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FROM THE EDITORS: The Global South

by Eugene Finkel, Adria Lawrence, and Andrew Mertha



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All of us – particularly those of us based in the United States – need to get out more. True, we have been constrained in doing so due to COVID-19, but the problem of neglecting the contextualizing effects of conducting research *in situ* existed long before then. This is not meant to re-ignite the “positivist vs. area studies debate,” which is a different, albeit adjacent, discussion. Rather, it is a question of hearing the voices of our colleagues who are asking the same questions and looking at the same classes of phenomena as us, but from substantially different vantage points than those of us in the Global North.

Oftentimes, the constraints can be challenging, even insurmountable. The costs of attending professional conferences, the hurdle of acceptance to top journals, and insufficient research funds are challenging for all of us. But combining this with other factors such as political volatility and societal unpredictability deepen these other problems (ironically, by displacing them) by an order of magnitude. These are the kinds of matters our colleagues in the Global South have to contend with on a daily basis. Few of us have to weigh submitting paper for consideration against the possibility of being imprisoned for writing it. We may get annoyed at the occasional

poor quality of a Zoom call, but spare a thought for those seeking to engage the rest of the field with a 90s-era vintage Internet connection or within a heavily-censored online platform.

And yet, these are voices that need to be heard. This is not simply because of the aspirations of the discipline to be an inclusive big tent. It is they who have a visceral understanding of the issues at stake when discussing the ethics of drone warfare. It is they for whom civil war is not a matter of theoretical spit-balling, but rather something that they might wake up in the middle of. It is they for whom corruption is not simply a way of explaining rent-seeking, but an actual, direct financial burden on them and their families. How might we conceptualize questions of inequality, anticipate violent regime change, understand the downtime between the events we measure, and appreciate the full range of costs of political decision-making and behavior from the perspective of those colleagues who live and breathe what we teach and research?

Our colleagues from the Global South do not share the analytical blind spots, the conceptual lacunae, or the dearth of empirical data that plague those of us who have never visited these places, or do so from the vantage point of a few





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days at the capital or ensconced in conferences or workshops where what we see of life there is limited to bus rides from the venue to dinner and then to the hotel.

We are, therefore, particularly delighted to be able to present these papers, all of which are written by scholars who are from, or who work in, the Global South. This includes contributions from people permanently based in Qatar, Tunisia, India, Chile, Mexico, Kyrgyzstan, and Singapore. We also have included US- and Europe-based scholars from Myanmar, Turkey, Afghanistan, Nigeria, and Palestine. They include scholars at every stage of their careers, as well as policy professionals from think tanks.

At a time in which travel remains sharply curtailed to most of the developing world, we can at least benefit from the scholarship on display here. We hope that the new perspectives, approaches, and ideas contained herein are not only helpful to you in your own research but that it incubates a desire to experience these phenomena where they are occurring as a way of broadening all of our intellectual horizons.

Our issue covers a wide range of topics affecting political and social relations in the Global South. Mohammad Qadam Shah focuses on the challenges to democratizations in the Global South. In the case of Afghanistan, he shows, these challenges include not only domestic factors, but also direct interference of foreign powers which for several centuries interfered with and shaped the country's political development thus precluding the consolidation of homegrown democratic practices and institutions.

The legacies of colonial rule extend well beyond regime type and political institutions. In Nigeria, argues Ada Johnson-Kanu, ethnic groups that were more exposed to Western style education

became overrepresented in the colonial bureaucracy and remain overrepresented in contemporary federal government structures, a situation that has important implication for distributive politics in the country. In Myanmar, writes Htet Thiha Zaw, the legacy of pre-colonial and colonial-era administration and policing (along with the data produced by colonial administrators) can help better understand the patterns of contemporary repression and violence.

Violence is another major problem plaguing the Global South. Ezgi Irgil's contribution centers on the relations between host community members (HMC) and Syrian refugees in Bursa, Turkey. Whereas most analyses of HMC-refugees' relations focus on structural factors and demographic attributes, the micro-analysis of Bursa demonstrates how everyday politics and local interactions shape the attitudes towards refugees. Sandra Ley analyzes responses to criminal violence in Mexico and demonstrates how social networks facilitate mobilization and helps people to overcome fear and demand justice, accountability and safety.

A number of contributions focus on political dynamics across different regime types. Laryssa Chomiak asks: Why in Tunisia, arguably the only success story of the Arab Spring, so many citizens are dissatisfied with democracy? Her analysis moves beyond formal institutions and highlights the importance of discursive practices and representations of the previous autocratic rule. Alexander Arifianto is also interested in the phenomenon of democratic backsliding. His contribution focuses on Indonesia's largest Muslim organization, Nahdlatul Ulama and shows how a changing political landscape forced this traditionally moderate group to engage in actions that contribute to the weakening of democracy.

Contributions by Neelanjan Sircar and Ammar Shamaileh analyze elite level dynamics in relations in Global South democracies and dictatorships. Sircar investigates the weak political attachments of politicians in Global South democracies and shows how in India the phenomenon affects party strategies and choices. Shamaileh analyzes elite dynamics in Syria, one of the world's most repressive dictatorship and argues that zooming in on elite networks is an invaluable lens to better understand non-democratic regimes.

Vulnerable and marginalized groups in the Global South face unique challenges and threats. Carla Alberti's contribution focuses on indigenous mobilization in Latin America. Despite several notable achievements, she argues, indigenous movements in Latin America are still unable to secure the most important rights, such as prior consultation and autonomy if and when these clash with the interests of national governments. Samer Anabtawi studies LGBTQ movements in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) and argues that such groups are marginalized not only in these societies, but also in the LGBTQ research, an omission that inhibits a better understanding of the MENA region states, societies and regimes.

The final contribution of this issue grapples with the meaning and the boundaries of the

Global South. Is post-Soviet Central Asia part of the Global South? asks Shairbek Dzhuraev. Incorporating Central Asia into the analysis of the Global South, he argues, will offer new insights that better illuminate the impact of colonial legacies, regime types and broader social transformations beyond the post-Soviet space.

In this issue of the Newsletter we include short Q&As with the most recent Section Awards winners. Rachel Brule (Luebbert Book Prize), Daniel Gingerich (Luebbert Article Prize), Nikhar Gaikwad, Erin Lin and Noah Zucker (Sage Paper Prize), Jacob Nyruup and Stuart Bramwell (Lijphart/Przeworski/Verba Dataset Award), Marc Helbling, Liv Bjerre, Friederike Römer, and Malisa Zobel (Lijphart/Przeworski/Verba Dataset Award Honorable Mention), Amy Erica Smith and Noam Lupu (Theda Skocpol Prize for Emerging Scholars) answer our question about their research process and findings.

This is the last issue produced by the Johns Hopkins University editorial team. We want to thank the editorial board members Lisel Hintz, Sarah Parkinson, and Pavithra Suryanarayan, our editorial assistant Maya Camargo-Vemuri, and Anne-Marie Arel, who designed and produced the newsletter. We are excited to pass the baton to Ben Smith and the University of Florida editorial team and wish them much luck. ●

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WHY TRANSITION TO MODERN DEMOCRACY IS CHALLENGING IN DEVELOPING NATIONS?

The Role of Foreign Powers in Afghanistan

by *Mohammad Qadam Shah*



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The transition to modern democracy has been quite remarkable during the last 200 years. Modern democratic governance is now known for facilitating economic development (Lipset 1959); ensuring peaceful co-existence of states (Russett and Oneal 2001); promoting free trade (Milner and Mukherjee 2009); preventing the effect of corruption on economic growth (Drury, Kriechhaus, and Lusztig 2006); and more importantly, creating a limited government. However, it has been challenging for many societies to transition and achieve these democratic outcomes (Angell 1986). Many new modern democracies have struggled or failed in the process. But why?

A strand of political science literature suggests that modern democracy is an invention of Europe and not compatible with non-Western countries. For some early scholars, the coherence and homogeneity of societies were preconditions for stable democracy (Mill 1861; Habermas 1962; Putnam 1993). Accordingly, modern democracy works when a society is coherent and homogeneous, and when public discourse is alive and social trust exists among fellow citizens (Putnam 1993). Conversely, pluralist nationalism based on primordial identity

disrupts the possibility of a democratic public discourse within a political community (Easton 1965). Likewise, some scholars debate on the role of religion and its compatibility with democratic ideals (Provencher 2011). Further, some focus on the role of culture and emphasize that democracy requires a “spirit of association” that in turn make the men and women “to associate freely in everything” (de Tocqueville 1838). As such, in deeply divided societies, certain patterns of political culture may influence the willingness of actors to engage in cross-cultural communications (Reilly 2001). The mismatch of culture with political institutions can also result in “transplant effect,” or policies that are incompatible with the local conditions (Boettke, Coyne, and Leeson 2008).

In a recent book titled “The Decline and Rise of Democracy,” David Stasavage challenges these arguments and the common perception that democracy is an invention of Europe. Stasavage distinguishes between early democracy and modern democracy and argues that early democracy – simply defined as consensual governance through assembly and council – existed long before it was practiced in Europe in many different places including Americas before



Afghanistan consistently sought to create a strong state that facilitated autocratic, top-down governance with no reliance on people's consent and participation.

European conquest, ancient Mesopotamia, precolonial Africa, Islamic Middle Eastern countries, and even China (Stasavage 2020). Early democracy, according to Stasavage, was prevalent in small scale settings with a weak state bureaucracy, whenever the “rulers lacked

knowledge of what people were producing,” and finally when the rulers needed people for taxes and waging wars (Stasavage 2020). With weak state institutions, rulers needed the consent of their people to govern, thus favoring consensual, democratic form of governance. While these conditions prevailed in both Western and non-Western countries, they tended to diverge based on the type of the institutions they adopted to define state and society relations in the later stages

of their development. The non-Western countries – such as China and Islamic Middle Eastern states – adopted strong state institutions such as executive and tax bureaucracy through which the rulers did not need the consent of their people. This resulted in the formation of autocracy in these states. Conversely, early democracy in Western countries continued and gradually took the form of modern democracy. Stasavage argues that the transition from early to modern democracy – of which vanguards are England and the United States – happened when states combined popular control with a strong state over a large territory.

Stasavage (2020) presents a convincing argument by emphasizing the institutions as the distinguishing, explanatory factor of the divergent path of democracy in Western and non-Western countries. His institutional approach aligns with the new institutionalism literature (North 1990; Acemoglu and Robinson 2006, 2012, and 2019).

Stasavage also rejects the incompatibility theories based on homogeneity, culture, and religion by arguing that even Islamic countries used to be democratic in their classic forms. As such, Stasavage’s work assumes the process of institution-making and institutional evolution is an endogenous one, where the state and societal actors interact and decide upon their governing institutions.

Although the indigenous leaders exert influence over the institutional fate of their countries, their influence is minimum when external powers such as colonizers or state builders are involved. In such circumstances, the external powers dominate the institution making process and determine the institutional path of these countries. As evident from colonies’ experiences, the local leaders mostly find it in their best interests to align with the institutional settings designed by external powers.

The external powers basically, due to their financial and military influence, tend to both promote certain political leaders and shape and influence the type of regimes in these countries. In most circumstance, the external powers appoint one of their loyal politicians as the head of the state being built (Lake 2016). Such an influence, which works as an institutional shock, is apparent in the relationship of past and present great powers vis-à-vis poor and developing nations: from Great Britain promoting indirect rule to the Soviet Union spreading communist regimes to the United States and Western European countries exporting liberal democracy and to China and Russia facilitating and supporting authoritarian regimes. All these external powers have one common characteristics: they all disrupt(ed) the original, traditional form of governance in these countries. Surprisingly,

such influence has proven quite effective in shaping the institutional fate of these countries – either democracy or autocracy – for a long time. The experience of Asian, African, and Latin American countries – whether colonies or not – show that once the institutional path get formed through the influence of foreign powers, the subsequent leaders find it difficult to deviate from it. This creates a path dependent situation.

In the rest of this contribution, I use the case of Afghanistan to illustrate how external powers influenced the fate of democracy in non-Western countries. Building on Stasavage's work, I argue that Afghanistan, between 1747 and 1880, was an early democracy or at least had a traditional form of governance based on consensus and regional autonomy, but it failed to transition to modern democracy. Like most of Middle Eastern countries, Afghanistan failed to scale up early democracy to its whole territory along with broad local participation and a strong state. Conversely, Afghanistan consistently sought to create a strong state that facilitated autocratic, top-down governance with no reliance on people's consent and participation. This effort to create a strong, centralized state was repeatedly supported and imposed by external powers. Throughout Afghanistan's history, three major powers – Great Britain, the Soviet Union, and the United States – at different periods dominated politics in Afghanistan. These three major powers favored centralized, strong state for Afghanistan to materialize their strategic objectives in Afghanistan.

The Afghan Empire and Traditional Governance 1747-1880

The contemporary history of Afghanistan goes back to 1747 when the Durrani dynasty, led by Ahmad Shah, formed an Afghan Empire. Ahmad

Shah kicked off the early democracy period (1747-1880) where external powers did not exert direct or indirect influence over Afghanistan. Within few years, Ahmad Shah expanded the Afghan territory from Khurasan in the west to Kashmir and North India in the east, and from Amu Darya in the north to the Arabian Sea in the South.

In this period, Afghanistan resembled a loose confederation of tribes than a centralized state. Afghanistan was controlled by a group of Khans and tribal leaders that were collectively forming the Afghan government (Newell 1972). The regions were controlled either by Ahmad Shah's sons or a Durrani Sardars (leaders). Afghanistan was more akin to indirect rule, which is a system in which monarchs and other political leaders exert authority through a network of autonomous princes while maintaining a role for tribal and customary authority (Hechter 2000). Louise Dupree has characterized this period as "alternating fusion and fission" meaning that "a charismatic leader arises in a tribal society and ...unites several tribes into a confederation, which spreads as far as its accumulated power permits, creating an empire, not a nation-state." (Dupree 1973, xix).

