. The IMF's Pd is equivalent to Pn in the Dutch Disease model.

Table 1: Returns to long staple cotton production

	1972/3		1976/7		% Change
World Price - \$ / <u>mt</u>	341		661		+ 93.8
Yield - kg/feddan	681		568		-16.6
Total Return <u>£s</u> / <u>Fd</u>	93.0		150.2		+ 61.5
Distribution of Returns					% Change
	<u>£s</u>	%	<u>£s</u>	%	
Traded Inputs	22.4	24.1	35.1	23.4	- 2.9
<u>Non Tradeable</u> Inputs	16.4	17.6	31.4	20.9	+ 91.4
Labour	15.2	16.3	37.6	25.0	
Tenant	6.5	7.0	15	10.0	
Sub Total	21.7	23.3	52.6	35.0	+ 50.2
<u>Ld</u> Water, <u>Mgt</u> , Admin	16.1	17.3	23	15.3	- 11.6
Total	76.6	82.4	142.1	94.6	
Excess Profit	16.4		8.1		- 50.6

Source: Calculated from data in Nashishibi, 1980

A comparison between irrigated cotton and rainfed groundnuts illustrates how Dutch Disease effects vary between different lagging sector industries. With Sudan's weak textile industry there was little scope for import substitution in cotton. Almost the entire crop was exported, contributing up to two thirds of total exports. With some 20% of the total, groundnut exports came second only to cotton. However, this crop was also an import substitute. Cooking oil is a major item in the Sudanese household budget, and the oil milling industry is long-established. At independence,

it contributed over a third of all industrial production [22]. Predominantly a smallholder rainfed crop produced without fertiliser, pesticides or mechanisation, emigration was much less of an option for groundnut farmers whose traditional skills were of little value in the OPEC economies. For all these reasons, the groundnut industry withstood the impact of Dutch Disease, at least initially. Figure 2, shows how groundnut exports grew rapidly through the late 1970s. This was followed by a fall in the export of unprocessed nuts offset by rising exports of oilseed cake.

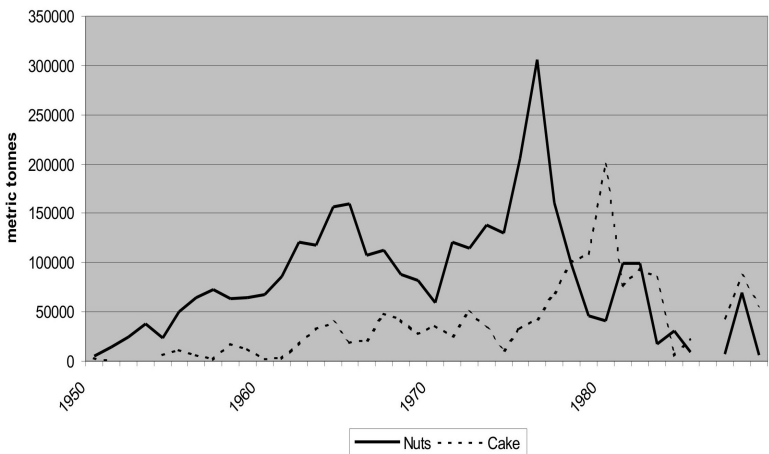


Figure 2: Sudan Groundnut exports (Morton, 1994, redrawn)

More data is needed to be certain but this pattern is consistent with a shift from the export of raw nuts to import substitution of cooking oil; with rising oilseed cake exports as a byproduct of that shift. In terms of the Dutch Disease model, increased demand for wage goods like cooking oil is driven by the Spending Effect. Exposure to that demand protects industries in the lagging sector L from de-industrialisation; provided those industries are competitive at import parity prices.

Government as a Lagging Sector

A boom in a natural resource sector like oil or gas is the most well-known form of Dutch Disease. In this case, the booming sector is largely an enclave, isolated from domestic markets, and the impact on government is unambiguous. Although it will be exposed to higher costs through the Spending Effect, its ability to extract a large share of the natural resource rent more than compensates. The budget deficit is reduced, in most cases substantially. In the non-enclave case things are very different. Government is exposed to the Resource Movement Effect as well as the Spending Effect. At the same time, its ability to extract rents from the booming sector is likely to be much lower. Emigration, as in the case

considered here, is the very opposite of an enclave. In effect, there is a one-to-one link between the booming sector and domestic labour markets. The implications can best be considered by adding a Government Sector, G, to the standard model described above. Although public services are, by their nature, non-tradeable, the revenue side of the Government account is exposed to all sectors, tradeable as well as non-tradeable.

G's revenues have two sources: economic rents in all three sectors, B, L and N; and factor incomes. Revenue can be raised from the latter in one of three ways: income, consumption, and trade taxes. The Sudanese case can be summed up in terms of the two sides within the budget as follows:

- Expenditure: As the main employer of professional and skilled labour, the Sudanese government was uniquely exposed to the Resource Movement Effect: the movement of labour from N to B. Much of government expenditure, and 100% of transfer payments was subject to the Spending Effect, the increase in non-tradeable prices, P_n .
- Revenue: There was no direct way in which the government of Sudan could extract rents from the B sector, emigration. At the same time, it was directly exposed to the fall in economic rents on public enterprises in the lagging sector L and to lower tax revenues on private rents in L, and potentially in N as well. To balance that, the government had the potential to realise greater tax income from higher wages and from increased consumption financed from remittances. Its ability to maintain a budget balance would largely depend on how successfully it realised this potential.

Figure 3 below shows that the government failed to achieve that balance. Commentators have often attribute this to excessive development spending, financed by OPEC countries and the World Bank. This was not really the case. By 1975/6, the state had lost control of its current expenditures. These absorbed substantially more than the state's total revenue. This increase in current expenditures can be seen as the inevitable result of the pressure the government was under from both Spending and Resource Movement Effects.

The only realistic option was to raise revenues to match the rise in costs. The structure of Government revenues would make that very difficult to achieve. At independence, Sudan inherited three sources of revenue. Import taxes and non-tax revenues, principally profits on the major irrigation schemes, each contributed 40%. The remaining 20% came from export taxes. By 1973/4, the state had added excise and direct income taxes which only contributed 26% of the total. It still depended on import taxes and non-tax revenues for 60% [23].

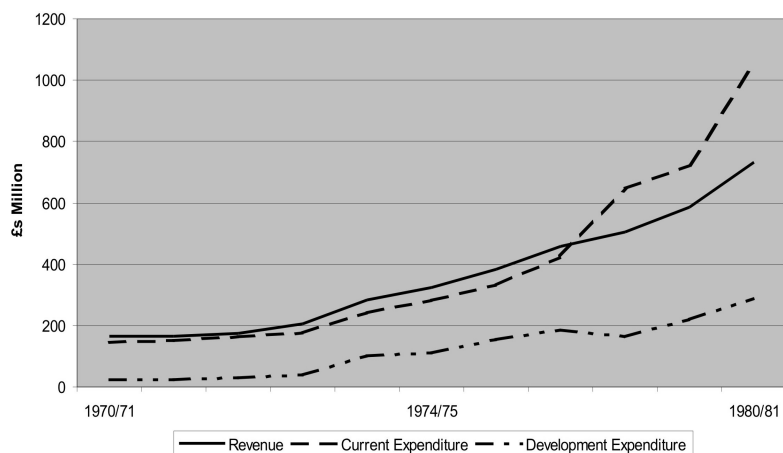


Figure 3: Sudanese Government budget allocation (Morton, 1994, redrawn)

Non-tax revenues, in the form of profits on state owned enterprise, are largely equivalent to economic rents in the lagging sector L, rents which the Dutch Disease model predicts will fall; as is confirmed in the analysis of the returns to long staple cotton (Table 1). Although not without support, the Numeiri regime of the 1970s lacked the legitimacy needed to successfully increase direct income and consumption taxes [24]. Having lost a large proportion of its most capable staff, its capacity to implement such a change was also constrained. With taxes on exports from the lagging agriculture sector falling, maximising revenues from import tariffs was the only remaining option. The late 1970s and the 1980s were dominated by the state's struggle to achieve this. That struggle was played out in a parallel foreign sector in the form of "mis-invoicing and smuggling of exports and imports, and diversion of remittances from Sudanese nationals working abroad to the black market for foreign exchange." At its peak in 1984, it is estimated that 'self-financed imports' accounted for 77% of total imports while remittances through legal channels are estimated to be around 23% of total remittances.

Of course, data on a parallel economy is inevitably uncertain and requires caution [25]. As an example, Badawi's estimate of remittances outside official channels between 1973 and 1989 seems to be based on a single migrant household survey. The implicit assumption, that the ratio of official to total remittances never varied, seems implausible. Regardless, with self-financed imports not subject to import tariffs, the state was only able to realise a quarter of potential revenue created by emigration. Starting in 1979, the next ten years saw a series of attempts to unify the regulated and parallel economies by liberalising foreign

trade and foreign exchange markets. For much of the period, self-financed imports were legal and dealers were licenced to trade in currency. Although the volume of outright smuggling may have fallen, these reforms had little impact on a black market foreign exchange premium of between 50% and 100%. At the end of the period these policies were abandoned and total import bans and exchange controls were re-imposed [26].

Analysts at the time attributed the failure of the attempt to unify the parallel and regulated economies to the government's failure to control spending and the inflation which lay behind the growing balance of payments deficit. "With unsustainable macroeconomic policies, the (liberalisation) experiment has widely exposed the credibility problem of the government, thus rekindling expectation and widening the parallel market" [27]. An alternative view saw the parallel economy as a response to the state's attempts to control the balance of payments deficit by raising tariffs. It was argued that a better way to control the deficit would have been to stabilise the real exchange rate by floating the nominal rate. This would have removed any incentive to self-financed imports and black market currency dealing [28]. The analyses may have reflected the World Bank and IMF's strategies to re-think structural adjustment in the face of its failure, not just in Sudan but in other African countries as well. They endeavoured to develop new adjustment principles by testing complex econometric models on generally weak data. Nevertheless, they maintained the basic recommendations of structural adjustment: reduce the budget deficit, devalue, and liberalise trade. In doing so, they failed to address the actual dynamics within Sudan. While recognising the role remittances played in Sudan's parallel economy, they overlooked the impact emigration and remittances would have on the real economy and on the government's fiscal resources and capacity to execute. It was unrealistic to recommend a policy of retrenchment to a government whose weak legitimacy was now compounded by a loss of revenues and human resources.

Given the state's dependence on revenues from import and export taxes, trade liberalisation was equally unrealistic. It was also the wrong policy. A combination of tariffs and export subsidies is equivalent to a devaluation. Sudan had a framework for trade taxation already in place and an effort to reform the tariff structure would have been more effective than the adjustment combination of devaluation and trade liberalisation. With the critical difference that this policy would have raised Government revenues where liberalisation reduced them. It would, therefore, have formed part of a credible macroeconomic strategy, a strategy which addressed the balance of payments and the budget deficits at the same time. In this respect, the devaluation – liberalisation combination was not a coherent policy for Sudan. Implementing such a reform

would not have been easy. The sheer size of Sudan's parallel economy was a measure of the government's inability to enforce its trade policy. Branson and Macedo argue that black market premia and the volume of smuggling are principally a function of tariff rates: "escalation of trade barriers generates a rising black market premium and offers increasing incentives to smuggling, already a pervasive problem in the African countries" [29]. This underscores the driving factors of inefficiency, rent seeking, and weak enforcement. Even so, the failure of the different attempts at liberalisation between 1979 and 1989 suggest the alternative could hardly have been worse.

Conclusion

Between 1973 and 1989, Sudan was exposed to a double economic shock combining the full Resource Movement and Spending Effects of Dutch Disease. The contrast is with the classic Dutch case in which the booming natural gas sector was to a large extent an enclave and the major economic impact came through the Spending Effect. The Sudanese case is, therefore, worthy of the title Double Dutch Disease. To fully comprehend its impact it is necessary to extend standard Dutch Disease models to cover the effect on government, DOIing this identifies a major weakness in the macroeconomic strategies advocated by the IMF and World Bank and summed up as structural adjustment. If there was an incompatibility in the state's macroeconomic management, it was at least partly because the devaluation and liberalisation combination it was being urged to adopt was itself incompatible. By continuing lending for development projects and balance of payments support and by promoting policies to realise unobtainable efficiencies in public services, without addressing the revenue side of the equation, it can be suggested that such institutions extended or exacerbated the Dutch Disease effects.

In the decades since 1970 and through into the 21st century, Sudan has experienced great political and economic turbulence. These are manifested most clearly in outright civil war in Darfur and South Sudan. Those difficulties have, in major part, reflected the weakness of the Sudanese state. Figure 3 graphs the government's loss of control over its expenditure. What it cannot do is show the decline in the volume and quality of the public services delivered. Government's resort to arming militias to combat conflict is the most extreme measure of its inability to devise and implement coherent and sustainable policies. That failure has extended across most aspects of public service and the provision of public goods. Many of Sudan's problems pre-date OPEC. For example, the government's dependence on patronage to bolster its weak legitimacy goes back to the colonial era. Nevertheless, the way the Dutch Disease effects of mass emigration hit the state reinforced

all its worst features and set the pattern for much of what followed. The analytic framework suggested in this paper may be applicable more broadly. Sudan in the 1970s and 1980s was an extreme case. Other countries such as Bangladesh, Nepal, and Central America n states have experienced similar periods of mass emigration.

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24. The colonial state set this pattern. Administrative unease regarding its lack of legitimacy led it to abandon most forms of direct taxation in the interwar period.
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JUSTIFYING THE UNJUSTIFIABLE: WHY COLD WAR AMERICAN INTERVENTIONISM ALWAYS HAD A STRONG ETHICAL DIMENSION

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Abstract

This article challenges the assumption that Cold War American interventionism was inherently immoral. To do so, it explores the marriage between missionary American exceptionalism and the necessities of realist foreign policymaking, to argue that we can identify the moral dimensions of American interventionism not in deontological, but in consequentialist terms. This article introduces its own theoretical framework to grasp the inherent ethical side of Cold War US foreign policymaking, through which it explores the influence of American Exceptionalism in the conceptualization of American foreign policy in the context of the Cold War, along with its superpower competition with the Soviet Union and world communism more broadly. The fundamental principle that this article proposes is that Cold War American administrations operated with a consequentialist mindset, in which containing and defeating communism was not only a strategic and geopolitical interest in realist terms, but also a moral imperative, in existential ones. This only means that the injustices committed in interventions such as in Chile or in Vietnam, were otherwise considered not only as strategically indispensable, but also as the right thing to do because of the moral purpose that they served.