Under Afghanistan's traditional governance system, the localities used to rely on informal, traditional mechanisms to run their affairs. In terms of judicial affairs, the state had a limited role as the sources of resolving disputes were either Sharia or customary tribal codes (the code of Pashtunwali among the Pashtun clans). Accordingly, Sharia judges existed "in all considerable towns in the Caubul dominions, and they [had] deputies over the whole country, . . . [but they] nowhere interposed unless an application was made to them" (Elphinstone 1842, 263). The Sharia judges had significant authority and

autonomy in interpreting Sharia such that the state did not impose any unified interpretation or a systematic review of their decisions. Like the early democracies, the localities were involved in supporting Ahmad Shah in his conquering wars through their taxes and providing soldiers. (Dupree 1973). The local leaders used to collect the taxes, send some amount to the central government, and keep the rest for local affairs. According to one account, during the Durrani Empire, many provinces yielded no revenue to the government (Barfield 2012). This suggests that the state bureaucracy was absent in most areas and quite weak in others. Thus, the localities could exercise a great deal of autonomy.

The First Shock and its persistent effect

After the death of Ahmad Shah in 1773, the consensual, traditional form of governance lasted only until 1880. The domestic challenges in the form of power struggle, by Ahmad Shah's grandson, significantly undermined the political stability and the existing relationship between the king and the regions. The imposition of new taxes, the appointment of new Sardars in the region, and the conflict among Durrani brothers weakened the existing political order in Afghanistan. These changes coincided with the growing interests of the Great Britain in Afghanistan, which subsequently resulted in the Great Game and major changes in Afghanistan's form of governance.

The Great Game was a political and military confrontation between British and Russian Empires over controlling Afghanistan and neighboring territories in Central and South Asia during most of the 19th century. The Britain needed to protect India from Russian expansion and the key British sea trade route. In doing so, the Britain decided to take control of Afghanistan and use

it as a buffer zone against Russia. The Britain initiated two Anglo-Afghan wars (1839-42 and 1878-80) to finally install their puppet king in Afghanistan. The Britain was of the idea that "transformation of Afghanistan from a group of trivial and warring principalities into one state ruled by a dependent of the government of India, an ally whose foreign relations would be conducted on its behalf by the Governor-General and the Foreign office" (Ingram 1980) would help them prevent Russian's threat to India. This was part of the Britain's attempt to create a so-called modern state that aimed at facilitating the Britain's political and military goals in the region.

In line with its geopolitical goals and its typical indirect rule, Britain installed Abdul Rahman as the new king of Afghanistan and supported him both financially and militarily. Abdul Rahman took it upon himself and significantly transformed the existing consensual, traditional form of governance. He stamped out the "middlemen" – tribal and customary leaders, as well as religious authorities – who he viewed as a source of political disorder. To modernize the state in Afghanistan, Abdul Rahman centralized the state apparatus, something that did not exist in Afghanistan before. He emphasized two goals: first, concentrating all state affairs, even the trivial things, into his hands; and second, creating a strong army to impose his concentrated power throughout the country. As such, Abdul Rahman reorganized the administration of the state. He divided Afghanistan into six provinces – each headed by a governor appointed by and loyal to him – that included Herat, Kandahar, Farah, Badakshan, and Turkestan. Abdul Rahman created these provinces only to extend his reach and influence over the provinces, but not to create independent provincial ad-

ministrations. Unlike his predecessors, Rahman imposed strict control over the provinces and created smaller divisions and subdivisions that were controlled by the officials appointed by him based on personal loyalties, ethnic and tribal solidarities, Sharia, and customary laws.

Abdul Rahman formalized and bureaucratized all aspect of his administration to impose clear scope of responsibilities on his officials at higher or lower levels. He reorganized the civil and judicial administration and adopted specific laws to bring them under his direct control. Simultaneously, Abdul Rahman, with the Britain's support, suppressed any internal opposition against his excessive centralization policies.

Continuity of Centralization and the Soviet Tastes

Thanks to Abdul Rahman's excessive centralization, the Britain could dominate over Afghanistan's domestic and foreign policy for almost half a century. During this period, the subsequent kings did continue Abdul Rahman's centralized governance system. The only difference was the kings' less aggressive policies vis-à-vis other ethnic, religious, and linguistic minorities and opposition groups. The turn of century and the end of World War I changed the calculation of great powers, including the Great Britain, and their areas of interests. This coincided with Afghanistan claiming its independence from Britain in 1919 through the third Anglo-Afghan war. While the then Soviet Union continued to provide subsidies to the Afghan king for sometimes, they also had to leave Afghanistan given the changing circumstances in Europe and the ultimate changes of the world order because of the World War II.

The end of World War Second and the advent of the Cold War brought the Soviet Union back into Afghanistan, due to competition with the United States. This time, the Soviet Union stayed in Afghanistan for almost half a century (1950s-1992), pursued similar policies to Great Britain in terms of centralization, and added Soviet tastes to all aspects of Afghanistan's centralized governance system. Politically, it took almost three decades for the Soviet Union to transform Afghanistan into a communist regime. Through educational, social, and cultural programs, the Soviet Union cultivated the seeds of communism, which came to fruition through the formation of the first political parties in Afghanistan. The same parties ultimately took power and formed a communist regime for a decade in Afghanistan. The Soviet Union also changed the shape of public administration by adding Soviet features such as the top-down bureaucracy – structure, rules of decision-making, and employment to name a few – coupled with numerous administration rules and regulations.

Economically, the Soviet Union initiated the first five-year development plan in Afghanistan, which was the same as Soviet central planning. In terms of trade, the Soviet Union became Afghanistan's main trade partner, as more than 90% of Afghanistan's trades were conducted with the Soviet Union. Socially and culturally, the Soviet advisors were controlling and dominating the policymaking mechanism of all Afghan ministries – especially, the ministries of education, higher education, culture and information and others. The Soviet advisors significantly changed the curriculum and teaching materials of schools and universities and could control the content of the press and media. The Soviet Union was accepting tens of thousands of Afghans in their universities in different areas.

All in all, the Soviet Union adopted the same strategies as the Great Britain. They even went further by adding the Soviet features, which further centralized the governance system and distanced Afghanistan from its traditional, consensual governance style.

The US Liberal Democracy through centralization

The Sovietization of Afghanistan only served the interests of the Soviet Union and did not help Afghanistan's effort to create a stable, all-inclusive, and pro-development state. Despite the withdrawal of the Soviet Union, the Afghans could not agree upon an all-inclusive government between 1992 and 2001 that ultimately resulted in civil war and the emergence of Taliban. However, the year 2001 opened a new chapter in Afghanistan's history. The 9/11 terrorist attacks, this time, brought the United States into Afghanistan primarily for counterterrorism purposes, which ultimately became a state building mission.

As the third great power, the United States had its own brand of state building – liberal democracy – when dealing with developing nations. While liberal democracy could facilitate a consensual governance in Afghanistan, the US and the Afghan elites continued the old, failed, Sovietized, centralized governance system with some minor features of liberal democracy such as elections, weak checks and balances, and separation of powers. Afghanistan readopted the 1964 constitution and changed it from constitutional monarchy to an Islamic Republic, which was a unitary, presidential system. Afghanistan basically continued the centralized governance system that Great Britain imposed on Afghanistan in 19th century, which was consequently Sovietized by the Soviet Union.

Like the Great Britain and the Soviet Union, the United States favored centralization over decentralization, which could facilitate self-rule and consensual governance.

The post-2001 system concentrated all political, fiscal, and administrative authorities into the hands of the president. Politically, the president could appoint almost all government officials at all levels including, but not limited to, ministers, Supreme Court Justices, governors, district governors, etc. Fiscally, the president had a hold on planning, budgeting (formulation, allocation, and execution), and taxation. Administratively, the central government dominated all procurement and administrative affairs. The post-2001 governance system was in no way aligned with the nature of Afghan tradition and culture of governance. The natural state formation and democratization was yet again disrupted. The continuity of governance paradox ultimately resulted in the wastes of several trillions of dollars, the death of hundreds of thousands of Afghans and foreigners, and worst of all the collapse of the Afghan government and the Taliban takeover in 2021. So far, the Taliban's performance – their interim cabinet and their other domestic, exclusive policies – does not suggest that they have learned from history. More importantly, their affiliation to Pakistan, China, and Russia suggests that again some major powers would determine Afghanistan's political future rather than the Afghans.

Conclusion

This contribution focused on how and why transition to democracy has been challenging in developing nations – especially in Afghanistan. While such transition has happened gradually, endogenously, and smoothly in Europe, the developing nations – especially, those colonized

and influenced by great powers – have had turbulent journey. The case of Afghanistan illustrates this argument. Except the initial period (1747-1880) during which Afghanistan was an early democracy – a consensual form of democracy where the ruler relied on regions for taxes and waring purposes – the rest of Afghanistan’s history suggests several disruptions. Three foreign powers disrupted Afghanistan’s natural state formation and democratization process. First, the Great Britain imposed the first shock and transformed Afghanistan from a confederation of regions to a centralized governance system. Second, the Soviet Union, out of Cold War competition with the US, dominated, further centralized, and Sovietized Afghanistan. Finally, the US, pursuing counterterrorism and state building purposes, entered Afghanistan and created a liberal democracy through excessive centralization. The case of Afghanistan shows that while democratization should be an endogenous process, the external factor of foreign intervention in most cases determine the fate of democratization in developing nations. This contribution shows that the failure of democratization in developing nations requires more emphasis on the role of foreign powers and the dynamics of it. This also suggests that local ownership is key for the success of democratization and state building processes. ●

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THE ORIGINS AND CONSEQUENCES OF DESCRIPTIVE REPRESENTATION IN THE NIGERIAN FEDERAL CIVIL SERVICE

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Governments, educational institutions, and business seek to improve the level of representation within their organizations. Organizations go as far as advertising specifically to various identity groups to apply to positions they have available. Scholarship suggests that group representation in government agencies has important consequences for distributive politics (see e.g. Bhavnani and Lee 2018; Xu et al. 2018; Bhavnani and Lee 2019; Hassan 2020). But why do some ethnic groups in contemporary Africa have better representation than others, within government bureaucracies? Rarely is bureaucratic representation endogenized and studied as an outcome we need to understand. In this essay, I discuss the theories and findings from my research on how ethnic representation in the Nigerian civil service emerges and its consequences on public goods provision (Johnson-Kanu 2021).

In my work, I show that the contemporary composition of the bureaucracy reflects colonial-era legacies. I argue that investments in Western education made by both Europeans and indigenous Nigerians allowed some ethnic groups to

gain early entry into the civil service during the colonial era. Ethnic groups which gained early representation in the bureaucracy reproduced their representational advantage over time through preferential hiring of their co-ethnics. As a result, ethnic groups which gained early representation in the colonial-era bureaucracy remain over-represented in Nigeria's contemporary civil service, with important consequences for representation and distributive politics.

Additionally, I find that those ethnic groups that have historically been highly represented within the civil service are less likely to experience high completion rates of projects allocated to them. I attribute this negative consequence of representation in the bureaucracy to the lack of accountability in the bureaucracy. I argue that both citizens and politicians fail to hold bureaucrats accountable since they belong to the same ethnic group.

My research contributes to literature on the state building process by showing that contemporary patterns of ethnic representation in the state bureaucracy are a product of colonial-era legacies (see Tilly 1975; Thies 2007; Ali



et al. 2019). The contemporary Nigerian state was built out of the colonial Nigerian state, and thus traces many of its institutional foundations from colonial polices. Secondly, I add to the literature on the persistence of history, and colonial legacies in Africa (Acemoglu et al. 2000; Huillery 2009; Okoye and Pongou 2014; Ricart-Huguet 2021b). I also contribute to scholarship on the bureaucracy by providing rich data on the Federal civil Service in Nigeria.

The broader research project contributes to our understanding of spatial variation in the quality of public goods (operationalized as the completion rate of public projects). I argue that the unequal provision of goods in a state is affected by unequal levels of bureaucratic representation across groups in that state. Simply put, my arguments suggest that where a group is highly represented in a bureaucracy, that group is less likely to receive higher quality public goods from the government compared to places with lower levels of representation.

Origins of Descriptive Representation in the bureaucracy

To understand how indigenous ethnic groups first attained positions in the colonial bureaucracy, we first need to understand the requirements for employment in the service, and the political terrain the colonized found themselves in during colonial rule. For employment in the colonial bureaucracy, individuals needed to have at least a secondary level education. This is because the duties were conducted in the language of the colonial power (English), and official documents usually contained advanced concepts and vocabulary that the indigenes could only grasp after attaining a certain level of education. In Nigeria, the colonial officials were

reluctant to employ local Nigerians and only made exceptions for educated Nigerians.

Different factors affected exposure to Western education across ethnic groups during the colonial period. For instance, ethnic groups that had centralized pre-colonial structures and organization, especially centralized bureaucracies, were able to use these existing structures to disseminate colonial directives and exposure to Western education. For instance, Muller-Crepon (2020) shows that existing precolonial structures determined whether indirect or direct rule was instituted by European powers. I therefore argue that ethnic groups that had centralized precolonial institutions that could facilitate the spread of policy, were better able to provide colonial education to their citizens using this structure. As a result, these ethnic groups are also likely to gain early representation in the colonial-era bureaucracy.

On the other hand, ethnic groups already utilizing non-Western forms of education were resistant to the introduction, and dissemination of Western education. This is because they already had entrenched educational systems that were difficult to change from. For instance, ethnic groups located in Northern Nigeria, where Islamic forms of education were already widespread at the time of colonization, were less exposed to Western education due to the pre-existence of Islamic education. As a result, these ethnic groups were less likely to gain early representation in the colonial-era bureaucracy.

As ethnic groups gained employment in the bureaucracy, they would employ their co-ethnics when they got the power to make employment decisions. Since bureaucrats were given autonomy, and allowed to make and execute policy, indigenous bureaucrats would create

employment opportunities for their co-ethnics. Government jobs in colonial and post-colonial periods were stable, well paid, and respected occupations in society. Therefore, those who attained such positions would be reluctant to quit such positions. Ricart-Huguet (2021a) argues that bureaucrats were most likely to become politicians and cabinet ministers in the post-colonial period. Therefore, colonial bureaucrats may have recognized the strategic positions they occupied and worked towards obtaining future political positions on behalf of their ethnic group.

I expect that those ethnic groups that got into the colonial bureaucracy first would maintain their numbers within the bureaucracy and increase their population. These ethnic groups would dominate government agencies through employing their co-ethnics to fill available positions as they gain the power to do so. Thus, they replicated their early advantage through selective hiring.