Introduction

The study of international ethics can often seem like an academic minefield. Morality is next to impossible to define, but as universal moral axioms are subconsciously accepted, they are often applied to the study of state behaviour on the international level. In that sense, many of America's interventions during the Cold War—such as the overthrow of Salvador Allende in Chile, or that of Mohammad Mosaddegh in Iran—are considered *de facto* immoral. Many realists could argue that such interventionist endeavours may have been immoral, but otherwise strategically essential, while liberal internationalists may refer to them to point out the inherently immoral character of US foreign policymaking. However, this article suggests that those Cold War interventions which are widely seen as immoral, had a strong ethical dimension, exactly because of the impact that missionary American exceptionalism had in Cold War foreign policymaking, and the establishment of a consequential-

ist set of ethics, instead of a deontological one. In other words, Washington's existential urgency to contain communism was always considered among its highest moral purposes, along with its belief that the ends that could justify the means. American exceptionalism has defined American political development, and is the longest ideological war that the US has ever fought. Memorably conceptualized by Alexis de Tocqueville, its fundamental premise is that America is intrinsically and culturally different, compared to other nations, mainly due to its socio-political value system [1]. Glenn Hastedt has explored the influence of exceptionalism on American foreign policy and proposes four axioms through which American exceptionalism has assigned a *telos* to American foreign policymaking: first, that America is God's "chosen nation", second, that America's mission is to transform the world in its sociopolitical image, third, that America's mission is to fight "evil" on the international level and, fourth, that "evil" must be "decisively and permanently defeated"[2]. Hastedt concludes that these axioms are valid in both "isolationist" and "internationalist" policymaking; but Cold War American interventionism has always had an internationalist flair to it. Above all, however, Cold War American interventionism has always had a mission, which stemmed from the premises of missionary American exceptionalism: to protect liberal democracy; or, in other words, to contain communism.

Missionary Exceptionalism and Wilson's prophecy

Woodrow Wilson's missionary vision emphasized particularly the long-term influence that the US should have on the international level. Wilsonianism was more influential than Wilson himself. Wilsonianism recognized two fundamental elements within international relations: first, that democratic nations tend to value and preserve peace and, second, that they rarely engage in aggressive acts against each other [3]. There is a wide consensus on how Wilsonian internationalism and missionary American exceptionalism informed the ideological foundations of the post-WWII liberal world order – influencing America's internationalist foreign policy in the second half of the century [4]. Likewise, Roosevelt's post-WWII plans for European restoration and the promotion of liberal democracy were Wilsonian in spirit [5]. Even NATO, despite being envisioned as a military alliance—which it remains to this day—has liberal founding principles "at heart" exactly because post-WWII America had both the "power and the vision" to develop the liberal world order for which Wilson had first advocated [6].

That is why within the study of international relations, Wilsonianism has become a synonym for liberal internationalism. Tony Smith argues that Wilson, guided by his firm belief in America's mission to lead the post-WWI international order, interpreted American interests as parallel to European ones. Smith also af-

firms that Franklin Roosevelt's universalist "Four Freedoms" as expressed amidst WWII, as well as his signing of the Atlantic Charter along with Winston Churchill, were of Wilsonian origins [7]. Geir Lundestad elaborates that America's belief that its exceptional principles were "in the interests of the whole world" found a practical application, as after WWII, America "would participate in an entirely different way than previously" in world affairs [8]. And as Daniel Deudney and Jeffrey Meisner argue, the shift in Americans' understanding of their country's duty to actively promote liberal principles placed the concept of "constitutional democracy" at the core of American foreign policymaking [9]. Missionary exceptionalism became thus the *modus operandi* of foreign policymaking.

Nikolas Gvosdev, Jessica Blankshain, and David Cooper provide a coherent explanation of how American exceptionalism has defined American policymaking in psychodynamic terms. They argue that "Americans as a people take this exceptionalism to heart as a core defining national trait" adding that exceptionalism is a "pervasive belief within the American psyche that influences how Americans think about the role of their country in ways that differ." They also explore how exceptionalism has informed conflicting and contradictory foreign policy approaches, from the isolationist Monroe and Trump doctrines to Kennedy's and Reagan's highly interventionist ones, arguing that because of exceptionalism's influence, the US can never espouse a truly "realpolitik" foreign policy [10].

In other words, Gvosdev, Blankshain, and Cooper showcase how American exceptionalism and American foreign policy are intertwined by definition. In reality, it does not matter if the US is exceptional or not, but whether Americans believe it to be, and whether this means that Washington indeed has a mission to carry out in its foreign policy. The premise within this worldview is that exceptionalism's appeal and influence depend on Americans' deep belief that their nation is unique [11]; a belief may be unfalsifiable, but that does not mean that it cannot have practical implications, as is the case with religion. Through this lens, America's promotion of freedom, democracy, and liberal principles has informed its foreign policy not just as an "idealist preoccupation" but as a "national security orientation" as well. Missionary American exceptionalism, therefore, provides a "huge domestic constituency for democracy promotion" [12] that is bipartisan and consistently relevant in foreign policymaking. In other words, exceptionalism does not presuppose a specific policy mix but informs instead both Republican and Democratic administrations' foreign policies. In retrospect, the shift that Wilsonian missionary exceptionalism brought in American foreign policymaking could not have been more profound. Henry Kissinger, one of the most prominent realist foreign policy thinkers and practitioners, admits that

"some of the finest acts of twentieth-century diplomacy had their roots in the idealism of Woodrow Wilson: the Marshall Plan, the brave commitment to containing communism, defence of the freedom of Western Europe, and even the ill-fated League of Nations and its later incarnation, the United Nations" [13].

Kissinger elaborates that "the genius of Woodrow Wilson has been its ability to harness American idealism in the service of great foreign policy undertakings" [14].

Essentially, the Wilsonian-led shift from exemplary to missionary exceptionalism provided American foreign policymakers with an axis to reshape the post-WWII international order that even a staunch realist like Kissinger acknowledges. But Kissinger's admission is informed by the reality that Cold War American foreign policymaking merged two crucial dynamics into one: American exceptionalism and realism. From the outset of the geopolitical clash with the USSR, the US's emphasis on promoting the values that had defined its political development since the 18th century merged with its prioritization to maintain its national security—and by extension its sphere of influence. As Andrew Preston suggests, the glue that bound this merger together was the fear that world communism instilled in American foreign policymakers, which defined the attitude of Cold War administrations towards the communist world [15]. This article does not suggest that the existential foe of the US was the USSR simply due to being a rival superpower, but instead that the USSR was its main foe precisely because it promoted communism as an alternative value system. In other words, this article suggests that the main goal of Cold War American foreign policymaking was the containment of communism, which largely coincided with the containment of the USSR, especially during the immediate post-WWII era.

Cold War interventionism and the realist presupposition

Realism focuses on the state as a level of analysis. Since the ancient city-states, the concept of balance of power – the settings in which two states balance each other's power so that neither can become dominant and rise as a hegemon [16] —has become fundamental in understanding international conflict [17]. Thucydides is considered the father of realism, while his account of the Peloponnesian War between democratic Athens and authoritarian Sparta highlighted how the two city-states' opposing value systems defined their conflict [18]. Because of this feature, Thucydides' work became popular during the Cold War, as the clash between the US and the USSR, two great powers with radically different value systems, mirrored the one between Athens and Sparta [19]. In modern times, Nicolo Machiavelli's *The Prince* is considered a landmark

realist work (in philosophical terms); interestingly, American foreign policy has often been defined as "Machiavellian" [20] as the Prince emphasizes how sheer power can both inspire fear in enemies and admiration in allies [21]. Of course, it is widely known that very term "Machiavellian" holds a predominantly negative connotation and is associated with immorality.

Several prominent realists have explored the notion of morality within realism. In his *Twenty Years Crisis*, a landmark work, Edward Carr considers liberal internationalism utopian, impractical, naïve, and inapplicable, using the Wilsonian-inspired League of Nations' collapse to support his case. Carr then argues that realism can far better express international relations within international anarchy because of its thorough consideration of power and state competition [22]. Despite his emphasis on these elements, Carr maintains that ethics should not be overlooked, and that power should be buttressed by morality. However, Carr emphasizes that international moral standards can only be a product of hegemonic power. Adopting a Hobbesian narrative, Carr concludes that morality can be prioritized only when a nation achieves a hegemonic status and the subsequent consent of others.

Reinhold Niebuhr's *Moral Man and Immoral Society: A Study in Ethics and Politics* is another essential present-day realist work. Like Carr, Niebuhr critiques the League of Nations' inefficiency to argue that the formation of an international community, while well-intentioned, is not sufficient to restrict rogue nations. Similarly to Carr, Niebuhr does not discredit the significance of morality in international politics, but nonetheless believes that international treaties and covenants are too simplistic and superficial to regulate state behaviour within international anarchy. Niebuhr based his analysis on his perception of human nature, arguing that personal interests cannot but generate conflicts with those of others [23]. The subsequent rise of Nazi Germany was interpreted as a vindication of Niebuhr's warnings about supranationalism [24]. After WWII, Hans Morgenthau emerged as another prominent realist thinker. In his seminal work *Politics Among Nations*, Morgenthau reaffirms the core realist principle of balance of power as a classic conceptualization of state competition, foreseeing that it would define the future, just as it had defined the past. Morgenthau does not exclude the influence of morality in politics either but warns that individuals' luxury to act according to their moral code is not applicable on the state level. Elaborating on American foreign policy, Morgenthau argues that America's interests as a superpower inevitably conflict with the promotion and protection of human rights, using Washington's interventions in Cambodia and Vietnam as an example [25]. In practice, Morgenthau suggests that state competition within international anarchy makes moral axioms largely obsolete.

As John Mearsheimer suggests "great powers are logically inclined to act according to balance of power logic" and that one cannot expect that "a potential rival will hew to liberal dictates during a serious dispute." Mearsheimer concludes that surviving can mean "pursuing ruthless policies" and although this is an uncomfortable reality, there is no other alternative within international anarchy [26]. To that end, Kenneth Waltz, another prominent realist, argues that the Cold War "has its origins in the anarchic ordering of the international arena" [27]. Waltz's assumption is based on the observation that on the international level, states must be constantly ready to counterforce an opponent state's demonstration of power or succumb to it [28]. In short, from Thucydides to Waltz, realists agree that international anarchy inevitably limits the applicability of good intentions and compromises ethical state behaviour—as morality is conventionally understood mainly by liberal internationalists. Realism offers the most suitable framework to assess the Cold War, which spanned across all continents and lasting for more than four decades [29]. In his famous "Long Telegram" George Kennan argued that the Soviet understanding of the evolution of history was at odds with the American one, making thus the two superpowers' coexistence impossible [30]. A year later, in 1947, Kennan suggested a "policy of firm containment, designed to confront the Russians with unalterable counterforce at every point where they show signs of encroaching upon the interests of a peaceful and stable world" [31]. Containment, which eventually became Washington's core strategic doctrine almost until the end of the Cold War, aimed at isolating the USSR, and at preventing communism from spreading [32].

Kennan's story is well-known, but revisiting it allows us to comprehend the paradigm shift in the conceptualization of American foreign policymaking during the Truman administration. This article recognizes that the Cold War cannot be synopsized in one single era; the conflict between the US and the USSR—but also world communism in general—went through several different stages. Every scholar of the Cold War knows that there are several qualitative differences between different stages of the conflict, from the early—and highly confrontational—years from 1947 until the Cuban Missile Crisis, and the latter era of *détente*. The dynamic nature of the conflict can also be easily summarized by the varied approaches of the Reagan administration. Reagan started his term as a devoted Cold Warrior, but radically changed his approach towards the USSR when Mikhail Gorbachev emerged as the General Secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. Yet, despite the differences in American foreign policymaking between numerous presidencies, the imperative to contain communism remained at the forefront of American foreign policymaking, while each and every administration proceeded with at least one ethically dubious intervention to serve this purpose.

Challenging consensus: deontology vs. consequentialism

Deontology offers a first interpretation of ethical foreign policy-making. In normative ethics, it emphasizes the nature of an action and assesses whether it falls within the thresholds of universal ethical conduct, irrespective of the consequences it may bring [33]; the means matter and not the ends, so to speak. From a distance, deontology and American exceptionalism seem to be in tune. If America professes to be a moral superpower in the service of freedom and democracy, then its interventions must be consistent with the principles of missionary exceptionalism. In other words, this philosophical argument suggests that American interventionism is bound by certain deontological standards, outside of which interventions are not justifiable; respecting the intervened nation's democratic integrity and self-determination is imperative.

This deontological narrative informs the frequent criticism that American foreign policy is hypocritical, as it exposes the "gap" between America's professed ideals and actual foreign policymaking [34]. As Stephen Huggins argues, the "enduring sense" that America is morally superior is an outcome of the established deep belief in American exceptionalism which has provided Washington with the moral justification to intervene abroad. Huggins elaborates on this conventional criticism of American interventionism – shared by most sceptics of American exceptionalism – arguing that America's missionary motives are challenged by ethically questionable interventions such as "the nuclear destruction of Hiroshima and Nagasaki" [35]. Based on Huggins' reasoning, we could easily list many more examples when American interventionism did not meet the standards of missionary exceptionalism. Yet, this interpretation would be one-sided, because of the shallow interpretative limits of deontology.

The second interpretation is that of consequentialism, which informs the core of this article's proposed framework. In contrast to deontological ethics, consequentialism suggests that the morality of an action stems from the outcomes that it produces; the ends matter more than the means in this case. Consequentialism largely falls within classic Benthamite utilitarianism, according to which moral actions are considered those which produce more overall net good [36], and in which disrespecting others' rights is permissible—which is unacceptable in deontology [37]. From a consequentialist perspective, the morality of American foreign policymaking depends on whether US interventions contribute to the wider good, irrespective of the harm that they might cause in the process. Thus, in consequentialist terms, the US's mission to contain and defeat the USSR, which proposes a rivalling value system to the world, is prioritized before any deontological objections. In other words, containing and defeating communism on a

global level is the only imperative and hence became the US existential mission. Michael Sandel, one of the world's leading political philosophers, offers an example that allows us to comprehend how utilitarian ethics apply in practice. Sandel argues that utilitarian ethics mainly work on the assumption that committing a seemingly immoral act--the kind that deontologists would never condone--rests on another assumption, that not doing so would lead to undesirable consequences [38]. Exploring this point in the context of the Cold War allows us to comprehend why the US proceeded with ethically questionable interventions: if Washington did not intervene in countries like Greece, Cyprus, Vietnam, Chile, Iran, and so on, then it would be only a matter of time before the USSR took advantage of power vacuums left by the US.

Exactly because defining morality is next to impossible, these two schools offer two directly opposite worldviews to ethically assess any nation's foreign policy in general [39]. However, as Felix Oppenheim remarks in his study of international ethics, although deontology and consequentialism are indeed the two major rival moral codes in ethical foreign policy analysis, the West has largely accepted that the deontological worldview--in which acting in ways that benefit the interests of others as well--by far exceeds the consequentialist one in terms of public appreciation [40]. This article extends Oppenheim's argument to discuss a fundamental problem in appreciating consequentialist ethics: exactly because values such as democracy and self-determination carry significant moral (or more accurately, deontological) weight within the West, any act that violates them is seen as immoral. Interventions which violate these moral axioms feel wrong despite their potential geopolitical successes. Naturally, by contrast, liberal internationalism seems like a more ethical school of thought than realism, as its prioritization of values aligns far better with deontological ethics. Robert McElroy, a scholar who has worked extensively on the ethics of American foreign policy and who is overly critical of realist interpretations of morality, argues that the international system can only be derived by a set of moral norms. McElroy suggests that the two "maxims" are first, that moral norms can be identified by their universalizability and second, that they are distinctive because they force a state to take others' interests and views into account [41]. At its core, this is a highly deontological interpretation, in which ethical foreign policy is one that considers and respects the interests of other nations as well. Through this lens, most Cold War American interventions are unreservedly unethical.

Several other scholars of international ethics espouse McElroy's view. As Manfred Halpern suggests "there is no obvious synthesis between morality and intervention" [42] in a phrase that perfectly summarizes the backlash that the US faced whenever it intervened in other nations' affairs. And through this deontological lens, the

US has faced moral scrutiny in what concerned its multiple (and multifaceted) interventions around the world, which have defined Cold War foreign policymaking since 1947 [43]. As Jeffrey Sachs argues in his—highly deontological—interpretation of Cold War American interventionism, the US has engineered ethically questionable interventions to stir other nations away from Soviet influence, often irrespective of whether there was a credible threat of losing them to world communism. Through this argument, Sachs suggests that the balance of power politics which epitomized Cold War foreign policymaking are inherently immoral [44].

Similarly, as John Gans put it in 2019, people "must appreciate that [the] US national security process is designed to drain decisions of their morality" [45]. This is another deontological assessment which suggests that American foreign policymaking is immoral by definition, as too often Washington's foreign policy endeavours rely on questionable means to serve geopolitical purposes. Such deontological assessments are reasonable, but they are far from the only credible ones. In his study of the history of ethical systems, Kennan Malik concludes that there is no external authority that defines what is ethical and what is not, irrespective of our social conventions [46]. Extending this argument—and considering Oppenheim's suggestion that deontological ethics feel more inherent to the West—this article emphasizes that despite its appeal, deontology should not be considered as the optimal worldview to assess ethical foreign policy, but just a worldview. This article argues that consequentialist ethics are just as valid as deontological ones. And just as liberal internationalism is compatible with deontology due to its emphasis on values, so is realism with consequentialism due to its emphasis on survival. As Ronald Stupak and Peter Leitner argue in their ethical interpretation of realism, "realists must be prepared to acknowledge that noble goals are always realized with imperfect means and methods" [47]. At its core, this is an entirely consequentialist argument, which suggests the use of questionable means is permitted if it serves higher "noble" goals. Similarly, John Bew suggests that Machiavellianism influenced the conceptualization of Cold War American interventionism, giving a new meaning to ideas expressed by great foreign policy thinkers, often from competing schools, such as Wilson, Carr, or Niebuhr [48]. This article argues that the moral value of consequentialism as expressed through "Machiavellian" foreign policy decisions has been largely neglected—especially in what concerns Cold War American interventionism.

Frances Harbour acutely observes that even the staunchest of realists "do not usually talk about 'consequentialism'" despite their entirely utilitarian interpretation of states' urge to prioritize their national interests. Harbour also suggests that prioritizing one's survival is by definition a moral choice, even if other nations'

interests may be disregarded or disrespected in the process, and adds that states must often decide whether they will respect what are considered moral conventions and perish, or violate them and survive [49]. And in the context of the Cold War, Harbour's assessment aligns with Waltz's defence of Machiavellian foreign policy in the face of deontological criticisms [50]. Consequentialism, thus, has received less attention than it really merits—despite allowing us to comprehend better the moral reasoning behind what seem like entirely unethical decisions.

This article argues that consequentialism is particularly applicable to Cold War American foreign policy. Specifically, it suggests that all Cold War American administrations, from Harry Truman's to Ronald Reagan's, orchestrated and implemented ethically dubious interventions for the sake of the broader goal within Cold War American foreign policymaking, which was to contain world communism. Furthermore, if leaders have a "special ethical responsibility" to protect their countries' interests as Jack Donnelly argues [51] then we can comprehend how these administrations embraced consequentialism. This article suggests that the reason why Washington considered these "unethical" (when viewed from a deontological worldview) interventions as "ethical" is the profound influence of missionary exceptionalism on Cold War foreign policymaking: containing communism—and everything it stood for, geopolitically, socio-politically, culturally, and even religiously—was elevated as America's fundamental mission.

The origins of Washington's consequentialist foreign policymaking have been hiding in plain sight. That is because Woodrow Wilson, who secured re-election capitalizing on his promise to keep the US out of the war, essentially made a consequentialist argument when he asked Congress to declare war on the Central Powers—which would end or destroy the lives of many American soldiers—because the US needed to "make the world safe for democracy". Wilson knew joining the war would assign to the US a role that the country had been rejecting since its foundation, and by doing so, American soldiers—and presumably American foreign policymakers as well—would have to act immorally; Wilson himself noted the "profound sense of solemn and even tragical character of the step" he was taking. But crucially, he also said that "we are accepting this challenge of hostile purpose because we know that in such a government [...] we can never have a friend" and that without confronting and defeating the Central Powers, "there can be no assured security for the democratic Governments of the world" [52]. This was Washington's first telos.

Liberal internationalists have claimed Wilson—and the ideals found within missionary American exceptionalism, Wilsonianism, and even morality in international relations more broadly—as

their own. Arguably, Wilson's radical envisioning of the League of Nations and his internationalist philosophy that inspired Franklin Roosevelt, whose vision in turn reshaped post-WWII international politics, indicates that they are right to do so; yet, only in peacetime or in peace-building settings. In times of crisis—or, as was the case during the Cold War, of great power competition—Wilson's missionary exceptionalism, as indicated in this speech, provided both the operational and ideological axis for all future American consequentialist foreign policymaking and interventionism. One could argue that this speech resonates with the ethos of the Just War Tradition [53] as Wilson notes how the aggression of the Central Powers is essentially what permits the American entry into a brutal military conflict. However, Wilson also provides a strong mission to Washington, noting that the US "can never have a friend" in a government like Germany, as it opposes everything that Washington stands for. But, if this is a good enough reason to trigger America's intervention in WWI, then it certainly seems an equally valid reason to never have a friend in a rivalling superpower like the USSR, and in any country that promotes the value system of communism during the Cold War. The key difference is that, in contrast with WWI and WWII which were fought through direct military means (hence the Just War Theory can be invoked) the Cold War was fought through covert action and proxy wars, in which the violation of third countries' sovereign rights was indispensable to achieve the aim of containing communism. In other words, we may have been reading Wilson wrongly for almost a century: what Wilson effectively said in his war declaration request was that to make the world "safe for democracy" several deontological lines must be crossed, and that there was no alternative to that, exactly because it was the moral and existential duty of the US to achieve a higher end. This is the essence of consequentialism, and it is what the Cold War was all about.

Indicative case studies

To comprehend how the proposed consequentialist foreign policy framework can be invoked, we need to explore a few case studies. After all, Cold War American interventionism has been marked by controversy, exactly because many interventions are considered entirely inconsistent with America's professed idealism. As a practical introduction to consequentialist reasoning, we should twist Huggins' reasoning on the Hiroshima and Nagasaki bombings. Truman's two objectives were to diminish the number of American casualties and end the war with an unyielding Japan [54]. Although in deontological terms the instant—and extremely violent—murder of thousands is clearly unjustifiable, the bombings were entirely justified from a consequentialist perspective, as they helped the Truman administration achieve its higher purposes. This thought exercise encapsulates the consequentialist ethos.

We should note though that the proposed consequentialist foreign policy framework emphasizes the decision-making process regarding an intervention. It explains the rationale behind ethically contestable interventions, which were nonetheless considered indispensable by the administration which engineered them, as they were considered indispensable to the strategic imperative of containing communism. In other words, violating its own principles in the short-term was expected to facilitate a long-term success for both the US and its allies. However, that has not always been the case, as several interventions have backfired, causing long-term complications for Washington. Past interventions, such as those in Vietnam or Iran, may have been informed by this consequentialist mindset, but proved to be strategically unwise in the long-run. America's defeat in the first case caused the infamous "Vietnam Syndrome" while US-Iranian relations suffer to this day. In other words, invoking consequentialist ethics did not necessarily lead to successful interventions. Likewise, not every American intervention during the Cold War can be interpreted or synthesised through the proposed consequentialist lens. For instance, American interventionism during the Korean War—which was initiated as a response to North Vietnamese communist aggression—or during the Berlin Blockade which, again, was a response to Stalin's initiative, cannot be considered devious, from a deontological point of view. Likewise, Washington's support towards European integration through the Marshall Plan after WWII, and since the days of the European Coal and Steel Community, might not have been informed by a pure vision to re-democratize Europe, and clearly aimed at containing communism in the Old Continent, but again cannot be considered immoral or inconsistent with the fundamental ideals of American exceptionalism. In that sense, the proposed consequentialist framework is not omnirelevant, and can mainly be invoked in instances when the balance of power between the US and world communism looked like it could shift towards the latter's favour.

Thus, consequentialist interventions have often led to entirely unwanted consequences for Washington. As the violation of deontological norms and practices is essentially a prerequisite to consequentialist interventionism, the rise of anti-American political actors and popular sentiments is entirely to be expected, especially if such interventions fail to achieve their long-term purpose. Therefore, we should interpret consequentialist foreign policy as an interventionist ethos that prioritized American security and the US teleological struggle against communism, rather than an infallible strategic doctrine.

I. The Eisenhower administration

Truman's immediate successor provides us with several questionable interventions, such as the overthrow of the Iranian Mossa-

degh government. Mohammad Mossadegh was perceived as a potential threat, as his increasingly warmer relationships with the USSR in the early 1950s could potentially block American access to Iranian oil. Thus, Eisenhower cleared Operation Ajax, which led to the return of the monarch Mohammad Reza Pahlavi, and the selection of Fazlollah Zahedi as Prime Minister [55]. The operation succeeded in imposing a strong pro-American Iranian government that supplied oil to the West on favourable terms, while serving Washington as a significant American ally, and that while bordering the USSR. In deontological terms, Iranian self-determination was unquestionably violated, as Mossadegh had been democratically elected; yet, in consequentialist terms, the coup was entirely justifiable, as it—briefly, as it turned out—maintained Iran within the American sphere of influence. The same reasoning can apply to the 1954 Guatemalan coup. The Eisenhower administration believed that Jacobo Árbenz, who was supported by Guatemalan communists, personified the threat of losing Guatemala to communism [56]. To prevent this, Eisenhower permitted the overthrow of the Árbenz government, which alarmed the Soviets who in their turn decided to ship arms in defence of Árbenz. In response, a rapid Senate resolution initiated by future President, Lyndon Johnson (which passed with a margin of 69 to 1) reaffirmed America's opposition to Soviet interference in Latin America. As a result, the Árbenz government was overthrown and replaced by US-backed and CIA-trained dictator, Carlos Castillo, in another deontologically reprehensible yet entirely justifiable—from a consequentialist perspective—intervention.

II. The Kennedy and Johnson administrations

We can also interpret the 1963 overthrow of the Vietnamese Diem administration through the proposed framework. President Kennedy's belief that President Ngo Diem was incompetent in combating Northern Vietnamese communists caused significant tensions between the two leaders, with Kennedy deciding not to block a military coup against him, which led to his assassination [57]. In deontological terms, permitting a coup against a democratically elected president is impermissible, yet can be justified through a consequentialist lens because the higher purpose was to prevent Vietnam from falling to communism. This was an extreme manifestation of a broader pattern of consequentialist interventionism aimed at promoting and supporting pro-American actors in regions contested by the two superpowers.[58]

Likewise, we cannot but include the escalation of the Vietnam War by the Johnson administration in these examples. As Eric Goldman argues, despite Johnson's shallow foreign policy knowledge, he was as adamant as Kennedy regarding the policy of containment. After the North Vietnamese attacked two US warships, Johnson pursued a congressional resolution to dispatch Ameri-

can troops in the region, which was approved with 416 to 0 votes in Congress and 81 to 2 in the Senate [59]. The outsized margins in favour of Johnson's Vietnam resolution—which mirror those of Eisenhower's Guatemalan one—show the bipartisanship that such foreign policy endeavours enjoyed. It was the Johnson administration that escalated the Vietnam War, making it an American conflict [60] and unreservedly a must-win.

III. The Nixon administration

Another case study concerns Nixon's opening to China. Sino-American relations had generally been bad since the communist revolutionaries' victory in 1949 in the Chinese Civil War. This led the US to diplomatically recognize Taiwan (Republic of China) as the legitimate government of China, instead of Beijing and the People's Republic of China. Yet, in an astonishing move, Nixon capitalized on the Sino-Soviet split and successfully pursued an opening to mainland China in 1969, famously declaring America's pledge to defend the Chinese against a potential Soviet attack [61]. Nixon's visits to China and the signing of several bilateral trade agreements demonstrate the merits of consequentialist interventionism. Although Maoist China was an opposite of the US on political and sociocultural levels, working with the Chinese communist regime was morally justifiable exactly because its outcome would be the further isolation of America's arch enemy in that political time—the USSR.

In an even more profound case, Nixon's intervention in Cambodia exposes once more his consequentialist approach. In 1970, the geopolitically neutral administration of Prince Norodom Sihanouk was deposed by a successful coup led by the right-wing general, Lon Nol, who established a military dictatorship. As a result of Nol's success, the North Vietnamese intervened in Laos, which mobilized the Nixon administration to support the Cambodian dictator. As Nixon put it, America's failure to support Nol would make her look like a "pitiful, helpless giant" and would allow "the forces of totalitarianism and anarchy [...] threaten free nations and institutions" [62]. For Nixon's consequentialist policy, supporting a right-wing dictator was morally permissible, exactly because it would keep Cambodia safe from communism.

Finally, the Nixon administration provides us with another similar consequentialist intervention. When it seemed that the election of Salvador Allende as President of Chile was inevitable, Nixon decided first, to strangle the Chilean economy and second, allowed the CIA to explore how Allende's electoral victory could be neutralized [63]. Allende was elected President in 1970 and governed until 1973 when General Augusto Pinochet proceeded with a successful coup against him, which also resulted in Allende's murder. Although the Nixon administration initially denied any participa-

tion in the coup and any provision of support towards Pinochet's authoritarian regime [64] later evidence suggests otherwise [65]. In another instance, thus, for the sake of containing communism in Latin America, Nixon justified the violent overthrow of a democratically elected government. The deontological alternative—respecting Chilean self-determination—would undermine America's Cold War end goal.

IV. The Carter administration.

If Nixon is widely regarded as an immoral political agent due to the Watergate scandal that cost him the Presidency, the same does not apply to Jimmy Carter. Throughout American political history, no President has entered the White House with stronger deontological convictions. Carter regarded Washington's frequent political compromises as "morally wrong" [66] while he was a liberal internationalist who interpreted America's foreign policy through Wilsonian lenses [67] and resented the possibility of permitting American casualties abroad for the sake of political gains [68]. Still, even Carter, the moralist amongst the Cold War occupants of the White House, proceeded with consequentialist interventions in the name of containment. First, Carter intervened in Zaire, which had become increasingly susceptible to communist infiltration by Angolan rebels, by providing financial and military support to the authoritarian—but pro-American—regime of Colonel Mobutu Sese Seko. As reprehensible as Mobutu's murderous reign probably seemed to Carter, he nonetheless supported it for the greater cause of Cold War American foreign policy. The Zaire situation shifted Carter's African policy from racial justice to containment, just like his predecessors had done too [69].