To test my expectations, I calculated the level of representation of each ethnic group in the sample from 1928 to 1966 for each MDA in the Nigerian civil service. I collect and digitize these data from staff lists scanned from the Nigerian National archives in Kaduna, Nigeria. Additional data is collected from the Federal Character Commission in Abuja on the level of representation and aggregated to obtain the proportion of each ethnic group that comprises each agency in the civil service for various groups for the years 1997 and 1999. I analyze a panel data set

that shows the levels of representation in the civil service for each Nigerian ethnic group for the period 1925 to 1966 with gaps in the series.

Ethnic groups which gained early representation in the colonial-era bureaucracy remain over-represented in Nigeria's contemporary civil service, with important consequences for representation and distributive politics.

Figure 1 shows the distribution of representativeness of ethnic groups in the civil service across time, while Figure 2 shows that across ministries in 1999 only. British civil servants are left out from my analysis since I am only interested in understanding how the population of various Nigerian ethnic groups in the civil service changed over time. Since I expect previous representation levels to influence future levels, I create 1-, 3-, and 5-year lags of the

representation measure as my independent variable on interest. The dependent variable is the representation measure at time t .

The results in *table 1* show that previous levels of representation influence current levels, and this is the case for representation levels even 5 years in the past. Even when fixed effects are included to deal with unknown ethnicity, time, and MDA related confounders, I still find that previous representation levels predict its future levels. Column 4 shows the results when time, ethnicity, and MDA fixed effects are included. I find that a one percent increase in the level of representation on average is associated with a 0.35 increase in its level in one year, 0.16 increase in 3 years, and 0.17 increase after 5 years. Even when time trends are included to deal with factors that could influence an ethnic groups level of representation within the service that is persistent over time, results in column 5 remain consistent with other specifications.



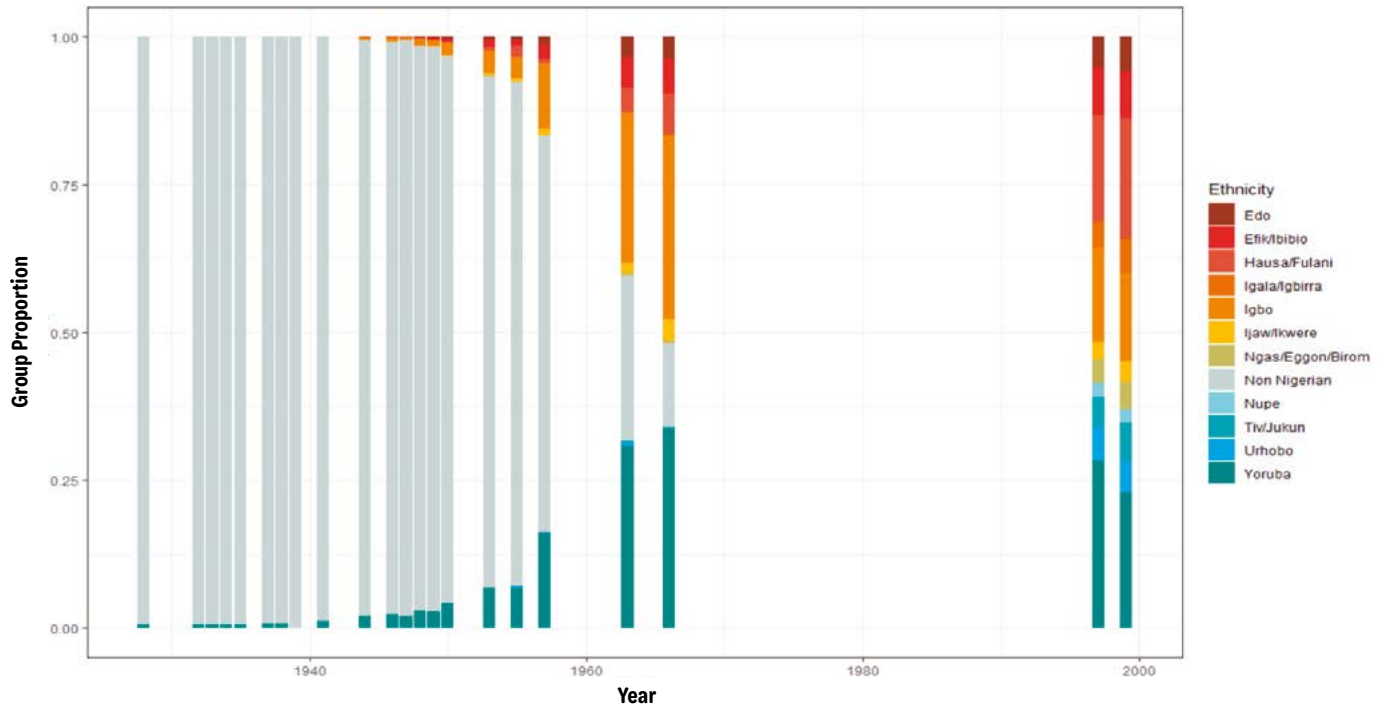


Figure 1: Temporal Distribution of Civil Servants. Notes: This chart shows the distribution of civil servants for all available data years 1928 to 1999, taken from staff lists and manpower statistics. 1997 and 1999 data is coded from state to corresponding ethnic group. Ethnic groups are color coded, and the corresponding group names are labeled on the right. This graph shows data for the entire civil service including Non-Nigerians.

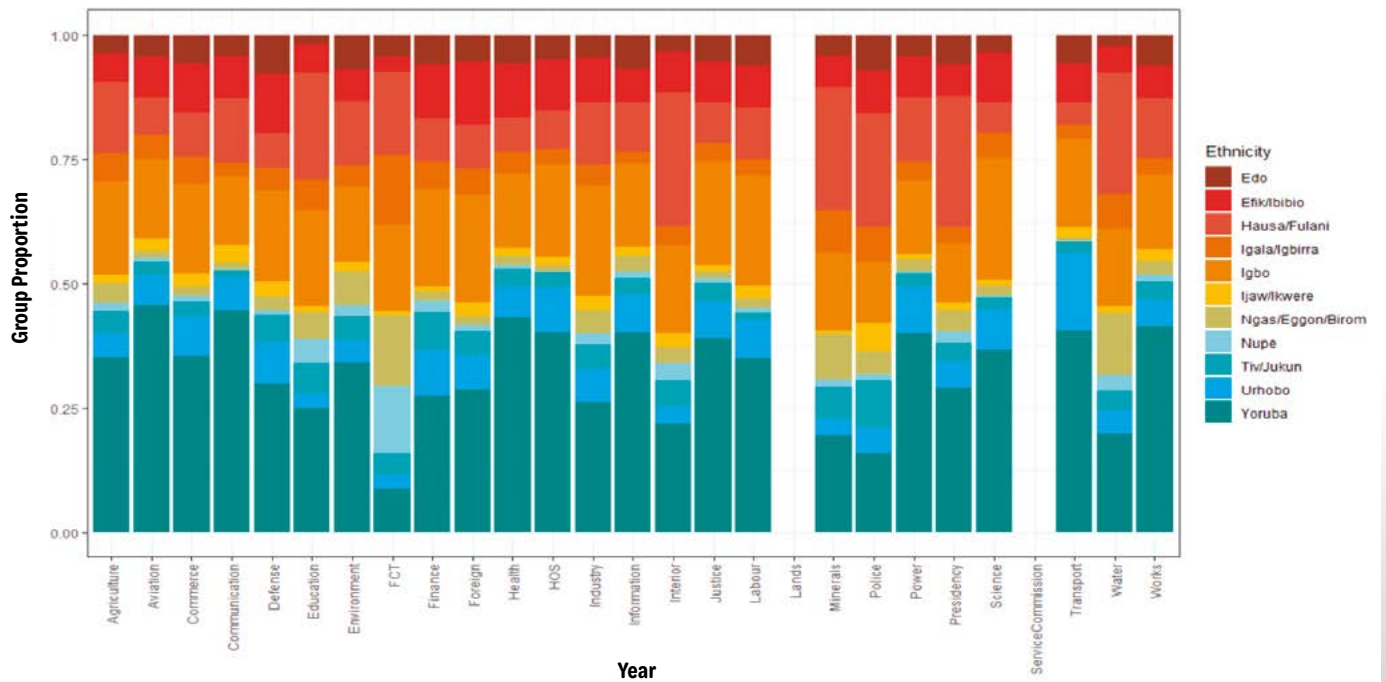


Figure 2: Cross Sectional distribution of Civil Servants in 1999. Notes: This chart shows the distribution of civil servants belonging to various ethnic groups, across MDAs for the year 1999. Ethnic groups are color coded and the corresponding group names are labeled on the right. This chart contains information for only the Nigerian civil servants.

Table 1:
Previous levels of representation predict future representation

Notes:
The unit of analysis is the Ethnicity-MDA-Year. The dependent variable is the level of representation, which is measured between 0 and 1 in time *t*. The independent variables are 1, 3, and 5 year lags of the dependent variable. Each column progressively includes time, ethnicity, and MDA fixed effects. Data is an unbalanced panel between 1925 and 1966. MDA and Ethnicity clustered standard errors are in parenthesis. **p*<0.1; ***p*<0.05; ****p*<0.01.

	Level of Representation in T prop				
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Representation t-1	0.408*** (0.052)	0.354*** (0.051)	0.345*** (0.050)	0.345*** (0.050)	0.342*** (0.050)
Representation t-3	0.208*** (0.044)	0.169*** (0.041)	0.162*** (0.041)	0.163*** (0.041)	0.161*** (0.041)
Representation t-5	0.207*** (0.044)	0.181*** (0.042)	0.174*** (0.041)	0.174*** (0.041)	0.172*** (0.041)
Time FE	N	Y	Y	Y	Y
Ethnicity FE	N	N	Y	Y	Y
MDA FE	N	N	N	Y	Y
Trend	N	N	N	N	Y
Observations	22,220	22,220	22,220	22,220	22,220
R ²	0.476	0.500	0.504	0.507	0.508
Adjusted R ²	0.476	0.498	0.502	0.505	0.506

Consequences of descriptive representation in the bureaucracy for public goods provision

Scholars have shown that public goods projects implementation is influenced by a groups level of representation in the bureaucracy (Bhavnani and Lee 2018; 2019). I contend, perhaps counterintuitively, that groups that are highly represented in a government agency have lower completion rates of projects allocated to them. This is because bureaucrats from that group can capture resources meant for their group without being held accountable in their agency (because they have power in the agency due to their size), or by their group (due to social trust within the group and attribution of project delivery to politicians). These bureaucrats have an incentive to be corrupt. Xu et al. (2018) argue that bureaucrats are perceived to be more corrupt in their home region. Thus, highly represented groups in the bureaucracy see lower completion rates of projects allocated to them even if politicians would like these projects completed. This contrasts with existing evidence that higher representation may produce better or equal

provision of goods to groups in a country (Gulzar et al. 2020).

The literature suggests that representative bureaucracies (where group proportions mirror that of the population) should produce better outcomes for more groups in society (Meier et al. 1999; Rasul and Rogger 2015). Scholars have also argued that civil servants who are represented in an area are more susceptible to corruption (Bhavnani and Lee 2018). My research reconciles these contrasting explanations on representation of groups within the bureaucracy by showing that while representation is important for public goods provision, more representation can have negative consequences for goods provision.

Bureaucrats have their own goals and incentives and these may or may not be in alignment with the priorities and preferences of politicians and voters. Politicians and bureaucrats may have different preferences, and on the same issue space, they can have different ideal points (Meier 1987). The politician chooses to delegate to bureaucrats who have policy discretion and

private information, with uncertainty of the outcome (Huber and Shipan 2006). They do so because they have numerous responsibilities and no experience with policy implementation.

Bureaucracies in African states have undergone transformation through periods of colonization and post-colonization. These agencies evolve and develop strong rules that guide their daily operations. For instance, in the Nigerian civil service, it is difficult to outright fire a civil servant that has gone through the confirmation process in a ministry. The civil servant is entitled to an investigation by an internal committee and this investigation can take a long time to complete thus delaying accountability. Not all civil servants are caught when they engage in corruption. High profile cases where huge sums of money have been embezzled are usually broadcast and sensationalized.

Politicians may fail to hold bureaucrats accountable for corrupt practices because these practices, though not sanctioned by them, benefit their reelection plans, since bureaucrats share the spoils from their corrupt practices with politicians who in turn use it to fund their reelection campaigns (Brierley 2020). Thus, bureaucrats have incentives to shirk their responsibilities and expropriate resources meant for project completion when they know they will not be held accountable by either voters or politicians.

Citizens may also fail to hold bureaucrat members of their group accountable for three reasons: they may have no knowledge of the public policy to be implemented for their benefit, they know the bureaucrat is a member of their group and do not sanction them for that reason, and they prefer private goods over public goods. Group solidarity forces individuals to accept

wrongdoing from a co-ethnic rather than report them to a non-co-ethnic for punishment. Co-ethnics of the bureaucrat may accept their under-performance since having a co-ethnic employed in a government agency uplifts the image of the group. Outing a member of the group may threaten the position of the group and the prospects of other group members obtaining positions within the service since the group's reputation suffers. Government jobs in Nigeria are prestigious positions and co-ethnics may value having a co-ethnic in the bureaucracy as much as they value receiving public goods.

Additionally, citizens may not hold bureaucrats accountable because they just do not know who provides what public goods – politicians or bureaucrats (Martin and Raffler 2021). Even when they have this information, their channel to accountability may be through politicians and they may not have enough information on how much power the politician has over the bureaucrat. It is also possible that citizens blame the wrong politicians for the project and the completion rates (Harding 2015). Citizens may value the allocation of the project alone and not just the completion of said project (Dasgupta 2015). This means that they will not hold politicians or bureaucrats accountable where they fail to complete allocated projects.

Summarily, my arguments imply that co-ethnicity gives bureaucrats a cover from accountability. Citizens are familiar with and trust co-ethnic bureaucrat which prevents them from sanctioning them when they fail to perform their duties efficiently. Politicians on the other hand may collude with co-ethnic bureaucrats for rent seeking and also fail to hold them accountable. Government jobs in Nigeria are stable, well-paying jobs and it may be enough to satisfy citizens with representation in the civil service.