Carter's embrace of consequentialism did not end at Zaire. In the name of the new Sino-American entente—under the leadership of Mao's reformist successor, Deng Xiaoping—Carter proceeded in what was considered an unthinkable move up to that point, succumbing to Deng Xiaoping's pressure to recognize the People's Republic of China as the legitimate Chinese government. This meant that the US would terminate their longstanding diplomatic recognition of Taiwan, where the republican defeated side of the Chinese Civil War had escaped; in the words of Carter's national security advisor, Zbigniew Brzezinski, America and China should "cooperate again in the face of a common threat" [70]. Washington's abandonment of Taipei was entirely consequentialist. Carter followed Nixon's lead and withdrew US support towards a long-term anti-Maoist and democratic ally to support communist China, exactly because this shift would serve the end goal of Cold War foreign policy: to isolate, weaken, and eventually defeat the USSR. Of course, the US still supported Taiwan through the Taiwan Relations Act, and through indirect diplomatic channels, yet the US's recognition of the One-China Policy essentially since Carter's

days--and despite the geopolitical and ideological tensions within Sino-American relations--epitomizes the consequentialist influence in US foreign policymaking.

Finally, like his predecessors, Carter embraced consequentialism towards Iran. Since Eisenhower's time, the US provided unconditional support to Iran due to its proximity to the USSR for the sake of maintaining a crucial geopolitical advantage. To that end, and despite Pahlavi's poor human rights record, Carter provided him with all the military equipment he had requested. In a remarkable statement during his 1977 visit to Tehran, Carter noted that under Pahlavi's "great leadership" Iran had become "an island of stability in one of the more troubled eras of the world" [71]. Pahlavi's regime would be ousted two years later by the Islamic--and anti-American--regime of Ruhollah Khomeini. Still, Carter's support of Pahlavi, with whom he could not have been more incompatible in terms of moral principles, represented another deviation from his deontological integrity and another manifestation of consequentialist interventionism.

V. The Reagan administration

Ronald Reagan's Iran-Contra affair is an additional and profound indicative case that fits this article's proposed consequentialist framework. To overthrow the Nicaraguan Sandinistas' communist government, the Reagan administration backed their domestic opponents--the Contras--whose operations were funded by funds generated from American weapon sales to Ruhollah Khomeini's authoritarian regime in Iran. The key point is that Reagan had previously excluded the possibility of even discussing with Khomeini [72], urging Western Europeans to join the US embargo on Tehran [73]. In the Iran-Contra affair, Reagan crossed numerous deontological lines single-handedly; yet, as David Houghton suggests, he viewed this initiative as entirely ethical since these means would secure the defeat of the Marxist administration of the Sandinistas [74]. Another aspect of this operation is that it disregarded Congress' right to control arms sales abroad [75]. The Iran-Contra affair could not reveal Reagan's consequentialism more.

The Reagan administration proceeded with more consequentialist interventions. After the Grenadian communist PM, Maurice Bishop, was murdered by his deputy, Bernard Coard, Reagan allowed an operation in which almost two thousand American soldiers invaded Grenada to depose the new Marxist government. Reagan's intervention was immediately condemned by both the United Nations and by Reagan's transatlantic ideological ally--and personal friend--British Prime Minister, Margaret Thatcher, as a clear violation of international law and Grenada's sovereignty [76]. There is no question that Reagan's initiative disrespected Grenadian self-determination, but as his own words indicate, he

justified it in consequentialist terms; America "had no choice but to act strongly" against "a brutal gang of leftist thugs" [77]. The Reagan administration also proceeded in similar covert interventions—mostly in terms of military and financial support—in Angola and Afghanistan, where pro-American forces rebelled against the respective communist governments [78]. Reagan is frequently credited with "winning" the Cold War. Although typically the conflict ended during the George HW Bush administration, the clash between the US and the USSR practically ended in Reagan's time. The extent to which Reagan should be credited with this victory is highly debated [79] but this is not the crucial element here. Instead, we should emphasize how in his farewell address, the staunchest anti-communist occupant of the White House, and the one who had engineered these most questionable interventions for the sake of containment, summarized in just three words why his—and his predecessors'—interventions were justified: "America is freedom" [80].

Cold War American Foreign Policy: a consequentialist worldview

Peter Greys suggests that Republicans and Democrats have a different moral outlook on American foreign policy, because their political ideologies contain different values [81]. But as Campbell Craig and Fredrik Logevall correctly point out, all Cold War Presidents, from Harry Truman to Ronald Reagan operated on the same set of assumptions regarding containment [82]. What these case studies indicate is that both Republican and Democrat administrations implemented ethically questionable interventions—from a deontological perspective at least—throughout the Cold War, because these served Washington's wider goal of containment. These indicative case studies reveal three fundamental points about Cold War American foreign policy. First, there has been no administration that has not proceeded with an ethically questionable intervention for the sake of containing communism; the examples from the Truman and Carter presidencies, who were self-proclaimed Wilsonians, clearly manifest this pattern. Second, even most realist Presidents, such as Nixon and Reagan, shared either directly or indirectly an affinity for the Wilsonian interpretation of international politics; as President, Nixon had a portrait of Wilson in his office [83] while Reagan "stood at the edge of Wilsonian moralism" according to Kissinger [84]. Walter Mead specifically uses Nixon as an ideal example to argue that realists like him had a deep conviction in the moral rightness of their actions, because they interpreted them as indispensable in the struggle against global communism and Soviet influence [85]. Evidently, the Wilsonian interpretation of America's mission was a profound dynamic throughout Cold War American foreign policymaking, even during Nixon's or Reagan's time.

Third, these case studies indicate that this article's proposed framework offers a new way to analyse a series of controversial American interventions during the Cold War. The fact that consequentialism is not as easily digestible as deontology does not mean that it is a less credible ethical theory, as unsettling and disturbing as it may conceptually appear to be. And, in a way, consequentialism could not but inform the moral axis of Cold War American foreign policymaking. According to Arthur Schlesinger, the immense ideological conflict between America and the Soviet Union made the Cold War inevitable, making the containment of communism indispensable for Washington [86]. Robert Powaski concurs with Schlesinger and argues that "there was no alternative" to the Cold War because the competition between the two superpowers was incredibly profound and multidimensional [87]. As Powaski argues, the key element in the inevitability of the Cold War was the incompatibility of the two superpowers' competing 'manifest destinies.'

In other words, America had no alternative to victory in the Cold War. No matter how long—and what—it would take, failing to do so would signify that its value system would be replaced by that of the USSR; America would have failed in its mission. Powaski correctly points out that if this mission was based on Wilsonian idealism, so was the case with the Soviet Union and Vladimir Lenin's vision about the eventual victory of socialism [88]. The clash between these two contrasting teleological visions could not have been greater, while the two countries' geopolitical influence amplified it to a colossal extent. And at least in what concerns America, foreign interventionism was a precondition, if it was going to live up to her self-assigned role to serve the rest of the world through its principles [89]. This is exactly the point where American exceptionalism and realism meet. Although they may seem incompatible, this article suggests that consequentialist foreign policy was the realist expression of missionary American exceptionalism within the realities of the Cold War. Francis Fukuyama, a skeptic of realism, admits that during the Cold War "realism was an appropriate framework for understanding international politics [...] because the world operated according to realist premises" yet "not so much because realist principles reflected timeless truths, but because the world was sharply divided between states of radically differing and mutually hostile ideologies"[90]. In a way, this framework resonates with what Charles Krauthammer defines as "democratic realism" which explains America's urge to intervene in regions where the "defense or advancement of freedom is critical to success in the larger war against an existential element"[91].

However, despite Krauthammer's acute observation, his definition is not entirely satisfactory. First, it would be problematic to associate some of the aforementioned interventions with the notions of

"defence" and "advancement" of freedom as this can easily be dismissed as an attempt to sugarcoat extremely contestable foreign interventions. Instead, the consequentialist framework that this article proposes sees such interventions for what many—if not most—of them were: deontologically reprehensible and morally unsettling interventions that too often violated the intervened nations' rights of self-determination, undermined their democratic governance, disrespected their citizens' dignity and human rights, and left thousands, if not millions, suffering. But they can be nonetheless justified from a consequentialist viewpoint because they contributed to the containment of communism: the telos of America's Cold War mission.

Finally, it is crucial to define how the proposed consequentialist foreign policy framework differs from standard realist premises. The essential difference is that, in realism, policymakers and academics accept that ethically dubious and unjustifiable policies are often necessary because of the bigger picture, which is the ugly and anarchic state of international politics. In other words, they believe that within international anarchy, there may be no alternative to the occasional use of questionable interventions like the indicative case studies above. Most realists still see such interventions as unethical, but suggest that morality, as defined by liberal internationalists, cannot be prioritized; this is summarized by Mearsheimer's observations on "offensive realism" which characterizes great power interventionism as a fundamental mechanism to achieve international hegemony [92]. The proposed framework, however, argues that because of the influence of American exceptionalism in Cold War foreign policymaking, these questionable—and frequently reprehensible—interventions that America pursued on a global scale were not considered evil albeit mandatory, so to speak, but as the right thing to do because of the imperative to contain communism.

This detail is crucial in fully comprehending why horrendous interventions, from a deontological standpoint, were nonetheless justified by Washington. The proposed framework shows how assisting coups, supporting dictatorship, selling arms to authoritarian anti-communist regimes, or violating other nations' rights to self-determination were not considered unfortunate but necessary, as many realists would suggest, but instead as the only moral option available – either consciously or subconsciously – because of the higher moral end that they served. In his most recent book, John Bolton summarized perfectly what the consequentialist framework that this article proposes is all about. Donald Trump's former National Security advisor, a man who has publicly argued that planning and implementing coup d'états is not an easy thing to do, confesses in his work that his foreign policy worldview is shaped by "a merger of Dean Acheson and John Foster Dulles" [93].

Any scholar of American foreign policymaking—particularly during the Cold War—knows that these two men were instrumental in shaping American interventionism across the world. The examples are endless; this article proposes the consequentialist framework to re-evaluate several seemingly unethical interventions around the globe through the unholy marriage of realism and American Exceptionalism. One does not have to agree with the rightness of the consequentialist mindset to fully comprehend its defining influence in American foreign policymaking. But this article remains neutral towards the consequentialist approach; it recognizes its structure and ambitions, but does not side with consequentialism, or suggests that it was the morally right approach to take, nor did it attempt to play the devil's advocate. It does, however, suggest that in the minds of American foreign policymakers, the devil was not there in the first place to need an advocate; the devil had always been the USSR—as it may be the next superpower with which the US will enter an existential competition.

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INDIAN AGENCY, SECTORAL DOMINANCE, AND FOREIGN AID: THE MAKING OF THE BOKARO STEEL PLANT

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Abstract

This paper examines the complex interaction of external aid and domestic policy in India during the global Cold War, focusing on the Bokaro Steel Plant as a case study. It argues that while external aid was an alleged tool of political pressure wielded by superpowers to ensure influence in the 'Third World', India had agency to formulate its domestic policy, which resulted in complex layers of negotiations. Indian agency was compromised by crises and sectoral dominance of the superpowers in specific areas of the Indian economy, but the competitive nature of the Cold War, as well as the superpowers' domestic constraints, created space for India to sidestep the US and USSR's aid narratives and retain policy independence. Drawing on English School analyses of hegemony, the institutionally competitive nature of economic aid for hegemony is highlighted, which forced superpowers to compete for the kind of aid India wanted. The paper concludes that the insights gained from this study are generalizable to later crises, highlighting strategies of hedging and independent domestic planning as pathways available to 'middle' powers.

Introduction

The 'Global Cold War' witnessed superpower intervention in the 'Third World' owing to their respective version of universalised ideology each saw as 'natural' in promoting around the world and ensuring their own security [1]. This kind of intervention took various forms of 'political weapons' ranging from military assistance, propaganda, to economic and development aid [2]. Developmental aid was supposed to be the agent of societal/state transformation where it was received, especially as opposed to military intervention [3], and by the 1950s-60s, both the US and USSR gave ever-greater amounts of state aid to ensure influence in the 'Third World' as inherent parts of their ideologies [4]. India became the top recipient for non-military aid from both the US and the USSR during the same period [5]. However, this aid was not a unidirectional influence – the demand for external expertise and resources was deemed as a requirement to build a modern and self-sufficient economy, formulated by an independent domestic policy [6]. These contradictory influences of external aid and internal policy is central to the examination of the level of 'freedom'

India had to formulate its domestic policy. This paper undertakes a case study of one such economic aid project in India, the Bokaro Steel Plant, and examines the debates around its aid partner, economic narratives, and eventual completion of the project from the 1960s to the early 1970s to highlight key points of negotiation Indian agency underwent while accepting superpower aid amidst the global Cold War. This paper argues that the importance of South Asia and the competitive nature of the Cold War, as well as the superpowers' domestic constraints (political and technological), created space for India to navigate superpower influence and conduct an independent domestic policy. Within those plans, however, superpowers could exploit crises and exert dominance over sectors of the economy—via aid—to compromise Indian agency.

Drawing on English School analyses of hegemony as an "institutionalised practice" [7], this paper focuses on Cold War "developmental/economic aid", as channelled through a system where competition for influence was implicitly accepted by both superpowers to maintain and expand their "blocs" of ideological or geo-strategic alignment. While Clark (2011) explicitly disagrees that the US and USSR did not function as "collective" hegemonies over the world till late-1960s détente [8]; this paper hints at the groundwork for the informal (and formal) agreements over what institutions Cold War rivalries would confront themselves in; and their functioning, being laid already by the early 1960s-aid architecture.

Economic Aid as Influence in India

This paper identifies foreign economic aid as a key element of superpower influence in Indian politics. Arguments in International Relations around the purposes of foreign aid broadly centre around three justifications for aid – that it is based on either the humanitarian needs of the receiver countries; as a part of a drive towards economic homogenisation; or the realist argument that it is driven by the donor's strategic, economic, and political interests [9-10]. Scholars analysing specific aid practices of great powers have focused on the nature of aid and targeted countries to identify donor intentions - and they conclusively identify US aid during the Cold War as an instrument of its foreign policy, since its dispensation was based on the power base of the receiver country, and not its needs [11-13].

This "donor interest" model, among other things, allows for either rewarding receivers for following pro-donor domestic and foreign policy, or is used as a leverage against states which pursue disagreeable policies to align these with donor interests [14]. Two factors are particularly important for this paper's concerns – that great powers are attracted to aid countries with ideologies not aligned with them, as it enhances their leverage chances [15]

and that bilateral aid programmes specifically are used for supporting donor interests [16]. Specifically for India, one of the largest recipients of Cold War-era aid, a quantitative analysis further conforms to the donor interest model [17]. At the same time, this aid had domestic political effects in the receiver countries as well [18], such as impinging on receiver freedom in shaping economic policies via dependency [19]. In the institutional hegemon theory, US and Soviet hegemonies were circumscribed by domains where they could establish political, economic, security and cultural "rules" (institutions) - with each domain serving as an active alternative to the other [20]. Between the Cold War hegemons, India was a nonaligned domain. Neither within the Soviet nor American spheres of institutional hegemony, it consequently became a site for contestation, which allowed it substantial agency as a "recipient." Domestically, aid formed the core of 'development politics' - where groups of Indian policymakers actively deployed aid from one superpower bloc or another to compete against one another at the domestic level [21].

Courting Western and Soviet pro-planning economists, pro-planning policymakers like PC Mahalanobis in the early-1950s legitimised planning as a central tenant in the Second Five-Year Plan (FYP from hereon) (1956-61) [22]. These lobbyists courted American pro-market economists as well, but their suggestions were reduced to a 'dialogue of the deaf'—instead, these experts found support in the Indian Ministry of Finance [23]. This example, while showing definite effects of aid on receiver-state politics, also illustrates the layered nature of reception, active agency of receivers in accepting such narratives, and their deployment for their own political uses.

Narratives of Superpower Aid and Indian Agency

In the late-1940s, India did not feature on both superpowers' strategic agendas – the US was focused on China and did not consider communism as a threat in India [24] and the Soviets regarded India as a bourgeois state [25]. Changing Cold War geopolitics made both superpowers reconsider their position. India as a 'small state' could pursue its interests in this scenario by relying on all three forms of 'power' as defined by Long [26] - its "particular-intrinsic" geographic location in Asia, size and economic potential [27]; a "collective power" represented by its leadership of the Non-Aligned powers, and an important member in the UN and Commonwealth negotiating contemporary crises like the Korean War [28]; and its "derivative" power serving as a testing ground of US and Soviet modernisation theories [29]. The "loss" of China to communism made India the "pivotal" non-Communist state in Asia for the US [30]. Official discourse bordered on paranoia – fears of India turning into a Soviet-aligned, communist, or a failed state prompted

US regional involvement [31]. US ambassadors Henderson and Cooper emphasised that "any reduction in US aid would be immediately compensated by the Soviets", which might skew Indian "radicals" towards socialism. Even India's non-aligned was to be tolerated as a weak India might fall to communism – therefore, US aid had to support a "strong," democratic India while also pressuring it towards pro-US policies [32]. These concerns were exacerbated by Soviet aid efforts, Indian foreign exchange crises or Communist Party of India victories in provincial elections [33].

The Soviets, on the other hand, regarded India as crucial in their post-Stalinist "socialist expansion" of economic and ideological relations across the decolonising world [34], claiming solidarities of equality with the Third World, as a more liberating alternative to capitalist hierarchies [35]. Indian industry, heavily western-dependent, was sought to be made independent [36] – despite India not being communist, a "non-capitalist path" to development of decolonising countries was accepted [37]. Removing decolonising countries' dependence on the capitalist world would weaken the latter automatically, with possibilities of garnering socialist regimes in the former countries in the future [38]. The global Cold War competition created dynamics for offering economic aid – as each superpower's "victory" could be mapped in the spread of their economic vision around the world [39]. Therefore, economic aid became one of the primary tools to increase superpower influence and undercut the other ones, as well as to keep recipients under one's fold [40]. This aid was dispersed via national and multilateral aid institutions, which provided legitimacy to both superpowers and reciprocal consent of the recipients, thus forming a key part of US and Soviet hegemonies, as these institutions allowed for specific (here, economic) practices to be normalised in recipient countries [41]. During the Cold War, India became one of the largest recipients of aid – receiving the highest amount of Overseas Development Aid in the mid-1960s anywhere in the world [42]. From 1985-70, India received about \$10 billion in development aid, food, technical assistance, etc. via Western countries and institutions [43]. Programs like Development Loan Fund, Food for Peace, Aid-India Consortium, PL480 for foodgrains laid down the contours of US aid – primarily financial, technical, and agricultural [44]. Soviet aid was more industrial and project-based in nature – refineries, machinery plants, mining, power stations, etc. [45].

Nevertheless, domestic agency of Indian players cannot be ignored in the reception of these aid narratives and material. A nascent Indian economy needed to build up its infrastructure, industry and exploit its resources – which would need heavy amounts of foreign aid since enough revenue could not be generated in the immediate postcolonial era. The Cold War and India's non-aligned policy allowed India to play superpowers off each other, bargaining for

better deals and opening new export markets [46]. In a more localised manner, sources of aid were actively used by different interest groups to advance their agendas for India's economic policy [47].

The Development Decade and Bokaro

The Indian steel industry, after having modernised its mostly privately owned steel mills for much of the First FYP (1951-56), focused on the expansion of solely public-sector mills [48]. Three of these mills were authorised as part of the Second FYP, each to be built with substantial amounts of foreign aid and expertise [49]. To this end, Bhilai (Soviet-aided), Durgapur (British-aided), and Rourkela (West German-aided) were constructed during the 1950s. The steel industry, being one of the first sites of Cold War economic cooperation [50], soon became a centre point of Cold War competition, as well as deciphering agencies of various Indian agents involved. By the time India sanctioned its fourth public-owned steel mill, the Bokaro Steel Plant in 1961, several factors in Indian and foreign aid politics had solidified. The Industrial Note on Bokaro by the Planning Commission notified that the new plant would be built with foreign aid, although the aid provider (likely from the US) would serve a marginal role despite providing equipment and services to set it up [51]. This was expected because of the belief that India had achieved enough expertise from the previous three steel plants [52], hence a large share of the construction, consultancy, and training role was assigned to MN Dastur & Co., an Indian private firm, which would hand over the plant to a government agency upon completion [53]. Internationally, the mid-1950s-early-1960s can be conceptualised as India's 'Decade of Development' (even before the UN made it official in 1961). Superpower aid competition shifted from expertise to project-based aid – and Indian officials during the 2nd and 3rd FYPs worked with either the (Soviet) GKES or (US) AID on various projects [54]. The Soviets started with a geopolitical advantage – since Indian policy decided that heavy industry would be public-sector run – Soviet policy supported these projects; US policy did not [55]. Nevertheless, US agriculture, capital goods and financial programs dominated overall aid – about 50% of all aid during the 2nd FYP [56]. This dominance had even been deployed in the 1956-58 foreign exchange crisis in India to make the pro-US Finance Ministry lobby for acceptance of more 'non-project' based aid [57].

Despite this dominance, the US was forced to compete for Bokaro—as Bokaro was deemed a symbolic, project-aid, "prestigious project"—a marker of publicity [58]. The eagerness to compete can be explained by Cold War concerns. Soviet prestige in India and South Asia had been boosted through Bhilai due to smooth labour relations, with supply chains and more amicable Soviet engineers being held in comparison to problems at British-sponsored Dur-

gapur and German-sponsored Rourkela [59]. This encouraged the US to seek its own "symbol" in India [60]. The interest in pursuing symbolic projects has a 'domestic political imperative' as well – visible aid would quell domestic demand for Cold War competition and maintain popular (or Politburo) popularity [61].

Soviet project aid focusing on monumental projects has been analysed as a key means of asserting its 'symbolic domination' despite its weaker economic position vis-a-vis the Americans [62]. Indeed, even as debates over Bokaro panned out in the 1960s, US foreign policy experts like Morgenthau (1962) recognised the importance of 'prestige' aid by pointing out that 'the political effects of foreign aid are lost if its foreign source is not obvious to the recipient' [63], and its cost-effectiveness in gaining influence vis-a-vis other economic aid [64]. This forced competition over Bokaro revealed the complex interactions that the great power dynamic encountered with receiver agents, and how it manifested in Indian economic plans – as explained below via three arguments, chronologically examined as the plant was negotiated and built.

Negotiating Space via the Structure of Dual Hegemony

The first space for agency was created by the very global structures of great power hegemony during the Cold War. Despite near-total dominance of US aid (\$5 billion out of \$8 billion of total aid in India from 1951-62) [65], even considerable influence within the financial side of the steel sector (since the US financed improving private sector Indian steel mills in the 1FYP) [66], the US was still forced to compete for a single project-type aid, conforming to Indian expectations out of donors. This conformity was due to the increasing need felt by Ambassador Galbraith and President Kennedy to remove 'anonymity' of US aid, countering perceptions that the US only helped Indian private enterprises, and instead helped 'the people' like the Soviets did [67]. The paranoia over assumed Soviet influence in India, therefore, created room where Indian negotiators could ask the US to fund a project which its domestic constituency was opposed to – a public-sector plant.

As such, the US Steel Corporation was tasked to produce a Detailed Project Report on the feasibility of Bokaro. Immediately, fundamental differences over the plans emerged. Since the US saw Bokaro as a 'prestige' project, the report envisioned a 10-year American control over the plant, with over 670 US technicians operating it [68-69]. India wished for self-reliance – hence minimal foreign presence and its own private consultant (Dastur & Co.) to construct the plant [70]. Beyond ideology, the Indian stance was informed by reforms and relative improvement in public-sector steel mill performance over 1963-4 [71]. These basic incompatibilities; the perceived 'inefficiency' of the Indian public sector

[72]; the ideological hesitation to fund 'socialised' steel mills via private US tax dollars [73] – despite Bokaro's products boosting the Indian private sector [74]; among other reasons led to delays and opposition to the mill within the US Congress, leading India to withdraw the request in August 1963. As has been noted by Baldwin (1969), a decision not to give aid also constituted as indirect influence—this American retreat was to encourage Indian planners to internally reform and accept private investment—which was the American "universalising" economic ideology of free market capitalism [75-76].

While lacking the capacity for a one-time large donation to build a steel mill [77], US officials still sought to compete for one. The primarily ideological denial of US aid left India in a position to still seek out other donors for Bokaro, without being pressured into accepting a privately funded plant. Despite a long-term suspicion of Indian economic and foreign policy, US aid relationship with India was kept intact [78]. While hurting the prospects of the pro-US lobby in India [79], Indian response was mostly muted [80], as it had not really lost any significant aid or agency.

Crisis, Narrative Trap and Sectoral Dominance – Constraints to Indian Agency

Nevertheless, the loss of American aid for Bokaro triggered a crisis in India [81] – the project had been sanctioned, but there was no alternative donor planned. The USSR emerged as an alternative donor to aid Bokaro in 1964 – but the crisis, combined with similarities in Indian and Soviet development narratives as well as Soviet sectoral dominance in steel, allowed the USSR to constrain Indian agency at critical points which the US had not been able to do. The Soviet "alternative" hegemonic narrative was more appealing to Third-World regimes as it aligned with their ideas of economic development [82], but this hedging between superpowers had its own limits.

Firstly, exploiting the crisis, the USSR rushed negotiations and preparations of project reports on Bokaro. This included removing Dastur & Co. from the consultant position, assigning a Soviet consultant to build Bokaro instead and disregarding most cost-reduction measures suggested by Dastur & Co. in reviewing Soviet plans, which included allowing a large Soviet assistance group in India [83-84]. Therefore, the crisis enabled the Soviets to override critical Indian concerns on Bokaro. Secondly, Indian policymakers encountered what can be called a "narrative trap" when faced with Soviet options. Indo-Soviet aims were partially aligned; India wished for industrial project aid to develop a heavy industrial sector, reducing dependency on Western firms which had long-exploited India [85]. The USSR also focused on aiding countries with

a state-run public sector favouring heavy industrialisation, albeit for slightly varied reasons—hoping to mirror USSR's own industrial advances of the 1930s to spread sympathies to socialism [86], advancing 'anti-imperialism' in underdeveloped non-communist countries and keeping their 'Western-aligned' private enterprises at bay [87]. These narrative similarities meant that when the Soviets insisted on Bokaro having no private involvement (Dastur & Co.), India's position was constrained by its own reliance on public-sector led policy narratives. As such, India had to commit to public enterprises like the CEDB and HSCL for future expansion and management of Bokaro [88]. The coding of Soviet aid in narratives favourable to the pro-planning parts of the Indian government therefore ended up limiting Indian agency.

Thirdly, this narrative trap was supported by Soviet material dominance in the Indian steel sector. Despite Soviet aid only being 1/10th of US aid in the 3rd FYP, it was committed to over 41 industrial projects in India [89], crucially aiding its "self-reliance" narratives via building up Indian steel, oil, electrical and machinery industries [90]. This dominance in industrial project aid came via willingness to share technology, training [91], repayment in goods or rupees and easier interest rates [92]. This meant that, while accepting that much equipment for Bokaro would be fabricated in India, the plants fabricating them were all Soviet financed, following Soviet standards [93]. This made Soviet aid suitable for Bokaro in a way US aid would not be – it would simultaneously satisfy Indian domestic production concerns [94] as well as increasing Indian dependency on Soviet technology in the industrial sector [95]. In conclusion, Soviet aid caused the original Bokaro plan to be significantly altered to a purely public-sector program, even as Indian politicians justified these changes by pointing out similarities in narratives of building up the public sector [96].

Great Power Domestic Constraints leading to Agency

Just as Indian negotiating plans for Bokaro were not unidimensional, aid policies from superpowers were also influenced by a variety of domestic factors. This created further opportunities for the Indian government to navigate its agency. From the American side, the Bokaro project arrived at a crucial juncture of domestic debates on aid policy. Aid had been favoured since the 1950s, exemplified through the Marshall Plan, 'Point 4' Truman-era aid, and President Kennedy's USAID, Peace Corps, and Alliance for Progress [97]. However, disappointing progress with modernisation in aided countries or its relation to improving American national security prompted various reviews of US aid policies [98]. One such review, dubbed the Clay Committee Report of 1963, became significant in deciding US aid policies, especially the Bokaro plan. Highlighting US overspending, the committee recom-

mended streamlining, as well as more support for promoting 'private capital' in receiver countries by both the government and US businesses [99]. Specifically, while recommending continued aid to India to ensure containment of communism, Bokaro was not supported by the Clay Committee because it was a public sector project – and would compete with the private steel sector in India [100]. Bokaro would have been the highest allocated US aid project (with over \$100 million earmarked), but in presenting its case to the US domestic audience (especially the Congress), support for it floundered. US private steel interests were opposed to the project due to future competition, and members of Congress were disappointed that despite receiving the highest amounts of aid, India had not cooperated with US policy interests internationally, as well as Bokaro being publicly owned [101]. The US came out of Bokaro even further opposed to project-based aid, instead relying on non-project finance as its primary instrument of aid [102]. All these considerations failed on an economic understanding, as Bokaro would not have hurt US steel manufacturers, and aided the Indian private sector [103]. Therefore, this domestic ideological constraint on a changing US foreign policy allowed India to escape the pressure of proceeding with a private steel plant, while also securing US aid in other sectors.

As for the Soviets, all their projects in India (including Bokaro) were to be celebrated as visions of Soviet generosity worldwide, of reliability in giving aid and delivering projects [104], and public sector triumph [105]. These visions clashed with Indian ones – where USSR was not to be the template of Indian developmentalism [106], rejecting Soviet political views on projects by reaffirming Indian nationalistic ones [107]. Projects like Bhilai were to be symbols of a future India, a future which could come from other forms of aid (e.g. rejecting Soviet agricultural aid in favor of US aid, or steel plants sponsored by the UK and West Germany) [108]. For Bokaro, India's vision was one of self-sufficiency – minimum foreign involvement, domestic (even private) consultants, etc. [109], which had been opposed by Soviet dominance in its steel sector, favouring the public sector, and Soviet symbolism. However, once the implementation of the Bokaro project started, Soviet domestic constraints in organisation and technology opened space to rearticulate Indian visions of 'swadeshi' steel. Delays in construction and revision of estimates, as well as equipment from Soviet-financed Indian factories led to suspicion of effectiveness of Soviet financing [110]. Since delays in Bokaro were seen as a major constraint on larger plans of import-substitution [111], India bought some materials from Western companies, and gave major contracts to Indian private manufacturers [112]. This reaffirmed Indian narratives as Bokaro became a uniquely Indian project (with over 95% of plant structure and 50% of foundries built in India), but with major Indian private help (about 50% of supplies)

[113], which directly contradicted the Soviet vision of an aid-symbolic and public sector dominant project. Soviet economic and infrastructural inabilities to build Bokaro on-schedule therefore created space for India to reassert narratively and materially its own agency in building a 'swadeshi' steel mill—even if private—over Soviet visions [114].

Conditionality and Emerging Donors: New Institutional Hegemonies?