Like other countries such as Kenya (Harris and Posner 2019), Nigeria sets aside funds each year as part of its budget for the provision of public goods by legislators. Constituency projects in Nigeria are implemented by the civil service and are subject to national budget constraints. Technically, politicians do not provide more to the implementation of constituency projects besides nominating them, but they can claim credit for the project and be rewarded by their constituents through reelection. I assume bureaucrats' role in the allocation of projects to constituencies is greatly diminished by the fact that politicians themselves nominate the projects and as such are firmly in charge of the allocation decision of these projects.

I use Tracka data on constituency projects. I use data from the 2017 report as it tracks more states compared to the previous years. In this year, it tracked projects in 20 of the 36 states in Nigeria. The states tracked are shown in *Figure 3*. The data lists the projects nominated in each state that year. There is a detailed description of what was to be implemented by the project, the cost of the project, its location (town, state, and constituency) and how much of the project had been completed. The completion rate information is not coded as a continuous variable. Tracka records whether the project was started, abandoned, not started, ongoing or in progress, could not be tracked due to location issues or other issues that prevent the evaluators from

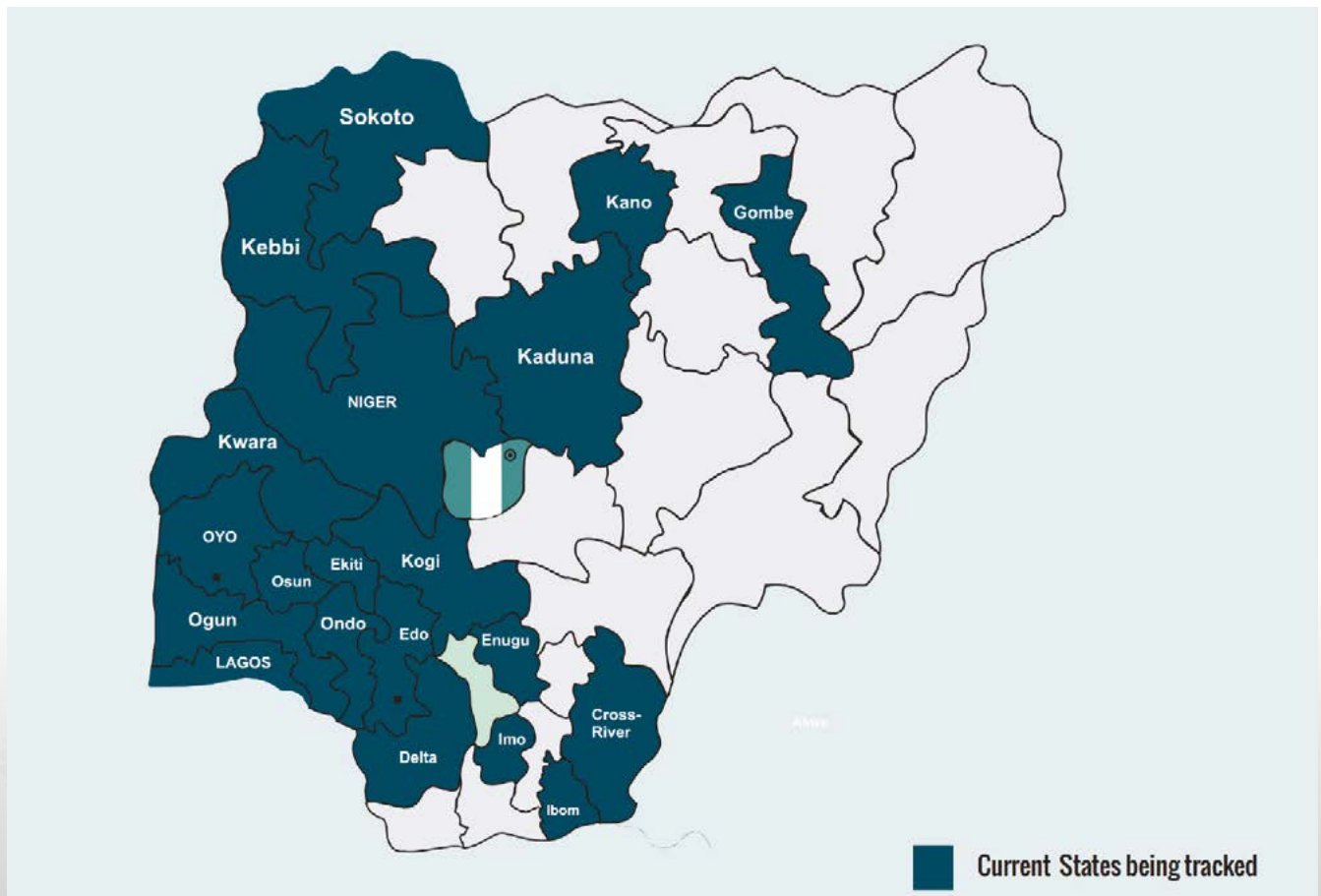


Figure 3:
Map of Nigeria showing States where Constituency Projects have been Tracked.

Notes: Map showing the states in Nigeria for which constituency project data was tracked and collected in 2017. This graphic is taken from the 2017 constituency project report released by Budgit.

Table 2:
Bureaucratic representation and Public Projects Completion Rates

Notes:
MDA and State clustered standard errors are in parenthesis. Completion rate is a fraction between 0 and 1 and recorded in 2006/2007. representation is captured in 1999 and ranges from 0 to 1. * $p < 0.1$; ** $p < 0.05$; *** $p < 0.01$.

	Project Completion Rate	
	(1)	(2)
Representation	-0.297 (0.302)	-0.745* (0.353)
Covariates	N	Y
Observations	2,864	2,864
R ²	0.0004	0.017
Adjusted R ²	0.00001	0.015
Residual Std. Error	0.430 (df = 2862)	0.427 (df = 2857)
F Statistic	1.024 (df = 1; 2862)	8.222*** (df = 6; 2857)

tracking the data. I expect that the higher the level of representation a state has in an MDA, the less likely their projects are to be started, completed, or ongoing. I also expect that higher levels of representation would increase the likelihoods of the project being abandoned after it has been started. *Table 2* shows the relationship between representation in the civil service in 1999 and completion rates of public goods projects in 2017.

It appears that as the level of representation of a state in an MDA increases, the probability of constituency projects allocated to them starting or getting completed decreases. A one percent increase in the level of bureaucratic representation of a group in an MDA on average decreases the probability that a project is started by 1.79 percent and the probability it is completed by 1.45 percent. I find no results for the probability the project would be ongoing or abandoned although the signs of the estimates are as expected. These results mirror those where historical representation (average from all historical periods from the previous section) is substituted as the independent variable of interest.

Conclusion

My research explores how representation in the bureaucracy developed through historical legacies in one country – Nigeria. The takeaway is no less powerful because of this single case study. Finding cross sectional micro data, such as that used in this paper, is no small task. As a former British colony, and the most populous black nation in the world, we may interpolate some of the lessons gleaned in this study to other countries, which share similar characteristics with Nigeria.

The findings contribute to the debate in comparative politics on the variation in the level of representation of various groups in multi-ethnic states across institutions. Scholars have studied this in the context of the legislature, the executive branch, and in ministerial cabinets (see Griffin 2014; Arriola and Johnson 2014; Kroeger 2018; Lublin and Bowler 2018). I focused specifically on representation without elections in the bureaucracy. Bureaucrats are not elected, but they hold great power over the implementation of policy with important consequences for distributive politics. In classical Weberian bureaucracies (Weber 1946), the efficiency and competence of the bureaucrat may be more

important than their personal ethnic or other group identity. However, some work shows that personal characteristics of bureaucrats matter for how they implement policy (e.g. Bhavnani and Lee 2019; Hassan 2020). Thus, studying the origins of variation in ethnic Tracka is a platform from Budgit – an organization in Nigeria interested in accountability in government public goods provisions representation in the bureaucracy is important to understanding how and for whom these agencies implement policies.

The finding that bureaucrats decrease access to quality public goods to certain groups is in line with Slough (2020). The mechanisms, however, differ greatly. Taken together, the results display a bleak picture for groups that are over-represented within the Nigerian bureaucracy. Conventional wisdom dictates that members of the same group should want to cooperate with each other to obtain public goods. It should follow that having a member of the group in a place that gives them power to provide such goods should be a good thing for the entire group. However, my research suggests that the opposite is, in fact, true. Overrepresentation of co-ethnics is bad for the provision of public goods in Nigeria. Nigerians, it appears, are more likely to expropriate resources meant for their co-ethnics than they would those meant for non-co-ethnics.

I have argued that co-ethnicity breeds trust and thus a sense of familiarity that does not encourage accountability, whereas distrust of non-co-ethnics encourages scrutiny of the work they do. Groups and politicians alike may be more willing to sanction bureaucrats who are not members of their group than they would members of their

group even when such members are more corrupt than the out-group bureaucrat. This may make sense on some level, but why do groups or politicians not care enough to do sanction bureaucrats when they expropriate resources since it leads to worse outcomes for the group? This is puzzling and should be studied in future work.

The pessimistic conclusions from this paper mirror that in Kasara (2007), where the author finds that as politicians get better at monitoring local intermediaries in their core constituency, they get more emboldened to tax agricultural productivity from that place. Here, where bureaucrats represent a group in the bureaucracy, they know the group may not get access to the agency except through them, and so take advantage of the situation by expropriating resources meant for the completion of projects allocated to their group. It may also be the case that the group is just satisfied by having their own in the civil service that they do not hold them accountable when they fail to perform.

While we cannot change much about history, we can learn a lot from it. Given the negative consequences of high levels of representation of some groups in the bureaucracy on the outcomes they obtain, it is important to address the imbalance in representation within the institution. One way we can deal with this is through changes in the hiring practices of the bureaucracy and putting an end to the long legacies of biased hiring some ethnic groups enjoy. Politicians can step in to ensure equitable distribution of positions in the bureaucracy without undermining its autonomy. ●

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PRE-COLONIAL ORIGINS OF LONG-RUN STATE DEVELOPMENT: Lessons from Burma (Myanmar)

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On February 1, 2021, a decade of the democratization process in Burma (Myanmar) stalled as the Burmese military staged a coup against the civilian government, arrested the senior members of the ruling party (National League for Democracy), and claimed itself as the “caretaker government.” While the coup was initially met with non-violent demonstrations, the military’s brutal crackdown further resulted in varying forms of civilian resistance: bureaucrats refused to work under the junta, ruling party’s politicians formed a parallel government, and a wave of armed resistance spread throughout the country.

And yet, repression and political violence in Burma were far from just an element of recent history. Since its independence from British rule in 1948, the country suffered from a long period of violent repression by the Burmese army and its conflicts with various groups representing ethnic minorities, pro-democracy activists, and ideological opponents. Bertil Lintner, for example, recorded as many as 249 armed conflict events over the five decades, between 1948 and 1998, in both Burmese-majority and ethnic minority regions (Lintner 1999, 430-479).

What factors influence such long-run patterns of state violence and conflict? When looking at post-independence states such as Burma, scholars attribute these outcomes to the institutions set up during colonial rule. For example, the political borders created under colonial rule divided ethnic homelands, which in turn fueled political conflict after independence (Alesina, Easterly, and Matuszeski 2011; Michalopoulos and Papaioannou 2016). In his work on ethnic conflict in India, Verghese explained the spatial variation of ethnic conflict in contemporary India using the differences in colonial policies towards caste and ethnic minorities (Verghese 2016). These studies form part of the larger literature that explains the variations in state development among post-independence states by looking at their colonial history (Acemoglu, Johnson, and Robinson 2001; Dell 2010; Banerjee and Iyer 2005).

While most studies pursued diverse approaches to deal with the endogeneity of colonial institutions to local factors in their specific contexts, questions remain on the role pre-colonial state history played in shaping the long-run development of colonial and post-independence states. In his study of state development in Africa,

We can use administrative records produced by the pre-colonial states themselves to study the long-run consequences of pre-colonial state history.

Herbst noted that the history of states preceding colonial rule was often “seen as too exotic to be relevant” given their lack of clear territorial definitions (Herbst 2014, 36). At the same

time, Herbst also warned that assuming the absence of states simply for the lack of territorial boundaries “demonstrates, at the minimum, a lack of imagination and, more importantly, a rather narrow conception of how power can be organized” (Herbst 2014, 37). Since then, several studies have emerged on the role of pre-colonial history in shaping

state development under colonial and post-independence states (Dell, Lane, and Querubin 2018; Michalopoulos and Papaioannou 2013; Paine 2019).

In this essay, I reflect on this growing literature, summarize their theoretical claims, and discuss their approaches given the limited availability of data on pre-colonial states. I then show that, rather than using the dominant method of using anthropological data or historical political boundaries, in certain contexts – such as Burma – we can utilize the administrative records produced by the pre-colonial states themselves to better understand their history and consequences for state-building during colonial rule. Finally, I evaluate whether the resulting patterns of colonial coercion can explain the spatial variations in post-independence violence.

The Role of Pre-colonial History

Building on the existing work on the legacies of colonial rule, a growing strand of research explores how the history preceding colonial rule shaped the very development of colonial and

later post-independence states. One early work that brings attention to pre-colonial institutions is Mamdani, who uses the concept of direct versus indirect rule to explain the bifurcation of colonial states: one where the colonial state-enforced European laws and institutions in some places, and kept (or even invented) pre-colonial customary laws and institutions in others (Mamdani 1996).

Since Mamdani, studies have explored how the two forms of rule built on pre-colonial institutions. For example, studies on the reversal of fortune hypothesis argue that Latin American colonial states built their coercive political and economic institutions in the places with high pre-colonial political organization and factor endowments, resulting in high inequalities and low development in the long run (Acemoglu, Johnson, and Robinson 2002; Engerman and Sokoloff 2012). Some, however, observed a positive relationship between precolonial political complexity and post-colonial development, as in present-day Uganda, where the British colonial state implemented the indirect rule in areas with high political complexity (Bandyopadhyay and Green 2016). While these relationships may be context-dependent, they agree on the important role pre-colonial institutions play in the later state-building process.¹

Rather than explicitly relying on the concept of direct versus indirect rule, a different sub-group in the literature look at the persistence of earlier historical borders. These studies utilize the political boundaries of pre-colonial states to compare the units exposed to the state and those that did not and identify the causal effects of being exposed to political institutions associated with such states. For example, a study on

1. See Lange, Mahoney, and Vom Hau 2006, for an example of how colonizer identity may shape the relationship between the forms of colonial rule and post-independence development.

the long-run impact of the Kuba Kingdom (in present-day DRC Congo) found a strong link between the exposure to the pre-colonial state and present-day cultural norms (Lowes et al. 2017). In another example from Southeast Asia, the villages that experienced state consolidation under Dai Viet enjoyed more goods provision and redistribution in present-day Vietnam, due to an institutionalized model of village governance (Dell, Lane, and Querubin 2018).