Both superpowers had placed specific conditions on dispensing aid to India. These caused small-scale changes in the immediate project; however, India found 'its own path to policy reform and adjustment', as most aid-receiving countries did [115]. Apart from the several reasons listed by Browne (2006) for failures of conditionality on aid, this paper has argued that the very nature of Cold War economic hegemony—a contestation based on institutions, influenced at both global and local levels (for both aid-giver and recipient)—creates space for recipient agency, and causes conditionalities to fail as well. This theoretical insight might become pertinent considering "emerging donors", which might end the unipolar "liberal imperialism" of post-Cold War US [116]. Particularly, China—with a long history of development aid, driven by both ideological solidarity with the developing world as well as own natural resource concerns, launching a new concerted aid effort since the mid-1990s [117].

Initial analyses of Chinese economic expansion and aid efforts were seen as non-threatening to established aid architecture, as it was seen as a further integration of China into the world capitalist system [118]. However, Chinese loans, credits, trade arrangements and investments are increasingly criticised as 'exploitative, promoting poor policies, helping rogue states and increasing debt burdens on poor countries' [119], even as China plays down any revisionist ambitions to global order [120]. The emergence of these narratives of paranoia among the (i.e., Western-led) development community finds striking parallels with narratives evoked for 'containment' of Soviet 'communism' during the Cold War.

These emergent donors also engage in "symbolic" politics, especially China via 'South-South' cooperation, flipping Western symbolic claims of charity, moral obligation and technical expertise towards Third-World solidarity, shared identity and experience [121], while at the same time also pursuing self-interested national identity and geopolitical concerns just like the West [122]. All of these parallel Cold War discourses regarding the universalisation of Soviet development narratives as 'alternative' to the imperial West. Emerging donors pose challenges for the regime of international development assistance; particularly, the establishment of norms

of aid-giving via institutions [123]. This foregrounds the importance of "hegemony" (here, post-Cold War Western hegemony) via institutions once again. The Western-dominated development community—full of institutions like agencies, NGOs, foundations etc. [124] gets challenged by 'non-traditional' assistance, which not only provides alternative financing, but also alternative methods of conducting partnerships, alternative discourses, approaches, and ideologies [125]. This challenge forces dominant aid institutions like the World Bank, IMF, and OECD-DAC to reconsider policies and engage in greater dialogue with recipient countries [126]. While mostly operating within the international aid regime (and seeking to reform it via pressure), external institutions like the Asian Development Bank, regional cooperation institutions (e.g., SCO) and agencies set up to execute specific projects like the Belt and Road Initiative hint at a potential alternative institutional 'hegemony' being offered.

Conclusion

In conclusion, Indian agency depended upon a complex interaction of development politics at various levels. The institutionally competitive nature of hegemony during the Cold War, which forced superpowers to compete for the kind of aid India wanted; the specialised nature and narratives of aid, which led to Soviet sectoral dominance and assertion despite US dominance of overall aid and influence; and factors domestic to the superpowers—political and technical—which prevented total assertion and gave room for Indian priorities to assert themselves. This was due to the inherently ideological nature of economic aid programs [127]; US insistence on private industry and Soviet insistence on a fully public one. Both were thwarted by Indian insistence on planning and import substitution; reducing dependence on the Soviets eventually by producing most imported machinery, as well as making American aid more financialised since they did not wish to invest in projects.

More broadly, this meant that India was relatively free to set its own domestic policy, which would only be compromised by crises like the Bokaro one, or later foreign exchange and military crises of the mid-1960s. It is during these crises that superpowers could moderately assert their sectoral dominance and partially influence the way domestic policy was shaped – like the Soviets pushed for greater control over the vision of the Bokaro project. These insights are also generalisable to later crises – like how the mid-1960s foreign exchange and famine crises led to India being more amenable to US pressure to devalue its currency and change its agricultural policy—two sectors where the US dominated in aid, even though not receiving promised aid for it [128].

Furthermore, in a scenario of disillusionment with Western conditionalities of IMF structural adjustment in the post-Cold War

world [129], aid-receivers are once again offered leverage and agency (after a period of unipolar US hegemony via aid institutions) via new emerging donors, who offer alternatives "silently" by introducing competitive pressures into an existing system, weakening Western donor attractiveness – and influence [130]. Due to the numerous parallels with the Cold War struggle for economic hegemony, it therefore becomes important to highlight strategies of hedging and an institutionally independent domestic planning, which countries like India undertook.

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ARE UN PEACEKEEPING OPERATIONS MORE LIKELY TO BE DEPLOYED TO OIL- PRODUCING STATES?

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Abstract

Are UN peacekeeping operations (UN PKOs) more likely to be deployed to oil-producing states? Is the UN serving the strategic interests of the permanent five (P5) members of the UN Security Council (UNSC)? Realist international relations scholars argue that the most powerful states intervene in civil wars primarily to pursue national interests such as access to strategic natural resources [1], and that UN peacekeeping deployments serve the strategic interests of the P5 [2]. Moreover, empirical evidence has shown that oil-producing and oil-exporting civil war states are more likely to be targeted by foreign interventions [3]. Thus, the aim of this paper is to examine whether UN PKOs serve the strategic interests of the P5. Specifically, based on previous research and theoretical arguments put forward by realist international relations scholars, this paper uses quantitative methods to test the hypothesis that the UN is more likely to deploy PKOs to states which produce oil than to those which do not. The empirical analysis is based on a dataset covering 168 civil wars and 37 UN peacekeeping deployments from 1948 to 2014, and logistic regression analysis is used to test the hypothesis. The results from three logistic regression models provide no evidence that the UN is more likely to deploy PKOs to oil-producing states. The findings contradict realist theoretical arguments [4], and the literature on third party intervention and oil production [5]. UN PKOs do not serve the P5's strategic interest of gaining access to oil supplies, but the P5 may still have other strategic motivations for supporting them [6].

Introduction

A key theoretical debate among scholars of international relations is whether international institutions serve the strategic interests of the states which created them [7]. For realists, "international institutions are created by the more powerful states, and the institutions survive in their original form as long as they serve the major interests of their creators" [8]. Constructivists have challenged this view, arguing "that the rational-legal authority that IOs embody gives them power independent of the states which created them" [9]. Realist international relations theory posits that powerful states seek to maximise their power via competition over natural resources [10]. Specifically, access to oil supplies is

a vital geo-strategic interest of the United States and other major powers, as they are "essential for continued economic growth and military operations" [11]. Thus, according to realist scholars, "humanitarian intervention is another foreign policy tool that is used to promote national security interests or to pursue economic interests involving natural resources such as oil" [12]. Quantitative studies have found that oil-producing civil war states are more likely to be targeted by foreign interventions [13].

Given that the world's major powers (the United States, the United Kingdom, France, Russia, and China) are also the five permanent members (P5) of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC), several studies have examined whether UN peacekeeping deployments serve the strategic interests of the P5, such as access to natural resources [14]. However, studies examining the relationship between peacekeeping operations (PKOs) and natural resources have certain limitations. Previous research has focused on the influence of primary commodity exports [15] or natural resource rents [16] on UN peacekeeping deployments, but the singular effect of oil has not been analysed therein. Specific research on the effect of oil on UN peacekeeping deployments is limited, with the exception of Kyle Beardsley and Holger Schmidt [17], and Szymon Stojek and Jaroslav Tir [18]. However, the findings of the former are not based on UN PKOs alone, as the authors include other types of UN intervention (e.g., sanctions) in their analysis. Furthermore, while the latter's study exclusively focuses on UN peacekeeping missions, it relies on data from 22 UN PKOs in the pre-2000 period. According to the UN Department of Peace Operations, there have since been an additional 18 UN peacekeeping missions [19] which are omitted from Stojek and Tir's work.

The association between the deployment of UN PKOs and resources like oil is an important topic that deserves to be examined. As Beardsley and Schmidt argue,

"if countries that are of special geo-strategic importance systematically receive higher levels of care than others, then this supports the contention that institutions such as the UN are mere vehicles for the advancement of the parochial interests of their most powerful members" [20].

This could have profound implications for UN legitimacy: "if the veto powers act according to their immediate interests and do not legitimately pursue international security, they risk losing legitimacy for an institution that supports their long-term interests," which could undermine the existing liberal international order [21]. A UN which does not act in the general interest of the international community risks losing support from member states who may no longer comply with its established rules [22]. This paper

examines whether the UN is more likely to deploy PKOs to states that produce oil than to those which do not. It aims to overcome some of the limitations of previous studies by (1) using a more extensive dataset that covers 168 civil wars and 37 UN peacekeeping deployments from 1948 to 2014, (2) examining the singular effect of oil as opposed to a combination of natural resources, and (3) focusing on UN PKOs alone by excluding all other forms of UN intervention from the analysis. Thus, the dependent variable for the analysis is UN peacekeeping operations (UN PKOs) and the independent variable is oil production (Oil). The paper uses quantitative methods (logistic regression analysis) to test this association.

The article is structured into five sections. The Theory and Hypothesis section examines the literature on the association between natural resources and international intervention into war, previous research on the link between natural resources and UN peacekeeping deployments, and other possible factors which could determine the deployment of UN PKOs. The Context section provides a brief overview of UN peacekeeping and recent arguments that the P5 use UN PKOs to pursue their oil interests and considers other potential strategic interests of theirs. The Data and Methodology section is dedicated to the factors involved in the empirical analysis, including the datasets, operationalization of variables, and logistic regression. In the Analysis and Results section, three logistic regression models are interpreted, and their findings discussed. Finally, the Conclusion summarises the paper's findings and considers the limitations of its empirical analysis.

Theory and Hypothesis

Natural Resources and International Intervention into Wars

According to realist international relations theory, "states, especially major states, maximize their power relative to others, and in so doing, compete over resources deemed crucial for power, including by using force" [23]. There is evidence that natural resources (especially oil) have always been strategically important for states, as natural resources have been a key determinant of war throughout history [24]. For example, Jeff Colgan has found that oil is a leading cause of interstate war [25]. According to Colgan, "between one-quarter and one-half of interstate wars since the beginning of the modern oil age in 1973 are connected to ... oil-related causal mechanisms" [26].

Similarly, Francesco Caselli et al. have demonstrated "that the presence and location of oil are significant and quantitatively important predictors of interstate conflicts after World War II" [27]. Furthermore, Reuveny and Barbieri have shown that "a country's resources play statistically significant roles in its overall propensity to engage in war" [28]. The dispute over the Rumaila oil field,

for instance, is cited as the inciting incident for the 1990 Iraqi invasion of Kuwait [29].

Realist international relations scholars also argue that the most powerful states intervene in civil wars primarily to pursue their national interests which include access to strategic natural resources [30]. Several studies have examined whether these resources increase the likelihood of third-party intervention in civil wars, and their empirical evidence has confirmed this association [31]. A study by Vincenzo Bove et al., for instance, has found that oil-producing civil war states are more likely to be targeted by foreign interventions [32]. The authors presented their findings in an article published in *Global Observatory*:

"We found that oil production and known oil reserves are central factors motivating third-party military interventions. More specifically, we demonstrated that the higher the quantities of oil produced and/or owned by a country at civil war, the higher the likelihood of third-party intervention" [33].

Similarly, empirical results from a study by Stojek and Chacha have shown that third parties are more likely to intervene in civil wars in oil-exporting states [34]. These findings may explain why states choose to intervene in some civil wars but not in others [35]. For instance, while various civil wars have broken out in Niger, Chad, and Mali (former colonies of France) [36], only Chad—distinct for its possession of oil resources—became subject to foreign intervention. In Chad, oil exploration began in 1969 but was interrupted during the Chadian civil war [37]. France subsequently intervened in this conflict during the 1970s and 1980s, but did not intervene in Niger, which does not have any oil resources [38]. During the Tuareg rebellion in the 1990s, Mali had no known oil reserves and France elected not to intervene [39]. However, in the 2000s, there were renewed hopes for the possibility of oil extraction in Mali, and in 2012, France intervened militarily in the ensuing conflict over secession [40]. The strategic motivations for international interventions in wars have also been discussed by think tanks. For instance, *Global Policy Forum* has argued that the primary purpose of international interventions is to secure access to natural resources, which reflects the realist view [41].

"When nations send their military forces into other nations' territory, it is rarely (if ever) for "humanitarian" purposes. They are typically pursuing their narrow national interest - grabbing territory, gaining geo-strategic advantage, or seizing control of precious natural resources" [42].

Similarly, Walden Bello asserts in *Foreign Policy in Focus* that the war in Iraq has been used by the West to gain access to oil [43]:

"[T]he Bush administration retroactively justified its intervention on humanitarian grounds: getting rid of a repressive dictatorship and imposing democratic rule... Iraq today is a base for U.S. geopolitical control of the oil-rich Middle East. It is a state propped up by U.S. military power, its oil resources and its wealth geared primarily to serve the West" [44].

Natural Resources and UN Peacekeeping Deployments

According to Laura Neack, "states become involved in UN peacekeeping mainly to serve their own national interests" [45]. Neack examined 18 UN PKOs from 1948 to 1990 and found that state involvement in UN peacekeeping is best explained by realist international relations theory [46]. Contrary to constructivists, who argue that normative considerations drive state behaviour, realists assert that material interests predominate [47]. Consequently, according to realist international relations scholars, states respond selectively to humanitarian crises, and "whether or not the international community takes major action is largely determined by the various interests of great powers, most notably by the permanent members of the Security Council" [48].

A study by Martin Binder and Jonathan Golub has revealed that the national interests of the P5 continue to influence the UNSC's agenda [49]. Their findings "are consistent with the widely held realist belief that P-5 parochial interests are key drivers of UNSC decision-making, including at the agenda-setting stage where they have no formal veto power" [50]. Several scholars have examined whether access to natural resources (a key P5 national interest) influence the deployment of UN PKOs [51]. David Gibbs has argued that American participation in the UN peacekeeping mission in Somalia can be explained by its interest in Somalian oil [52]:

"Somalia lies astride a major oil shipping route that the US military has long regarded as strategically important; the country also contains oil reserves and some moderately large investments by the Continental Oil company. One need not assume that these interests alone were sufficient to trigger the peacekeeping operation, but it seems doubtful that US policymakers would have disregarded these economic and strategic interests altogether" [53].

Using data from the Democratic Republic of the Congo from between 1999 and 2005, Ashly Townsen and Bryce Reeder observe that the amount of UN peacekeeping forces increases around locations with surface-based natural resources [54], yielding

"...evidence that either commanders on the ground choose these locations in an act of passive peacekeeping, or alternatively, that

these locations are hot spots of violence and thus are common deployment sites for commanders on the ground" [55].

On the other hand, Virginia Page Fortna, using data from 115 civil wars between 1944 and 1997, demonstrated that, since 1989, the UN has been less likely to deploy PKOs to states with heightened dependence on primary commodity exports [56]. Similarly, in their study on 19 UN PKOs in the post-Cold War period (initiated or still active after 1988), Michael Gilligan and Stephen Stedman found "no evidence that the United Nations intervenes more in countries with high primary commodity exports" [57]. Research by Richard Perkins and Eric Neumayer examining the effects of natural resource rents on multilateral PKOs (including those conducted by non-UN regional organisations and coalitions) discovered that natural resource rents are not a statistically significant predictor of peacekeeper deployment [58].