A key empirical challenge with the analyses of pre-colonial history is data availability. Several of the administrative functions of pre-colonial states were simply not collected or destroyed by the elements of time. Existing studies circumvent this problem by utilizing anthropological data or political boundaries, which were relatively more available. For example, studies often measure pre-colonial political complexity using the information on ethnic hierarchical structure in Murdock's 1967 *Ethnographic Atlas* (Bandyopadhyay and Green 2016; Michalopoulos and Papaioannou 2015). Political boundaries of pre-colonial states also allow scholars to compare the differences in the outcomes of interest between the units exposed to the institutions of the pre-colonial state and the nearby units that were not, often using estimation strategies such as regression discontinuity design (RDD).

While these approaches can yield valuable insights on the persistence of pre-colonial history or its interaction with the colonial rule to influence subsequent development, they cannot look at the variation within pre-colonial states, which limits the ability to address alternative explanations. For instance, the political hierarchy may correlate with numerous other ethnic-group-level characteristics, which limits the confidence at which we can claim about the

relationship between political hierarchy and the outcomes of interest. Similarly, given that the concept of pre-colonial states comprises multiple institutions, empirical strategies using political borders of the states cannot separate the effect of one institution from another.

Recognizing these limitations, I show in the next section how we can use administrative records produced by the pre-colonial states themselves to study the long-run consequences of pre-colonial state history in certain contexts such as Burma, with my ongoing research project looking at the role of pre-colonial state consolidation in colonial coercion under British Burma.

State Consolidation before British Burma

In mainland Southeast Asia (consisting of present-day Burma, Cambodia, Laos, Thailand, and Vietnam), state consolidation under indigenous rulers predated colonial rule, characterized by the declining number of states and territorial expansion of the surviving states. While there were altogether 23 independent polities in the fourteenth century, only three remained by the end of the eighteenth century: Burma (Myanmar), Siam (Thailand), and Dai Viet (Vietnam) (Lieberman and Buckley 2012, 1085).

As the remaining states enlarged, they also went through administrative innovations to further consolidate their rule. In Vietnam, to meet the new taxation demands, villages became increasingly institutionalized in their governance, moving away from the earlier models of patron-client networks (Dell, Lane, and Querubin 2018). In Siam, which avoided European colonization despite territorial losses in present-day Laos and Cambodia, continued the consolidation process past the nineteenth century, pro-

Figure 1:
Territorial extent of Konbaung dynasty in as featured in Thomson 1817 map named *Birman Empire* (link here). The white polygon with dashed lines represents the approximate historical territories. Black lines represent the present-day borders of Burma (Myanmar). Black polygon represents the Bago region, where all observations in this paper come from.



ducing new administrative units and reforming local governance (Paik and Vechbanyongratana 2019).

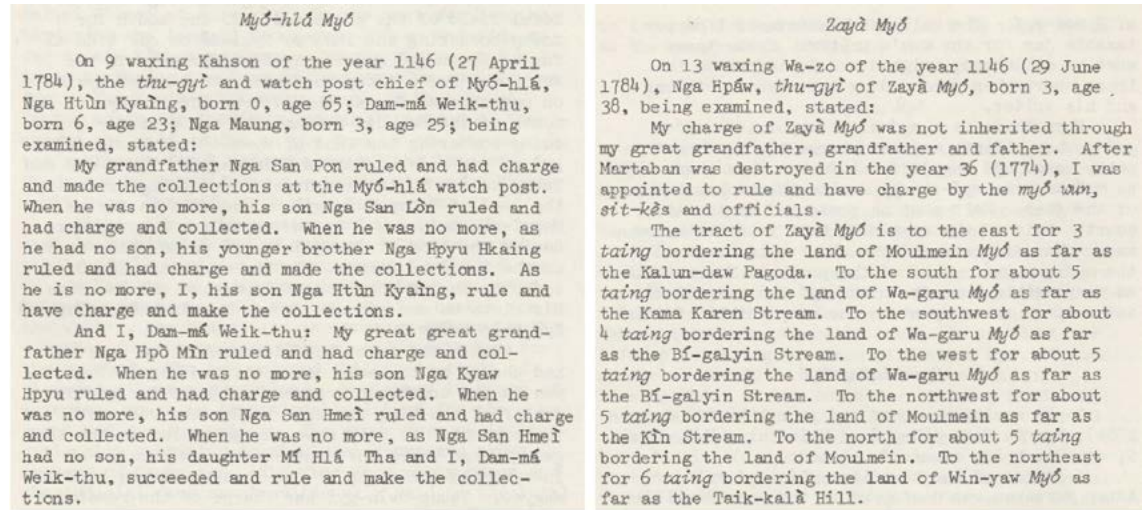
Similar to Dai Viet and Siam, the expanding Burmese state under the Konbaung dynasty, the last indigenous dynasty before British colonization, made substantial investments in expanding its administrative capacity (See *Figure 1* for its territorial extent). A result of these efforts was *sit-tans*, which were land revenue inquests containing information on local leadership, territorial extent, population, and economic activity, among others. The earliest surviving records date back to 1783, a century before colonial rule.

Contained in these records is a key piece of information about local state consolidation, which is where the local headman (*thugyi*) was newly appointed by the ruler before 1783. Traditionally passed along the hereditary line, the local headman is the key agent between the state and local society, implementing the former's taxation and judicial administration ac-

tions. Given their long-run interactions with the places they administered through generations, many headmen preferred to protect their communities, thereby limiting the ruler's extractive potential. The rulers generally respected the hereditary succession, and in fact, later royal reforms in 1809 made it difficult to remove the headmen from their posts (Lieberman 1984).

However, under one particular circumstance, the pre-colonial rulers received a unique opportunity to appoint a new headman: extinction of a hereditary line. When there was no available hereditary successor to the headman, the ruler instead appointed a loyal subject, breaking the generations of the social relationship built between the headman and the local society (*Figure 2* show an example of two towns, where one had a newly appointed headman before 1783 and the other did not). As a result, these locations experienced stronger precolonial state consolidation than those that maintained their hereditary headmen, as they became

Figure 2:
Sittan collected in a
 Toungoo town whose
 hereditary line of leader was
 maintained (left) versus
 a Martaban town whose
 hereditary line became
 extinct (right). Information
 on whether hereditary line
 was maintained was almost
 always stated in the second
 paragraph of town and
 village records.



(a) Hereditary headman

(b) New headman

more compliant to the state’s administrative demands (Lieberman 1984, 255). I additionally observed that these new appointments were plausibly exogenous, uncorrelated with local demographic or geographic factors.²

Coercion under British Burma

All the territories of the Konbaung dynasty came under British colonial rule via three Anglo-Burmese wars between 1824 and 1885. However, the end of the third war did not secure political order for the new colonial state as numerous local rebellions appeared throughout the country. What followed was a decade of political repression known as the Pacification of Burma and administrative reforms that ended the local administration by hereditary headmen, many of whom became key participants in the anti-colonial resistance movements.

Why should pre-colonial history matter in the colonial state’s allocation of its coercive power? I explain this in two steps: (1) increased lo-

cal compliance to the state’s demands after pre-colonial consolidation, and (2) the fiscally constrained colonial state’s lower need for coercion in the places with a history of compliance to the state. First, when the pre-colonial state appointed a new headman in the event of a broken hereditary line, it fundamentally reshaped the state-society relationship in the locality. The new headmen, no longer bounded by social constraints against extraction, instead became more compliant agents to the state’s intended policy actions; this compliance created a history of less contentious state-society interactions before colonial rule, compared to the places with unbroken hereditary lines where headmen maintained the centuries of strong ties with their society.

Once the territories came under colonial rule, the new state would allocate its coercive power based on local resistance against the state. This was especially the case for colonial states, many of which were administered under severe fis-

2. Additionally, this paper focuses only on Bago, a region in Southern Burma, for two reasons. First, the Konbaung dynasty’s large territorial expanse means enormous diversity in geography and demography. These potential confounders influence pre-colonial state consolidation and colonial outcomes at the same time. Limiting to a smaller geographic region controls for the variations in these confounders. Second, British Burma was colonized in waves via three wars between 1824 and 1886, creating variations in colonization timing across the territories. As Bago in its entirety was colonized in 1852, limiting our analyses to the region addresses the concerns with colonization timing as a potential confounder.

cal constraints (Frankema and Van Waijenburg 2014). I argue that the earlier history of state consolidation influenced the resulting spatial variation in colonial coercive power. When a town or village was consolidated before colonial rule (due to a broken hereditary line and a newly appointed headman), the subsequent local compliance to the state reduced the latter’s need to rely on coercion in pursuing its actions. In contrast, when local headmen maintained a continuous hereditary line for generations, limited state consolidation before colonial rule increased the state’s need to rely on coercion.

1783 and the colonial police presence in 1912. The coefficients are consistently negative at different cutoff points from historical locations. The places closer to the locations with replaced headmen before colonial rule also saw the fewer presence of colonial police in 1912. This relationship also holds for the number of police forces in 1912 and 1924. The consistently negative relationship is also not explained by other colonial institutions, pre-colonial population size, or spatial correlation.

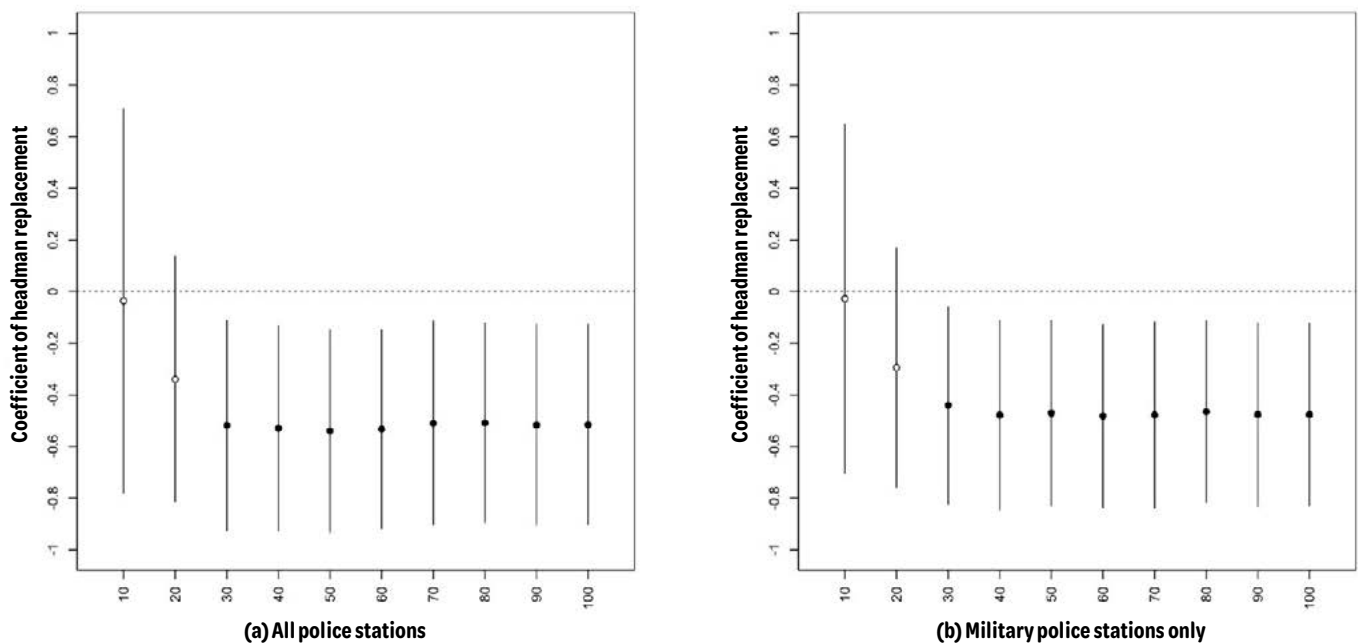
Implications for Post-Independence Conflict

Violence and political instability followed right after Burma gained its independence from British rule in 1948. Often described as one of the world’s longest civil wars, this multidimensional conflict involved ethnic groups, such as the Karen National Union (KNU) and Kachin

To evaluate this hypothesis, I use the colonial district gazetteers recorded in 1912 and 1924, which included information on the location of civilian and military police stations, along with the forces present in each station.³ Figure 3 show the coefficient plots showing the relationship between headman replacement before

3. Civilian police was for dealing with regular criminal matters, while military police were for repressing riots and rebellions against the state.

Figure 3: OLS estimates for the relationship between pre-colonial state consolidation and colonial investments in coercion, by cutoff point of maximum distance from a historical location included in the *sittans*. Unit of analysis is town/village included in 1912 district gazetteers.



Independence Association (KIA), asking for more autonomy, as well as organizations such as the Communist Party of Burma (CPB), who fought against the government based on ideological differences. Violent clashes and political instability throughout the country were ultimately followed by a coup d'état in 1962 and continued to the present day.

While important changes in ethnic composition and bureaucratic structure followed, the army was created by incorporating the Japanese-trained Patriotic Burmese Forces (PBF),⁴ into the British colonial army meant the Burmese army's coercive capacity ultimately built on the preceding colonial infrastructure (Callahan 1996; Nakanishi 2013). To investigate if the presence of post-independence conflicts was associated with colonial coercive infrastructure, I collected additional data on the location of conflict events between 1948 and 1998 as recorded by Lintner (Lintner 1999). I then observed the

relationship between the location of these conflicts and the civilian and military police presence at the towns and villages included in the colonial gazetteers.

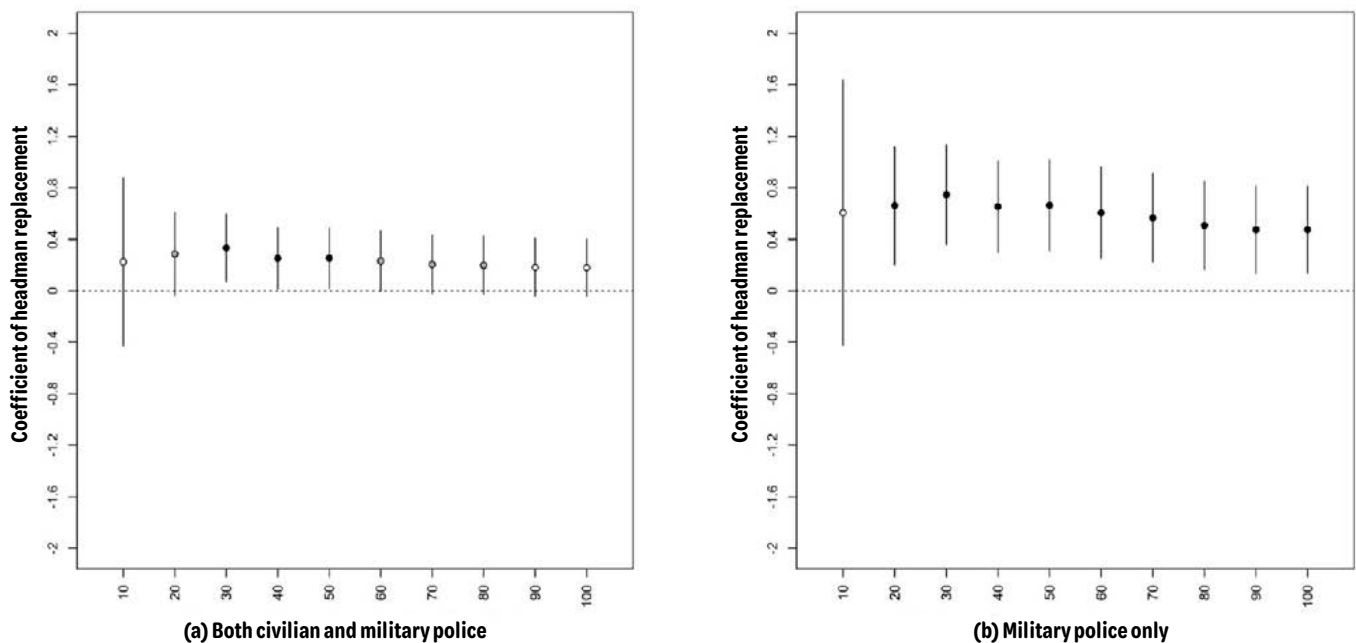
The results show that colonial coercion can explain the level of post-independence conflict, as the locations with colonial police stations were positively associated with the number of conflict events with 10 kilometers of the included towns and villages, after controlling for geographic and demographic characteristics (Figure 4). This holds whether the presence of colonial police only includes military police or both civilian and military police.

In summary, building on the existing research on the long-run impacts of pre-colonial institutions, my paper's findings highlight the importance of the pre-colonial state-building process in shaping the colonial and post-independence state-society relations and conflict. Particularly,

Figure 4:

OLS estimates for the relationship between pre-colonial state consolidation and colonial investments in coercion, by cutoff point of maximum distance from a historical location included in the *sittans*. Unit of analysis is town/village included in 1912 district gazetteers.

4. Also known as the Burma Independence Army (BIA).



they show how the use of records created by the pre-colonial states themselves could give us rich insights into a long-run state-building process with crucial implications for the colonial and post-independence state development. This invites scholars on the legacies of colonial rule in diverse regional contexts to bring in the records from pre-colonial history when there is an opportunity. We can see similar possibilities in Hong and Paik, who looked at how educational outcomes in colonial Korea can be explained by the presence of local elites using the pre-colonial data on civil service examinations (Hong and Paik 2018).

Conclusion

While the observational nature of the project posed challenges against causal claims, in this essay, I observe a consistent correlation between pre-colonial state history and colonial state development, showing in particular how the allocation of colonial coercive power was shaped by the history preceding colonization. Additionally, the resulting spatial patterns have

important implications for understanding the spatial patterns of post-independence conflict.

Findings like this were observable because many administrative records from pre-colonial Burma, from land-revenue inquests to royal orders, survived today. To quote the Southeast Asian historian Victor Lieberman, “scholars of Burma cannot, in good conscience, invoke the usual justification – lack of adequate primary materials – for failing to construct an economic history of the pre-colonial era” (Lieberman 1991, 1). This allows us to look at within-state variation of specific pre-colonial institutions and their effect on subsequent development, which was not possible with anthropological data or historical borders.

With a boom in the digitization of historical records and the increasing attention towards pre-colonial history among the studies of colonial legacies, we can expect more studies to incorporate pre-colonial history in their theories and pre-colonial historical data to explore their long-run consequences in post-independence states. ●

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STUDYING FORCED MIGRATION IN THE GLOBAL SOUTH: The Role of Everyday Politics

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What happens in cities when a new refugee group arrives? The arrival of new groups almost always signifies a substantial change, and this change is even more palpable when the arrival occurs in large influxes, which involves people moving to particular city areas in large volumes within a relatively short period.¹ This kind of large-scale influx affects the existing social dynamics, leading to functioning multiculturalism (Howard and Andreouli 2016; Wessendorf 2014) or intensified fractionalizations between groups (Kaufmann 2014; Putnam 2007). In both cases, new social orders emerge and social negotiations between host community members (hereafter HCMs) and refugees shift with the population influx.

Focusing on these new social dynamics, the studies on Western contexts suggest that when it comes to refugees, HCMs' acceptance rates are higher for cultures that are "more similar" to themselves, i.e. they prefer Christians over Muslims, and European immigrants over their Middle Eastern counterparts (see, Bansak,

Hainmueller, and Hangartner 2016). These results coincide with the increasing racism and symbolic threat—deriving from cultural differences as perceived by European HCMs—which have had an important impact on the widespread opposition to refugees and migrants. Thus, the inferred assumption is that cultural similarities would lead to more acceptance and fewer conflicts among groups (Byrne 1971). This indicates that one cannot expect the findings on Syrian refugee influx to be similar in the Global North and the Global South, and that the latter should have had more "acceptance" than the former, according to this cultural similarity argument.

Yet, the tenth anniversary of the arrival of Syrian refugees in Turkey has demonstrated that this has not been the case. Over the years, HCMs' opposition to Syrian refugees has been increasing, which has led to social conflicts (Şimşek 2015; Terzioğlu 2017). As the aforementioned assumptions do not seem to hold in the case of Turkey, I queried what has been hitherto over-

1. Jacobsen (1996, 657) defines refugee influx as that "which occurs when, within a relatively short period (a few years), large numbers (thousands) of people flee their places of residence for the asylum country." Hopkins (2010) argues that the seven percent change in the past decade can be considered "sudden," a term that he also applies to his study. I find Jacobsen's term more appropriate because "sudden" depends on the context.



looked in the literature. My answer is *everyday politics*.

I theorize on “everyday politics,” defining it as a concept to explain how interactions between HCMs and refugees shape everyday attitudes and behaviors, both implicitly and explicitly,

following the encounters they have in demographically changing areas in the aftermath of a refugee influx. “Everyday politics” covers various social dynamics of everyday life within the contexts of forced migration and influences one’s psychology, perception of others, and navigation of possible interactions (Billig 1995; Howarth 2017). Thus, “everyday politics” involves not only the individuals but also the social change

that revolves around them that is “rooted in everyday settings” (Boyte 2005, 4). By overlooking the role of everyday politics, we risk the potential to unravel the impact of daily social dynamics in the micro- and macro-level outcomes within forced migration. This is the first reason why we need this concept.

The second reason is to offer a novel way of thinking about a phenomenon that carries the potential to become political and seeing what is politically significant. Beveridge and Koch (2019) state the political potential of everyday life in our socio-spatial relations is a source that individuals thrive from. I argue that everyday politics manifests itself in the immediate spatial proximity of an individual’s life, whether one is an HCM or a refugee in relation to the context. I focus on the urban public spaces within neighborhoods where everyday life unfolds, overlaps, and results in expressing new sentiments, feelings, and opinions in ordinary people’s day-to-

day utterances and practices (Bayat 2013, 14). This also coincides with the everyday understanding of urban public spaces as spaces of “a social instance” that brings together “economic, cultural, ideological, and political instances” (Capanema Alvares and Barbosa 2018, 2).

Although everyday politics is not a new concept in social science, the focus on the individual and the role of surroundings in shaping individuals’ daily attitudes and behaviors is recent. Therefore, what surrounds the individuals in the aftermath of a refugee influx has the potential to become political in the urban public spaces. Hence, in my research, I set out to answer the question: *How does everyday politics manifest itself in the social dynamics of the urban public spaces following a refugee influx within a South–South context?*

Turkey, Host Community Members, and the Syrian Refugees

To answer the above question, I analyze the case of Çarşamba area in Bursa, Turkey and adopt an in-depth qualitative approach that offers an exploratory empirical analysis. Given that Turkey hosts the highest number of Syrian refugees (UNHCR 2021), the country serves as a critical case study for analyzing the problems of everyday politics by offering insights into the strategic importance of sudden demographic change (Flyvberg 2006, 229; Gerring 2006, 115).

All provinces in Turkey have Syrian inhabitants, but the number of Syrian refugees varies substantially across and within provinces (*Figure 1*).² The available information on the demographics of Syrian refugees in Turkey suggests that the majority is of Arab origin with the remainder comprised of Turkmen, Kurdish, and

2. Turkey is divided into 81 provinces (*il* in Turkish). Each province is divided into districts. Most of the time, unofficially, “province” overlaps with the use of “city.” However, administratively and officially, “province” is the official unit.

By overlooking the role of everyday politics, we risk the potential to unravel the impact of daily social dynamics in the micro- and macro-level outcomes.

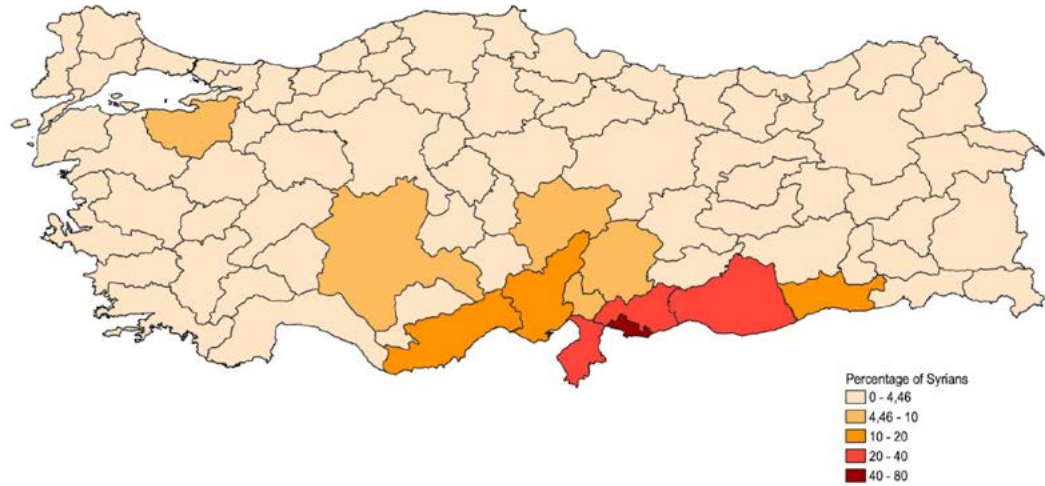


Figure 1: Registered Syrians in provinces (Source: DGMM March 2021) (Map created by the author in QGIS).

other ethnic groups (Erdoğan 2019) and the majority is Sunni Muslim. The existing 3,692,837 million Syrians in Turkey (Directorate General of Migration Management 2021; hereafter DGMM) add to the already existing population of Turkey, which is 83,614,362 (Turkish Statistical Institute 2021; hereafter TUIK). The majority of the population in Turkey is of Turkish ethnicity, and the largest minority of citizens is of Kurdish ethnicity (19%). The majority of the population of Turkey is of Muslim faith (99.8%), composed

of mostly Sunni Muslims, in addition to Alevites (Central Intelligence Agency Factbook 2021). These statistics show that there are more elements that are similar between the HCMs and the refugee population in Turkey compared to the Global North.

Bursa³ (Figure 2) is an industrial center (Kaya, Weidinger, and Yılmaz-Elmas 2020) and is the fourth largest province in Turkey, with 3,101,833 million residents (TUIK 2021) apart from Syrian

3. Bursa has also been home to numerous waves of migrants throughout the history of the Turkish Republic: from Eastern and Southeastern Turkey (Kurds), the Balkans (Muslims and ethnic Turks from Greece, Bosnia, and Bulgaria), and – the biggest wave of all until the arrival of the Syrians – the forced migration of ethnic Turks from Bulgaria in 1989 (Council of Europe 2018).



Figure 2: Location of Bursa with province borders in Turkey (Map created by the author in ArcGIS).

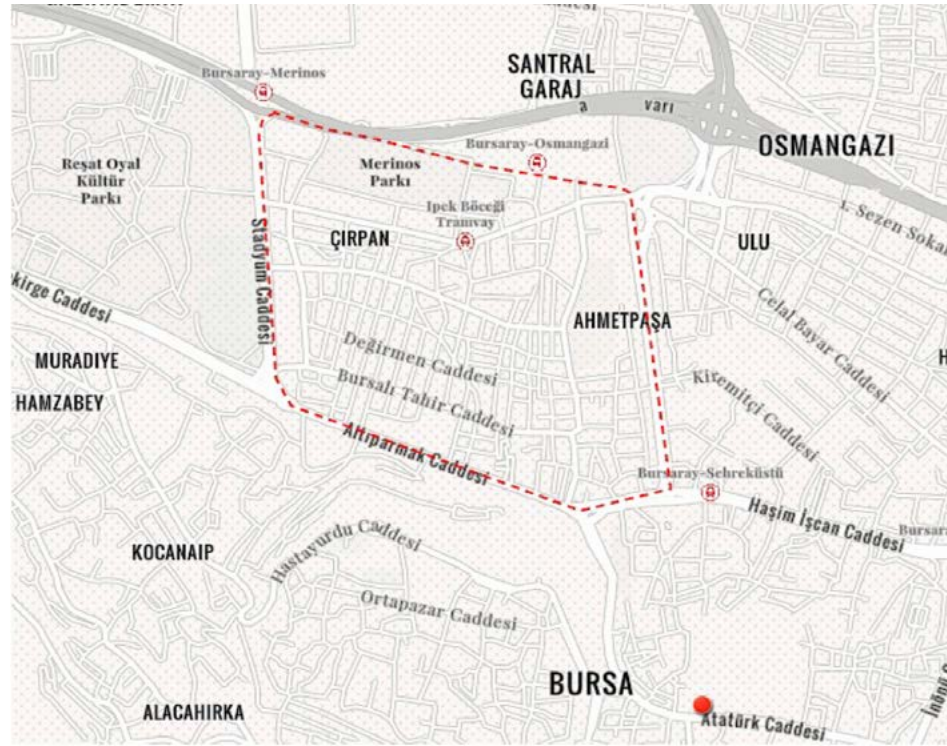


Figure 3:
Çarşamba in Bursa
(Map created by the author
in ArcGIS).

refugees. The province hosts the second largest population of Syrians (excluding border and near-border provinces), which constitutes 5.86% of its population, following Istanbul (DGMM 2021). All district municipalities in Bursa host registered Syrians, but the area of Çarşamba (Figure 3), specifically, has been referred to as “Little Aleppo” since 2016 (Özdal 2017).