Most previous quantitative studies, however, have not separately analysed the effects of oil on UN peacekeeping deployment. For instance, studies by Gilligan and Stedman [59], and Fortna [60], rely on a dataset by Michael Doyle and Nicholas Sambanis with data on primary commodity exports from the World Bank [61]. World Bank data on primary commodity exports (the variable *sxp*) includes not only oil but also numerous other natural resources such as wheat, coffee, livestock, tobacco, natural gas, coal, silver, and copper [62]. Perkins and Neumayer rely on natural resource rent data, also from the World Bank [63]. The World Bank defines natural resource rents as "the sum of oil rents, natural gas rents, coal rents (hard and soft), mineral rents, and forest rents" [64]. Finally, the findings by Townsen and Reeder rely on a single case, and they are based on natural resources such as timber reserves and alluvial diamonds [65].

The only quantitative studies which have focused on the relationship between oil and UN PKOs are those by Kyle Beardsley and Holger Schmidt [66], and Szymon Stojek and Jaroslav Tir [67]. To this end, Beardsley and Schmidt conclude that "the UN is not more likely to intervene when a crisis involves states which control substantial oil resources," while Stojek and Tir show that oil exporting states are not high value targets for UN missions [68].

However, only 2.21% of observations in the study by Beardsley and Schmidt were categorised as peacekeeping; they also included other forms of UN intervention in their analysis, such as passive diplomacy, active diplomacy, and sanctions [69]. Furthermore, the finding by Stojek and Tir is based on 22 UN PKOs prior to the year 2000, but their analysis excludes 18 UN PKOs conducted in the 21st century [70].

Based on the literature, the following hypothesis was formulated:

H1: The UN is more likely to deploy peacekeeping operations to states which produce oil than to states which do not produce any oil.

Other Determinants of UN Peacekeeping Deployments

There remains the possibility that the deployment of UN PKOs to civil war states can be determined by other factors, and that the relationship between oil production and UN PKOs may be spurious [71]. Another possible motivation for the P5 to authorise a PKO to an intra-state war is whether the state in question is among their former colonies [72].

"Great powers often maintain relatively close political ties with former colonies... [They] might conceive of former colonies as still part of their sphere of influence, given that young independent states typically retain the language and institutions introduced by the former colonial power" [73].

Gilligan and Stedman have examined whether the UN is more likely to deploy PKOs to former P5 colonies but found no evidence [74]. Another possible determinant of the deployment of UN PKOs is a state's level of democracy [75]. It has been argued that

"...democracies are more likely to be disposed towards spreading democracy to non-democratic territorial spaces, sometimes by force. Central to these claims is the idea that democratic polities regard the creation, maintenance, and expansion of well-functioning democracies as part of the national interest, supporting mutually beneficial stability, security, and prosperity" [76].

It is possible, however, that third parties have benevolent motives and intervene in non-democratic states to address human rights violations and atrocities attendant to civil conflicts [77]. Stojek and Tir argue that the UN is 19% less likely to deploy peacekeeping operations to democratic states, though Gilligan and Stedman find little evidence of any such compassionate tendency [78]. Finally, other domestic factors, such as a state's economic size (GDP) and population, may affect the deployment of UN PKOs [79]. According to Aysegul Aydin, low-income civil war states may be more likely targets of intervention because third parties, either for strategic or benevolent reasons, might be concerned that these states may fail due to the risk posed by armed opposition groups [80]. Gilligan and Stedman use population size as a control variable in their analysis to test whether the UN avoids conflicts in countries with larger populations, but find no statistically significant effect thereof on UN peacekeeping deployment [81].

History of UN Peacekeeping Operations

The United Nations was founded in 1945 by 51 countries at the conclusion of World War II [82]. The nascent UN's purpose was to maintain international peace and security [83]. In 1948, the UNSC deployed the first UN PKO to the Middle East [84]. During the early years of the Cold War, UN PKOs were primarily deployed to inter-state conflicts, such as that between India and Pakistan, and the Suez Crisis in Egypt [85]. UN PKOs during this period were mainly concerned with ceasefire maintenance and preventing further conflict escalation [86]. Most studies on UN peacekeeping during the Cold War focused on examining whether it was an effective tool for conflict resolution [87].

Following the Cold War, UN PKOs were primarily deployed to intra-state conflicts, and the number of missions increased rapidly [88]. Between 1989 and 1994 alone, 20 PKOs were authorised by the UNSC [89]. These authorizations raised the number of peacekeeping forces from 11,000 to 75,000 [90]. UN PKOs also took on additional tasks, including the implementation of peace agreements, the demobilization and disarmament of combatants, human rights monitoring, and the creation of democratic institutions [91]. During the mid-1990s, however, the reputation of UN peacekeeping reached its nadir after a sequence of failures in Rwanda, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Somalia [92]. Most research on UN peacekeeping in the 1990s, therefore, has focused on the shortcomings of such operations [93].

The UN introduced reforms to its peacekeeping strategy in the early 21st century to strengthen its capacity to sustain and effectively manage field operations [94]. There was renewed optimism for UN peacekeeping, and the UN took on more complex tasks such as serving as an interim administration for Kosovo [95]. Most UN peacekeeping missions in the 21st century have been deployed to intra-state wars in Africa, and the number of peacekeepers serving under the UN today has grown to over 110,000 [96]. The academic literature on UN peacekeeping in this period has mostly focused on whether it makes peace more durable, and why its operational efficacy varies [97].

UN Peacekeeping and P5 Oil Interests

In addition to the academic literature, many in the media have also claimed that the P5 use UN PKOs to gain access to oil resources [98]. Writing in *The Guardian*, Roger Howard argues that

"[h]umanitarian concern among policymakers in Washington is ultimately self-interested. The United States is willing to impose new sanctions on the Sudan government if the latter refuses to

accept a United Nations peacekeeping force, but it is no coincidence that Sudan, unlike Congo, has oil—lots of it—and strong links with China, a country the US regards as a strategic rival in the struggle for Africa's natural resources" [99].

Furthermore, writing in *Foreign Policy*, Colum Lynch asserts that the UN PKO in South Sudan is used by China to protect its oil interests in the country [100].

"Beijing quietly secured a deal that will put the U.N.'s famed blue helmets to work protecting workers in South Sudan's oil installations, where China has invested billions of dollars over the years and holds a major financial stake—at least 40 percent—in South Sudan's largest oil field" [101].

The largest foreign investor in both Sudan and South Sudan is the China National Petroleum Corporation (CNPC), a state-owned company [102]. This is unsurprising given that South Sudan has Africa's third largest oil reserves [103]. According to the Institute for Security and Development Policy, and Mamata Kumari, China participates in UN PKOs primarily due to its interest in oil resource access, as demonstrated by the mission in South Sudan [104].

Other Strategic Interests of the P5

Apart from gaining access to oil supplies, the P5 could have many other strategic interests in mind when authorising the deployment of PKOs [105]. Indeed, "states intervene to change or maintain the international distribution of power, to broaden or defend their respective geo-political spheres of influence, or to defend or extend their respective ideologies" [106]. An armed conflict has the potential to produce spillover effects such as refugee flows, international terrorism, and disruptions to international trade, which may increase the risk of conflict diffusion, and result in costs for neighbouring states and the P5 [107]. Previous research has shown "that civil wars, on average, result in roughly a 30% reduction in international trade" and "that a state with substantial trade ties to a particular region is more likely to intervene in a civil conflict in that region than in a conflict in an economically insignificant region" [108]. Focusing on UN peacekeeping interventions, Stojek and Tir have found "that a civil war-plagued country is more likely to receive a UN PKO the greater its trade with the P5" [109]. The P5 may also wish to aid allies directly involved in armed conflict [110]. For example, during the Cold War, the United States and the Soviet Union competed for allies in the Middle East; there were several crises involving their regional allies which motivated them to authorise the deployment of UN peacekeepers, such as during the Yom Kippur War as part of the United Nations Emergency Force II (UNEF II) [111].

The Datasets

To test the hypothesis, this paper utilizes the Correlates of War intra-state wars dataset, version 5.1, by Jeffrey Dixon and Meredith Sarkees [112], the Polity5 annual time series dataset, version 2018, by Monty Marshall and Ted Gurr [113], and the Quality of Government standard time series dataset, version Jan21, by Jan Teorell et al. [114].

The Correlates of War dataset by Dixon and Sarkees includes data on 420 civil wars from 1816 to 2014 [115]. It contains 43 variables and provides the start year of each intra-state war, as well as the country code for the primary participant in that war (defined as the state government: side A) [116]. The Correlates of War Project defines an intra-state war as a conflict that causes a minimum of 1000 combatant fatalities in a year [117].

The Polity5 annual time series dataset by Marshall and Gurr provides information on a country's political regime characteristics and transitions, and includes data on 37 variables from 1800-2018 [118]. The *polity2* variable provides data on a country's level of democracy as a score ranging from -10 to +10 [119]. According to the Polity5 project, a country is classified as a democracy if it has a *polity2* score of 6 or greater [120].

The Quality of Government standard time series dataset by Teorell et al. includes data on 1846 variables from 1946 to 2020, and the unit of analysis is country-year [121]. The variables of interest in the Quality of Government dataset are oil production in metric tons (*ross_oil_prod*), a country's former colonial ruler (*ht_colonial*), population size in millions (*pwt_pop*), and GDP per capita (*gle_cg_dpc*). The original source for the data on oil production in metric ton are Michael Ross and Paasha Mahdavi [122].

Given that the data for this analysis is contained in multiple datasets, this study merged the Correlates of War and Quality of Government datasets. This was accomplished using R Studio to create two new variables: country code (*ccodecow*) and year. These two figures were then accordingly merged by country code and year. Before collating the data, the analysis excluded all civil wars in the Correlates of War data that started or ended before 1948. Observations which did not have valid country codes, or which had two civil wars in the same year, were also removed.

The merged dataset contained 168 remaining observations. Thereafter, the Polity5 dataset was used to examine the *polity2* scores of civil war states and implement this data in the merged Correlates of War and Quality of Government dataset.

Operationalisation of Variables

First, two new variables were created in the merged dataset: *UN PKO* and *Oil*. The dependent variable, *UN PKO* (United Nations peacekeeping operation), is a categorical (binary) variable. It was coded as "1" if a UN PKO was deployed to a state because of civil war, and as "0" if there was no such UN peacekeeping deployment. The analysis excluded all UN PKOs deployed in response to inter-state conflict, such as UNEF I (United Nations Emergency Force I) to Egypt in response to the 1956 Suez Crisis. All information on UN peacekeeping deployments was obtained from the United Nations Department of Peace Operations website, which provides data on all past and current operations [123]. The independent variable, *Oil*, is also a categorical variable. Following Aysegul Aydin [124] and Noel Anderson [125], it was coded as "1" if a state was an oil producer during the year its civil war started, and as "0" if the state produced no oil that year.

The analysis further established two new control variables in the merged dataset: *P5 colony* and *Democracy*. Both are categorical variables. Since the *ht_colonial* variable in the Quality of Government dataset also includes non-P5 former colonial powers (the Netherlands, Spain, Italy, Portugal, Belgium, and Australia), the *P5 colony* control variable was only coded as "1" if a state was a former colony of a P5 member, and otherwise as "0". *Democracy* was coded as "1" if a state had a *polity2* score of 6 or greater one year before the start of its civil war, and as "0" if its *polity2* score was less than 6 a year prior to its civil conflict.

Finally, following Anderson [126], and Gilligan and Stedman [127], other domestic factors such as population size (*pwt_pop*) and GDP per capita (*gle_cgdp*) were included as control variables. To avoid skewness in the data, this study transformed the *Population* and *GDP per capita* variables into logarithmic values.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics

Variables	N	Mean	SD	Min	Max
UN PKO	168	0.22	0.42	0	1
Oil	147	0.6	0.49	0	1
P5 colony	154	0.48	0.5	0	1
Democracy	157	0.13	0.34	0	1
Population	121	2.93	1.54	-0.21	6.81
GDP per capita	136	6.8	1.06	4.34	9.12

Notes: N = number of observations. P5 = permanent five members of the UNSC. SD = standard deviation. Missing values were removed.

In the merged dataset, there were 168 civil wars with 1000 casualties in a year from 1948 to 2014, and the UN deployed PKOs to 37

of these conflicts. The descriptive statistics in Table 1 above show that the mean for the dependent variable, *UN PKO*, was 0.22, which means that the UN deployed PKOs to just 22% of intra-state wars. The mean for the independent variable, *Oil*, was 0.6, meaning that 60% of civil war states are oil producers.

The means for the control variables, *P5 colony* and *Democracy*, were 0.48 and 0.13, respectively, which demonstrates that 48% of civil war states are former colonies of the P5, and only 13% of civil war states are classified as democracies. The variables *UN PKO*, *Oil*, *P5 colony*, and *Democracy* range from 0 to 1.

Although the mean score of *Oil* was higher than that of *P5 colony* (0.6 compared to 0.48), their standard deviations were almost equal (0.49 and 0.5, respectively). However, *UN PKO* had a higher mean than *Democracy* (0.22 compared to 0.13), but their standard deviations differed (0.42 for *UN PKO* and 0.34 for *Democracy*).

Logistic Regression

Logistic regression analysis is a quantitative method which models binary dependent variables. It was used here to test this paper's hypothesis [128]. The following equation was used for logistic regression models with a binary dependent variable and multiple independent variables [129].

$$\text{logit}(p) = \log\left(\frac{p}{1-p}\right) = \beta_0 + \beta_1 x_1 + \cdots + \beta_k x_k.$$

For example, the equation for examining the relationship between *UN PKO* and *Oil* was:

$$\text{logit}(p) = \beta_0 + \beta_1 * \text{Oil}$$

When including multiple control variables (e.g. *P5 colony* and *Democracy*), the following equation applied:

$$\text{logit}(p) = \beta_0 + \beta_1 * \text{Oil} + \beta_2 * \text{P5colony} + \beta_3 * \text{Democracy}$$

I am mainly interested in whether the regression coefficient of *Oil* was significant in any of the models. Statistical significance is indicated by a p-value of less than 0.05, a standard in political science [130]. If the regression coefficient of *Oil* were positive and statistically significant in any of the models, then this would provide support for the hypothesis (H1) that the UN is more likely to deploy PKOs to states which produce oil than to those which do not. If, however, the regression coefficient of *Oil* was not statistically significant, or negative and statistically significant (i.e. the UN is *less* likely to deploy PKOs to states which produce oil than to states which do not), there would be no evidence for the hypothesis.

Table 2: Logistic regressions of UN Peacekeeping Operations

	Model 1: Oil		Model 2: Oil, P5 colony, Democracy		Model 3: Oil, Population, GDP per capita	
	Coefficient	SE	Coefficient	SE	Coefficient	SE
Oil	-0.427	0.407	-0.233	0.425	1.031	0.641
P5 colony			-0.683	0.437		
Democracy			-1.653	1.057		
Population					-0.772***	0.242
GDP per capita					-0.195	0.274
Constant	-1.076***	-0.299	-0.744**	0.353	1.514	
N	147		141		115	
AIC	154.35		146.35		117.35	
Log likelihood	-75.173		-69.176		-54.677	

Notes: ** = $p < 0.05$; *** = $p < 0.01$. N = number of observations. AIC = Akaike Information Criterion. Missing values (NAs) were removed.