Çarşamba has a population of approximately 24 thousand residents, excluding Syrians (TUIK 2021). It consists of eight neighborhoods, but unofficially it is considered as one area. Çarşamba has experienced waves of demographic changes as a result of populations moving to and from the city. The demographic change in Çarşamba started with the moving out of upper-middle-class apartment owners during the 1980s. The transformation continued during the 1990s and 2000s with the arrival of sex workers and Roma people as tenants who later left the district. Therefore, when Syrians arrived in Bursa,

Çarşamba became an attractive site both for its proximity to the city center and for the availability of housing options. These changing demographics made Çarşamba a compelling case to understand the everyday social dynamics following a refugee influx.

Measuring Everyday Politics within Forced Migration

I approach everyday politics and its elements through the “politicized places hypothesis” developed by Hopkins (2010). According to this hypothesis, the local context matters when a sudden demographic change involving incoming waves of immigrants, accompanied by salient national rhetoric, influences the attitudes of individuals in that area because “they will find it easier to draw conclusions from their experiences” (Hopkins 2010, 43).

Çarşamba is a case with one dominant newcomer group rather than multiple diverse groups liv-

ing together. The actors that I focus on within this context are HCMs and newcomers. Thus, within a politicized context, I base my analysis on the concept of *group membership*, that is, “objective inclusion in a group and does not necessitate an internalized sense of membership” in which “group members need to share common interests or at least perceive that they do” (Huddy 2013, 738, 750). This is not to downplay the importance of identity differences between individuals or groups in terms of class, religion, ethnicity, and so forth. Yet, I situate my analysis under the assumption that identities are embedded in social contexts (Howarth et al. 2013).

This allows me to dig deeper into the contextual factors as long as the influence of the sudden demographic change persists. An HCM describes the reflection of this change in these words: “I cannot walk in the street anymore. Mainly over the weekend, Çarşamba turns into Damascus. There are Arabic signs everywhere. It used to be beautiful, there used to be an order, people were nicer, we used to sit outside. Now people are looking for a reason to start a fight.” This statement aligns with what many of the HCMs said, “Çarşamba has become practically Damascus.” This change is also perceived by the Syrian refugees in a similar vein as they call the area a “Syrian hub.” A Syrian refugee that lives and works in the area agrees with HCMs’ statements but also adds, “As Syrians, we become the focus of attention, and there is social pressure from the Turkish people on the Syrian people, and they say to us: ‘This area has become a Syrian area.’” These statements demonstrate that there is an undeniable change that influences both the HCMs and the refugees. However, while HCMs reflect on this change in terms of a limitation to their everyday habits, Syrian refugees describe it from an everyday pressure point of view. Therefore, in addition to

the actors involved, how these actors perceive the contextual reflections of this demographic change in their everyday life reveals further dynamics that lead to better analysis.

In that regard, I propose that within the social context of forced migration, group membership (HCM vs. newcomer) is as likely to be influenced by social dynamics of everyday life as much as it is influenced by the identities of an individual. Moreover, I rely on the assumption that individuals bring something, explicitly or implicitly, to the interaction related to their group, which influences their political behavior (Huddy 2013). For instance, in this case, both HCMs and Syrian refugees describe their everyday habits in reference to the changing demographics of Çarşamba. The argument here is not that demographic change becomes the core of everyday dynamics, but rather that the *topic* of change in demographics permeates into everyday settings as attitudes and behaviors.

I conceptualize these attitudes and behaviors as *micro-manifestations* of everyday life, which refers to the micro-level attitudinal and behavioral outcomes of intergroup micro-encounters that derive from everyday politics and occur within the social context of forced migration. Studies have already demonstrated that micro-encounters between HCMs and immigrants influence macro-level outcomes such as trust in institutions (Dinesen and Sonderskov 2015), immigration policy preferences (Enos 2014; Hainmueller and Hopkins 2014; Hangartner et al. 2018), immigrants’ rights and access to welfare systems (Finseraas and Kotsadam 2017), and political party preferences that mainly increase support for right-wing parties (Dinas et al. 2019). However, such focus has the potential to discourage scholars from analyzing the micro-level outcomes of micro-encounters.

In Çarşamba, micro-level outcomes of everyday politics have an influential role in shaping the everyday attitudes and behaviors of both HCMs and Syrian refugees. For example, an HCM said during an interview, “We cannot say ‘You cannot go [to the park]’ to anyone. The parks belong to them [Syrians], they are everywhere. [...] But because they [Syrians] go, we do not go.” Although not all HCMs share a similar behavioral pattern, this is not a peculiar statement among HCMs either. The Syrian refugees on the other hand articulate on their choice of not going to the parks from a different perspective, which is reflected in the following statements: “Because I do not feel comfortable as everyone stares at us” and “the people here are uncomfortable with your presence, you become isolated.” Thus, while HCMs’ and Syrian refugees’ use of these spaces and *micro-manifestations* differ, empirical data shows that both groups adapt their everyday attitudes and behaviors according to the demographic change.

Conclusion and Policy Implications for the Global South

By introducing everyday politics into the literature on forced migration, I untangle the complex contextual elements of everyday life that shapes and influences individuals’ political behaviors in the Global South. With this study, I demonstrate that *how* everyday politics unfolds is as important as *where* it does. Scholars of forced migration studies have not yet paid enough attention to urban public spaces in neighborhoods to analyze the everyday attitudes and behaviors of individuals (see exception Petermann 2014). Yet, studying urban public spaces in-depth and understanding the workings of everyday life expand our understanding of what happens on the ground when we walk out our front door.

The results of my research are potentially generalizable to similar local contexts, to the extent where the everyday politics of the HCM population and elements of the incoming refugee population are going through sudden demographic changes, particularly in the Global South. Analyzing a South–South forced migration context contributed to expanding the literature that is predominantly focused on cases where similarities between HCMs and newcomers stand out. Thus, I propose that testing the results of this study in the contexts where migration movements between neighboring countries rather share similar elements. For instance, in February 2021, the Colombian government granted “temporary status” to one million Venezuelans (Treisman 2021), and xenophobic attacks have been reported against Venezuelans (Otis 2020). In the current outlook of the case, the situation of Venezuelan refugees in Colombia is very similar to Syrian refugees in Turkey. However, while sudden demographic changes are happening in various localities in Colombia, it is hitherto unknown how this population movement will evolve.

Therefore, scholars interested in the contextual role of forced migration dynamics should pay attention to the findings of this study particularly for two reasons. First, only if we start to dissect the everyday elements of forced migration, we will be able to measure the social dynamics better. Second, by expanding our focus beyond the Global North, we will be able to explain why encounters with newcomers may not result in predicted outcomes, such as easier integration. This will allow researchers to expand the current theoretical approaches by studying the contexts in the Global South. Overall, including everyday politics in our analysis helps understanding the immediate dynamics of forced migration. ●

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CRIMINAL VIOLENCE, INSECURITY, AND SOCIAL RESISTANCE: Insights from Mexico

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Over the past decade, criminal violence has multiplied across Latin America and organized crime has transformed dramatically. No longer centered in drug trafficking and searching to increase their rents amid rising competition, organized crime groups (OCGs) across the region have diversified their targets and interests. Criminal organizations now also attempt to exert influence on the political, economic, and social lives of the communities over which they seek territorial control. In this process, criminal groups have become *de facto* local rulers and established subnational criminal governance regimes in multiple Latin American cities (Arias 2017; Lessing 2021; Trejo and Ley 2020).

A vast literature in political science has addressed the logic of such criminal violence, its evolution, and its transformation. Multiple studies have reiterated the impact of security policies on violent trends. In particular, unconditional (Lessing 2017) and militarized (Flores-Macías 2018) strategies that focus on dismantling criminal groups' leadership (Calderón et al. 2015; Phillips 2015) intensify violence. Beyond anti-crime policies, changes in the state's internal organization also affect organized crime. First, party alternation shakes the protection networks on which organized crime depends for its

existence, which leads to uncertainty and violent competition among criminal groups (Trejo and Ley 2018; 2020; Bejarano 2021). Second, partisan fragmentation also limits the state's capacity to coordinate and effectively confront – or protect – organized crime (Durán-Martínez 2018; Trejo and Ley 2020). These findings are consistent across the major hubs of criminal violence in Latin America, from Mexico to Colombia to Brazil.

In the face of rising criminal activity that is deeply intertwined with politics, it is critical to understand its political consequences, too. In particular, how do citizens cope with criminal violence and respond to it? A more recent and growing research agenda within political science examines civilians' political reactions to violence across the Latin American region. Victimization experiences and perceptions of insecurity have been shown to depress individual support for democracy (Fernandez and Kuenzi 2010; Carreras 2013) and political trust (Blanco and Ruiz 2013; Ishiyama et al. 2018), while at the same time expanding the demand for punitive security policies (Visconti 2019; Flores-Macías and Zarkin 2021a) and even transforming preferences for social policies (Altamirano, Berens, and Ley 2020).



Criminal violence also impacts citizen behavior. The groundbreaking study by Regina Bateson (2012), on the positive impact of crime victimization on nonelectoral participation across the world, opened a new line of research on the behavioral consequences of organized crime in Latin America. Extant studies have examined distinct independent variables: experiences of victimization, perceptions of insecurity, fear of crime, and violent contexts. Overall, victims of crime indeed participate through nonelectoral mechanisms at a higher rate than nonvictims, but (violent) crime victimization is not as consequential for electoral participation (Córdova 2019; Berens and Dallendörfer 2019). Instead, on Election Day, a violent context can reduce turnout to a larger extent (Trelles and Carreras 2012), particularly when criminal groups exert violence against party candidates and public authorities (Ley 2018).

Considering that citizens may participate and collectively organize to explicitly address crime, scholars have begun to examine such experiences across Latin America (Moncada forthcoming), with a particular interest in armed reactions (Phillips 2017; Zizumbo-Colunga 2017). In light of this growing research agenda, my work has focused on citizens' *nonviolent* actions against criminal violence. In this essay, I share evidence from my past and current research on this topic in Mexico, the fifth most violent country in Latin America.¹

Organized crime-related violence in Mexico began to increase since the mid-1990s, but intensified as a result of the militarized strategy against drug cartels in 2006 (Trejo and Ley 2018; 2020). Over the past decade, the fight among criminal

groups and against the Mexican state has accumulated more than 200,000 deaths, in addition to more than 30,000 disappearances,² and approximately 200,000 internal displacements (Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre 2011). Additionally, the militarization of police forces resulted in increased human rights violations (Flores-Macías and Zarkin 2021b). In the midst of such violence, we have seen collectives of victims take to the streets and protest, and even lead their own searches for their missing relatives (Gallagher 2017; Robledo Silvestre 2018). My research seeks to understand such high-risk action.

Through survey data, in-depth interviews, and participant observation, I explain the mechanisms through which citizens are able to demand peace and justice. I argue that while victimization experiences provide an initial motivation for the organization of protests against insecurity, social networks play a fundamental role in citizen participation in reaction to crime.³ Socialization within networks helps transform the paralyzing emotions often associated with living amid violence into potential for action. In addition, network interaction reshapes perceptions about the effectiveness and risks of such collective efforts. And, as part of a new project, I further contend that to explain how civilians can collectively resist organized crime, one must also understand the different reasons criminal groups attack distinct sectors of civil society.

Demanding Peace and Justice amid Criminal Violence

In recent years, organized crime has become a more visible player of local politics in Mexico.

1. See <https://insightcrime.org/news/analysis/2020-homicide-round-up/>.

2. See <https://personasdesaparecidas.mx/db/db>.

3. Ley, Sandra. "High-risk participation: Demanding peace and justice amid criminal violence" (forthcoming at *Journal of Peace Research*).

How and why some individuals overcome fear associated with crime and take action in response to such insecurity, amid a violent context, despite the high risk that their participation can entail.

Criminal groups seek to influence party campaigns and elections by directly attacking politicians and imposing their preferred candidates. Since 2006, more than 500 political authorities and party candidates have been attacked by organized crime, particularly during local election cycles (Blume 2017; Trejo and Ley 2020; 2021; Martínez Trujillo and Fajardo Turner 2021). Such violent events greatly discourage electoral participation (Ley 2018). Not only do they magnify perceptions of insecurity – and the subsequent perceived cost of voting – but they also signal that it is criminal groups – and not voters – who define the electoral results.

As institutional and formal mechanisms of accountability become limited, non-institutional channels, such as street protests, become more attractive to hold politicians accountable and demand peace and justice. Based on systematic review of 50 local newspapers, I constructed the Mexican Protest against Crime (MPC) Dataset. The MPC includes 1,014 protest events organized by citizens against insecurity across 31 Mexican states between 2006 and 2012. While numerous, these actions often face high risks. Although the act of protesting is not risky per se, when such protests involve calls for security and justice, and occur amid a violent environment – with active criminal actors, operating in collusion with state authorities – physical dangers are likely to emerge. Participants in protests against crime in Mexico have been threatened by criminals and their allies into not pressing for judicial investigation or political accountability that could compromise their activity and freedom to operate with impunity. For instance, the parents of several missing persons have been murdered after openly denouncing

the collusion between criminal groups and local authorities. Therefore, a crucial question is how and why some individuals overcome fear associated with crime and take action in response to such insecurity, amid a violent context, despite the high risk that their participation can entail. I argue that the answer to this question lies on social networks.