Table 2 illustrates the results of three logistic regression analyses. The first regression analysis (Model 1) only included the dependent variable, UN peacekeeping operations (*UN PKO*), and the main independent variable, oil production (*Oil*). It found no evidence to suggest that the UN is more likely to deploy PKOs to oil-producing states than to non-oil-producing states. Results from the first regression analysis (Model 1) showed that the coefficient for the independent variable, *Oil*, was negative (-0.427), suggesting that the UN is less likely to deploy PKOs to oil-producing states than to non-oil-producing states; this could not be confirmed as the coefficient was not statistically significant ($p > 0.05$).

A second logistic regression analysis of the dependent variable and independent variable (Model 2) followed, with two added control variables (*P5 colony* and *Democracy*). Results from Model 2 demonstrated that the coefficient of the independent variable, *Oil*, remained negative (-0.233) and not statistically significant ($p > 0.05$). Moreover, the coefficients of the control variables, *P5 colony* and *Democracy*, were both negative (-0.683 and -1.653, respectively) and not statistically significant ($p > 0.05$). Consequently, I found no evidence that the UN is more likely to deploy PKOs to former colonies of the P5 than to states not colonized by the P5. The analysis also found no evidence that the UN is more likely to deploy PKOs to non-democratic states than to democratic ones.

Finally, a third logistic regression analysis of the dependent and independent variables (Model 3) was carried out, with the addition of *GDP per capita* and *Population* as control variables. Interest-

ingly, the analysis found evidence that the UN is more likely to deploy PKOs to countries with smaller populations than to those with larger ones. The coefficient for the control variable *Population* was negative (-0.772) and statistically significant, as the p-value was well below 0.01. The coefficient for the variable *GDP per capita* was also negative (-0.195), but not statistically significant. The coefficient for the variable *Oil* was positive in Model 3 (1.031), which indicates that the UN is more likely to deploy peacekeeping missions to oil-producing states, but this observation remained statistically insignificant ($p > 0.05$). Consequently, the hypothesis (H1) that the UN is more likely to deploy PKOs to states which produce oil than to those which do not was rejected.

The Akaike Information Criterion (AIC) in logistic regression is used to judge model fit, with a lower AIC representing a better model fit [131]. The AIC was 154.35 in Model 1, 146.35 in Model 2, and 117.35 in Model 3, which shows that Model 3 had a better fit than that of both Model 1 and Model 2. Similarly, the log likelihood, another indicator of model fit [132], was -75.173 in Model 1, -69.176 in Model 2, and -54.677 in Model 3, which also demonstrates that Model 3 had the better model fit. These results contradicted theoretical arguments by realist international relations scholars, who assert that UN PKOs serve the strategic interests of the P5 [133], and that humanitarian intervention is a tool for gaining access to natural resources [134]. The empirical results also did not support the findings of scholars who argue that third parties are more likely to intervene in oil producing [135] or oil exporting [136] civil war states. However, this study did support the findings of Stojek and Tir, as well as those of Beardsley and Schmidt, who have argued that the UN is not more likely to intervene in oil-exporting states [137]. The statistical insignificance of the *P5 colony* and *Democracy* coefficients provides support for Gilligan and Stedman's results, namely that the UN is not more likely to deploy PKOs to former P5 colonies and that there is no strong association between a state's level of democracy and UN peacekeeping deployment [138]. However, contrary to their findings [139], this paper concludes that population size happens to be a statistically significant factor in determining the deployment of a UN peacekeeping mission, meaning the UN is more likely to deploy PKOs to countries with smaller populations than to those with larger ones.

Conclusion

The aim of this article was to examine whether UN PKOs serve the strategic interests of the permanent five members of the UN Security Council. Specifically, it tested the hypothesis that the UN is more likely to deploy PKOs to states which produce oil than to those which do not. The hypothesis was based on (1) the realist

argument that states intervene in civil wars chiefly to pursue national interests such as strategic natural resources access [140], (2) previous research on third party intervention and oil-production in civil war states [141], and (3) various arguments that the P5 use UN peacekeeping deployments to gain access to oil supplies [142]. A logistic regression analysis of the dependent variable (UN PKOs) and the independent variable (oil production) was conducted to test the hypothesis. To address the possibility of a spurious relationship, the analysis included logistic regression models with several control variables: a state's level of democracy, GDP per capita, population size, and former P5 colonial status. The empirical analysis was based on a dataset covering 168 civil wars and 37 UN peacekeeping deployments from 1948 to 2014. The results from these three logistic regression analyses did not provide evidence that the UN is more likely to deploy PKOs to oil-producing states than to non-oil-producing states, as the independent variable (*Oil*) was consistently statistically insignificant. These findings contradicted previous research which suggests that oil supplies increase the likelihood of third-party intervention into civil wars [143], as well as arguments made by scholars, think tanks, and the media who assert that the P5 deploy UN PKOs to gain access to strategic natural resources such as oil [144]. UN PKOs do not serve the P5's strategic interest of gaining access to oil supplies, but the P5 may have other motivations for supporting UN PKOs [145].

This paper has a few important limitations. First, other possible strategic interests of the P5, such as trade ties and alliances, were not included in the empirical analysis [146]. Second, even though two of the logistic regression analyses controlled for several factors, these were based entirely on realist theoretical explanations, which left out many possible alternative theoretical explanations of UN peacekeeping deployments. For example, constructivist international relations scholars argue that the deployment of UN PKOs can be primarily explained by the severity of a humanitarian crisis and the level of media attention, while institutionalists point to previous UN involvement in a conflict as a possible factor [147]. Thus, given that the empirical analysis left out a range of other important theoretical factors, it may still be possible that a spurious relationship exists in the analysis [148]. Third, there were a number of missing values in the dataset used in the empirical analysis. For instance, although data on oil production was unavailable for just 21 of the 168 civil war states, population size data was unavailable for 47 of the 168 civil war states. Future research examining the relationship between oil production and UN PKOs could further expand on this article's empirical analysis by examining UN PKOs deployed to both intra-state and inter-state wars, and by including additional explanatory variables such as the severity of a humanitarian crisis, the level of media attention, and trade ties or alliances.

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PORTIA ROELOFS, *GOOD GOVERNANCE
IN NIGERIA: RETHINKING ACCOUNTABILITY
AND TRANSPARENCY IN NIGERIA*, CAM-
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Portia Roelofs' latest work delves into the complex tapestry of Southwest Nigeria's political history, deftly analysing the region's political binaries and characteristics, of which technocracy, patronage, developmentalism, and contrasting views on accountability form the major components. That Nigerian politics is ambiguous, disproportionately shaped by elite competition and influenced by personal relations, is something that scholars of the country have come to establish over the years. Continuing this line of scholarship, Roelofs, a London School of Economics-trained political scientist, builds on her findings from her PhD to respond to Raufu Abdul Mustapha's call to "rethink the good governance agenda [so that we can all] learn from the ways that [its] conceptions have been contested on the ground" [1].

Southwest Nigeria serves as Exhibit A in her probe. Amidst the Cold War's conclusion and the subsequent surge of democracy across Africa, International Financial Institutions (IFIs) such as the IMF and World Bank began using the term 'good governance' to define the standard of politics that Western countries expected from African leaders. This standard, echoing the Weberian model, emphasised democracy, free markets, privatisation, constitutionalism, and accountability, portraying the state and politics as impersonal, rational, bureaucratic, and managerial. The good governance agenda was readily undertaken by several African countries. For instance—from 1991—both France and the EU tied financial contributions to democracy and human rights, which prompted many Francophone countries to hold elections, draft new constitutions, and create national assemblies [2]. Nigeria—having not transitioned to democracy until 1999—trailed other African countries in this regard. Yet, when it came to it, Nigeria's embrace of the good governance agenda was fulsome in many respects. As Roelofs notes, this is particularly true for the southwest of the country, especially Lagos.

The author's main thesis argues that good governance is a contested notion which is not reducible to the tenets of the good governance agenda heralded by western actors and IFIs, such as the

IMF and World Bank. As such, Roelofs advances a novel reading of good governance 'from below,' interacting with individuals on the ground whose alternative conceptions and ideals of good governance were largely overlooked as elites in southwest Nigeria enacted measures consistent with the good governance agenda promoted by IFIs. As Roelofs demonstrates, in order to understand why southwestern elites pursued this course of action, historical analysis becomes necessary.

The opening chapter of the book delves into the history and evolution of good governance conceptions in southwest Nigeria from the era of British colonial rule to the start of the Fourth Republic. Amid the ripple effects of Western education beginning to bear fruit, Roelofs draws attention to the manner in which British colonialism influenced the socio-political thought of elites in the region, eventually leading to proponents of two kinds of politics. According to Roelofs, it is against this backdrop, that the concept of 'Olaju' emerged as an integral component within Yoruba politics and the defining socio-political ideal among elite and middle-class members who sought to challenge traditional social structures. Olaju itself refers to the indigenous conception of good governance among those in southwest Nigeria which emphasises enlightenment as a normative feature of political leaders. Hence, as Roelofs argues, education became the dividing line in Southwest Nigerian politics. Newly educated elites sought to play more active roles in government across the region, thereby usurping the old elites who held with them alternative concepts of leadership and good governance that were not aligned with Olaju.

This sect of old elites positioned themselves as the populist champions of the less educated and nationalist cause amid perceived threats to national unity and the long-standing conservative social order from Olaju-based good governance. Roelofs identifies Obafemi Awolowo as the political embodiment and legacy figure of Olaju good governance. Revered as the *Asiwaju* (leader) of the Yorubas and serving as the Premier of the Western Region, Awolowo's commitment to enlightened governance was most evident in his free education policy. Indeed, the tangible success of Awolowo's developmental approach is indicated by the fact that during his time as the Western Region's leader school enrolments doubled. Thus, Awolowo's progressivism (referred to as *Awoism*) served as the model for 'epistemic good governance' and continues to influence understandings of what it means to be a 'progressive' in southwest Nigeria today. Nevertheless—as highlighted by Roelofs—Awolowo's political philosophy wasn't without its critics.

Opponents of *Awoism* perceived the embrace of Olaju good governance as covertly ethno-nationalist and held it with suspicion. Highlighting this counter-narrative to *Awoism*, Roelofs notes a re-

mark by Adegoke Adelabu, a nationalist contemporary of Awolowo who critiqued Awolowo's political philosophy as exclusionary and rooted in Yoruba nationalism. Adelabu infamously drew a distinction between his brand of politics and Awolowo's, stating "My Yoruba birth is an accident. My Muslim faith is by chance. It is not that we too do not love our tribe, religion, class, and region, but we love Nigeria more" [3]. In an attempt to counter the popularity of Awolowo's Olaju-based good governance, Adelabu depicted his brand of populist-nationalism as rooted in age-old traditions of accountable leadership, a sentiment Roelofs describes as "Amala politics" [4]. Such a conception underscores the importance of leaders acting as benevolent patrons, redistributing political wealth and resources with long-term human development coming second.

While aspects of Amala politics tend to become commonplace across political parties during election cycles, most notably when politicians give money to the poor in exchange for support, Adelabu's political philosophy was premised on the sustained prioritisation of immediate economic benefits as a way of doing politics to create strong linkages between the general population and political leaders. In doing so, nationalist politicians like Adelabu sought to address and rectify what they saw as the limitations of the Olaju-based Awoism, namely the lacking tangibility of its political program and emphasis on long-term human development through education, rather than immediate economic benefits manifested through the disbursement of resources, or clientelism. By the mid-20th century, southwest Nigeria witnessed the emergence of two major political ideologies. Both, claiming to be rooted in the region's complex political history, professed to embody an indigenous ideal of good governance.

From the mid to later stages of the book, Roelofs turns her attention to the Fourth Republic, and analyses how the development of Lagos is the product of Olaju good governance—what the writer and others have referred to as the 'Lagos Model'. To many outsiders, the success of Lagos presents an intriguing anomaly within Nigeria, hinting at the latent potential awaiting the country should other states adopt this model. However, Roelofs contends that Lagos's success is not merely rooted in its adherence to Olaju tenets of bureaucratic proficiency and technocratic leadership. Lagos stands apart, materially speaking. Among the 36 states in Nigeria, Lagos remains unparalleled in its ability to attract investment, leveraging a historic significance that spans decades.

This unique position catalysed its transformation; eager to spotlight Lagos as a beacon for their good governance blueprint, IFIs and the UK's Department for International Development (DFiD) were quick to fund and steer donor-driven projects in the state. With champions of the Lagos Model, like Bola Tinubu, possess-

ing extensive networks for state investment and sharing ideological alignments with the good governance doctrine (particularly regarding the private sector's role in development), Lagos was primed for the adoption of a neo-liberal developmentalism that nonetheless placed an Olaju-like emphasis on public investment and the personal qualities of leaders. Roelofs further outlines how other states in the southwest have tried and failed to mirror the Lagos Model, notably Oyo. These outcomes are a testament to how the ideological, material, and bureaucratic forces at play make Lagos a de-facto enclave economy that is a difficult model to replicate, not only within the southwest, but the whole of Nigeria.

Upon analysing the material aspects of the Lagos Model, Roelofs' assessment of indigenous conceptions of good governance reverts back to the ideological lens wherein she provides an analysis of how accountability and transparency are understood by adherents of Olaju good governance and alternative conceptions. Contemporary manifestations of Olaju politics, such as the Lagos Model, have a tendency to stress long-term delivery which is perhaps a relic of the long-termism that was characteristic of Awolowo's brand of developmentalism. However, the fault line in Olaju politics in this respect is its neglect of context and the indigenous character of politics in the southwest.

The emphasis on accountability is not so much about fostering access, but about yielding measurable results over a medium to long-term period. Transparency, as opposed to addressing prevalent concerns about nepotism and cabal politics, is merely about meeting technical standards expected of a rational bureaucracy by opening access to state finances—irrespective of the extent to which such records have been subject to tampering. Importantly, as Roelofs highlights, in a country where voters value direct access to politicians and where personal relations continue to mould the political landscape, contemporary forms of Olaju-based politics can therefore come across as disconnected and equally vulnerable to the accusations levelled against it during the era of Awolowo. Hence, the solution, according to Roelofs, lies in Olaju progressives embracing the notion that a "personal politics without clientelism" is possible [5].

However, as to whether such is possible in Nigeria, given the entrenched nature of patron-client relations which extends beyond the political realm, is more of an open question. Nigeria has been the subject of countless writings, yet Roelofs' exploration of good governance in the southwest stands out for its profound intellectual depth. Roelofs achieves her goal of reshaping our understanding of good governance in Nigeria, presenting potential solutions tailored to its distinct political climate while simultaneously revealing the ways in which reading politics from below can provide

a fresh perspective on how we understand and respond to certain phenomena. While the book primarily delves into the politics sparked by the Lagos Model rather than the intricacies of the model itself, it offers a crucial perspective for those keen to grasp how Bola Tinubu, the mastermind behind the Lagos Model, might navigate his presidential tenure.

Notes

1. Roelofs, Portia. 2023. *Good Governance in Nigeria*. Cambridge University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1017/9781009235471>. p. 2.
2. Olsen, Gorm Rye. 1998. "Europe and the Promotion of Democracy in Post Cold War Africa: How Serious Is Europe and for What Reason?" *African Affairs* 97 (388): p.343. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/723214>.
3. *Supra*, note 1, p.76.
4. *Ibid.*, p.77.
5. *Ibid.*, p. 248.