Following classic works on high-risk collective action (McAdam 1986; Loveman 1998; Wood 2003), I contend that networks have the power to transform both emotions and perceptions. At an emotional level, socialization within networks helps transform the feelings of individual fear that crime evokes into collective anger that represents potential for action. As individuals become more engaged with one another, their feelings are transformed from being exclusively self-oriented towards being other-oriented. Additionally, denser network interactions insulate participants from coercion (Berg and Carranza 2018). Stronger networks also generate supporting mechanisms for their members, creating a sense of security (Dorff 2017). Thus, networks have the power to transform the perceptions of the risks and the effectiveness associated with their collective action against crime.

Quantitative and qualitative evidence from the initial wave of protest in 2011–2012 in Mexico support my argument. Original survey data show that while victims of crime are more likely to protest, social networks increase the probability of protest participation among victims and nonvictims. Participant observation and in-depth interviews reveal that social networks generate solidarity across and within both groups. As a father whose son was kidnapped by police in Monterrey noted: “There have been moments where we lost hope, but then realize that we have a new beautiful family that con-



tinues to give us energy, strength, and a space to fight until the very end: until we find our son again.”⁴

Interaction among victims and nonvictims also helped change the views of members of the latter group, helping them “realize [victims] were different, ... courageous citizens.”⁵ As a collective identity developed, victims and nonvictims also changed their views about protest and its effects, mainly regarding how mobilization can raise the costs to politicians. A participant in Chihuahua eloquently summarizes this point: “Marches, protests, and sit-ins help inform and express discontent. Maybe they can’t do all they should do or all we expect of them, but they at least shake up authorities who only want to show the ‘pretty things’ they do. When we show what is really going on, they have to do something because society and the media are watching.”⁶ Some victims, however, did not have such opportunities to interact. I find that in such cases, they did not take part in any collective action.

It is important to note that protest is not the only possible reaction in response to criminal violence and that the ability to protest is likely to differ across groups. The MPC dataset further reveals that over a third of protests against insecurity in Mexico were organized by human rights organizations. Taken together, schools, neighborhood associations, and churches promoted an additional 30% of the protests. While the private sector in Mexico did not engage in this kind of street mobilization, business elites in various states led security initiatives to deter crime and hold government authorities accountable for crime and insecurity. In this regard, I have

conducted in-depth interviews with business leaders in the north and south of Mexico. My coauthored work with Magdalena Guzmán shows that the private sector can undertake civil action, often in concert with local authorities, and deter crime (Ley and Guzmán 2019). Preliminary evidence, therefore, uncovers a wide variation across civil society sectors to organize and respond to crime, which most likely suggests that attempts by organized crime to influence and control civil society differ across groups. This is a pending research agenda that I seek to expand as part of a new ongoing project, which I present next.

Civil Society and Criminal Governance

As part of its transformation and diversification processes, organized crime has imposed de facto controls over different dimensions of local organization in Mexico, including the political, economic, and social life of entire communities (Trejo and Ley 2020). As noted, at a political level, criminal groups seek to influence party campaigns and elections by directly attacking politicians and imposing its preferred candidates. These strategies subsequently open the opportunity to shape public policy and alter policing capacities. Regarding the economic controls, organized crime attempts to extend its regulation over economic activity through extortion practices, the capture of public rents, and resource extraction. Finally, criminal governance also includes a social dimension through which organized crime regulates civilian participation and behavior. Criminal strategies to control civil society have not been systematically analyzed yet, however.⁷ We know even less

4. Interview with victim of crime in Nuevo León, February 2012.

5. Interview with nonvictim in Guerrero, July 2012.

6. Interviews with victims of crime in Chihuahua, July 2012.

7. or an innovative study on social controls in criminal governance regimes, see Magaloni et al. (2020).

about the subsequent capacity of civil society groups to collectively organize in response to violence.

Understanding the relationship between organized crime and civilians is crucial for both disentangling the logic of criminal governance and identifying possible social resistance mechanisms. Recent research suggests that organized crime seeks to govern civilians for multiple reasons: to increase profits, gain political leverage, reduce exposure to policing and repression, and deter competition, among others (Lessing 2021). I argue that social controls within subnational criminal governance regimes are essentially guided by organized crime's need to maximize two essential resources for its successful daily operation: protection and information.

When the protection networks that sustain organized crime are weak, information gathering becomes crucial to success in the criminal underworld (Gambetta 1996; Varese 2001). Residents of local communities are particularly valuable in this regard. They have fine-grained information about what happens in their surroundings, and they have the capacity to report such activity. Residents can open or close valuable informational channels for any local criminal organization attempting to establish territorial control. Therefore, organized crime is interested in regulating civilian behavior to control what people can say or do, limit what state authorities can discover about criminal activity, reduce police attention, and ultimately deepen local protection mechanisms.

Some groups of residents, however, may be more or less valuable for protection and informational purposes. Human rights activists and journalists, for example, are crucial actors in informational channels. Their ability and interest in documenting abuses makes organized

crime particularly vulnerable. Religious leaders also have access to information, but most importantly, they have the ability to influence behavior among the members of their religious community, which may subsequently affect mechanisms of social protection for organized crime. Business leaders have a more direct access to policy makers and power to lobby in favor of policies that can endanger criminal activity and the stability of protection networks.

I argue that, to understand the relationship between organized crime and civil society, as well as the social controls criminal groups may seek to impose, we must first acknowledge the diverse "forms of civil society" – from human rights organizations and media to churches and private businesses – as well as the various purposes that civil society organizations have (Edwards 2011). Accordingly, I further contend that the nature and activity of each group is likely to be valuable to organized crime for different reasons due to the distinct ways in which each can help maximize protection and information. Consequently, the interaction between organized crime and the diverse set of organizations that compose civil society is likely to differ from one group to the other. Overall, the greater the leverage of a given organization and its members to affect organized crime's protection and information gathering strategies, the higher violence these groups will experience. Such characteristics, however, are likely to differ across subnational units, due to different historical trajectories.

Conclusion

The networks of protection and collusion between the state and organized crime have deepened across the Latin American region. While reforming security and judicial institutions is essential for the containment of violence, civil

society plays a crucial role for the attainment of such goals through its agenda-setting power and societal accountability mechanisms. According to my research, the development of dense networks that can encourage citizens to take action, while at the same time protecting them, is key in this process. Thus, understanding how and when civil society can effectively organize and interact, despite ongoing violence, can help unveil the conditions under which organized citizens can build peaceful and resilient communities. This is a major challenge in Mexico and many other Latin American coun-

tries, where organized crime groups attempt to control entire communities. By investigating the relationship between organized crime and civilians, forthcoming studies will help us deepen our understanding of criminal governance, while simultaneously revealing patterns of targeted violence against social actors and their capacity to react and resist. This research agenda can, therefore, illuminate peacebuilding efforts across different contexts of violence – from organized crime to civil war – as well as across, and beyond, the Global South. ●

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TUNISIA'S AMBIGUOUS DEMOCRACY

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Tunisia has been celebrated as the sole successful democratic transition in the Arab World. Its 2011 nation-wide popular revolt ended Zine Al-Abdedine Ben Ali's twenty-seven-year authoritarian rule, sparking the 2011 Arab uprisings. Protests flourished across the Arab World region immediately thereafter, calling for political transformations and reforms, inspiring a surge in the comparative study of democracy and contentious politics. Regime responses to uprisings varied significantly, with many falling victim to intense repression and violence, as new constellations of authoritarian rule emerged. From a regional angle, comparing a case of relative political calm to unprecedented state violence and conflict, the Tunisian experience stands out as a democratic hopeful; a "laboratory for democracy," as many referred to it; and an experience that could be replicated elsewhere.

Simultaneously, Tunisian citizens showed intense dissatisfaction with the procedural democratic system that has been taking shape for the past decade. Public anger and widespread frustration became visible in the propagation

of contentious politics and protest, as well as in trends captured by public opinion surveys.¹ The tension between celebrated procedural democratic gains and widespread public frustration with the outcomes of these new institutions has been captured anecdotally, but has not been theorized sufficiently. In part, this is because minimalist definitions of democracy, focused on elections and processes related to the rotation of power, dominate comparative democratization studies. Consequently, many equate public support for measures that undermine such democratic procedures with public opinion turning against democracy. As I shall show below, public opinion is not turning against democracy (Arab Barometer 2020). Moreover, such events highlight how the focus on elections and democratic procedures obscures an understanding of *why* public opinion supports the undermining of new institutions, in particular failing to see how the outcomes of such institutions clash with citizens' demands, especially in nascent democracies.²

Scholarly work on Tunisian politics which assumes an uncomplicated democratic present

1. Between October 2019 and July 2021, the Tunisian Forum for Economic and Social Rights (FTDES) reported close to 20,000 sit-ins, demonstrations, and wildcat protests. In the same timeframe, the Arab Barometer poll registered the lowest percentage in democratic institutions (2018: not a lot of trust/no trust in political parties – 84%; not a lot/no trust in parliament – 78.55%; January 2021: not a lot of trust/no trust in government – 81%).
2. I would like to thank Ellen Lust for discussing this argument with me in detail.



Why are Tunisians expressing such high levels of popular support for what seems to be an anti-democratic move, ten years after toppling a dictatorship.

often lacks serious theoretical engagement with routine politics outside of formal institutions, the space in which political debate is unruly, rooted in historical divisions, and most telling of dissatisfaction with political elites and representative governance. It too is the space

in which debates *about* democracy persist vibrantly. I will highlight two distinctive trends that have occurred in Tunisia throughout its decade-long political transition – first, public debates and disagreements over the definition, meaning, and expectations from democracy and, second, how public opinion results have shaped citizens' perceptions of past and present. Both exemplify how

scholarly engagement with routine contention in the political present rooted in longstanding disagreement over political institutions, and the domination of public discourse via media and opinion surveys to forge public attachment to an unproblematic pre-democratic past, can strengthen our analysis of the complexity and uncertainty of political transitions.

For background, over the last decade, Tunisian political elites have instituted regular cycles of legislative, executive, and municipal elections³ under the auspices of the progressive 2014 Constitution as well as an electoral law favoring proportional representation. Eleven successive governments have been named, averaging a new political configuration per year. On July 25, 2021, Tunisia's Republic Day, President Kais Saied who was elected by a landslide vote in

2019, invoked article 80 of the constitution to declare a state of imminent danger⁴ (Parks and Kahlaoui 2021). He used this legal framework to freeze parliament, lift parliamentary immunity, and declare himself Attorney General. Only by doing so, he claimed, could Tunisia be steered out of its seven-year political crisis.⁵ In a nascent democracy, the declaration state of imminent danger is often viewed with suspicion at best, or critiqued as political maneuvers to concentrate power at worst (Guetat and Agrebi 2021; Mullin and Rouabah 2016). Yet Kais Saied's move was supported by an overwhelming percentage of Tunisian citizens despite its authoritarian inclination. Rather than decrying the move as a constitutional coup d'état, a significant number of Tunisian citizens welcomed it. They were not endorsing the end of Tunisian democracy, despite Saied's upturning of the constitutional order, but rather affirmed that by doing so, Saied would enable the birth of a *different* kind of democracy, one more responsive to the immediate needs of the people.

Since July 25th, debates about democracy, prospects for democratic consolidations, or whether the move constitutes a return to authoritarian rule, have been rife with contention. Many elected officials, including members of the Muslim-democratic *Ennahdha* party, have vocally protested the president's actions. *Ennahdha* held a plurality of seats in the now-frozen parliament and has been the most constant political player since elected to power in Tunisia's first democratic elections in the October 2012 National Constituent Elections. Article 80 stip-

3. Close to 200 registered political parties have competed in four cycles of competitive legislative (2011, 2014, 2019), executive (2014, 2019) and municipal (2018) elections, with relatively high voter turnout.
4. This declaration can be similar to a state of exception or state of emergency, however the specific legal concepts stipulate allowable political measures that differ from state to state.
5. By crisis he attributes on-going political deadlock, which he and his supporters root in the 2014 consensual agreement among political foes. 2014 was also the second time Tunisia was celebrated as a democratic hopeful after its 2011 Revolution, for which the main negotiating players, the Quartet, were awarded the Nobel Peace Prize.

ulates a specific timeline for emergency measures of 30 days after which the Constitutional Court is to rule on its termination or prolongation. But Tunisia never set up a Constitutional Court and Kais Saied, himself a constitutional law scholar⁶, has since prolonged the state of imminent danger indefinitely. This, of course, has raised concerns by many pointing to a comparison of previous authoritarian tactics, retraction of democratic gains, and political rule that is extra- or unconstitutional, while, at the time of writing, a critical percentage of Tunisian citizens continue to support the president.

Why are Tunisians expressing such high levels of popular support for what seems to be an anti-democratic move, ten years after toppling a dictatorship when protesters demanded a more equitable and free political system? One possible explanation can be located within a more critical vein of political science, which has been attentive to different definitions and expectations of democracy. Many political scientists and analysts have framed the events of July 25th in Tunisia as a democracy and dictatorship dichotomy, rather than a moment in which we can explore different meanings of democracy in both in theory and praxis (Shaffer 2002; Wedeen 2004). As political actors navigating Tunisia's transitional contexts for the last decade have demonstrated vastly different commitments to democracy, and disputed these routinely, so did scholars, analysts, Tunisian activists, commentators, and the academic community. In other words, different communities of scholarship on democracy – to borrow Lisa's Wedeen's term (2004) – within political science, but also in political practice, understood the last ten years of democracy-building in competing manners.

This, I believe, has critical consequences for our understanding of transformative events in periods of political transition.

In this essay, I will consider recent political science interventions that call attention to the theoretical and empirical insight which can be gained from long-durée historical approaches (Fenner 2019), as well as frameworks that place routine politics at the foreground of analysis and thereby expand the realm of vibrant political life beyond formal institutions (Schwedler 2022). What kind of scholarship ensues when historical debates about political imaginaries, hopes, and expectations are traced in the routine and daily practice of politics? Together, these show what can go unnoticed in exclusively minimalist and procedural approaches to studying democracy, and also lend insight to surprise moments during political transitions, such as Tunisia's political present.

Democratic Possibilities

In my own research and manuscript *Archipelagos of Dissent: Protest and Politics in Tunisia*, I examine the bright constellation of debates about democracy in Tunisia among the political opposition dating to the late 1990s – two decades before the Tunisian Revolution and the 2011 Arab Revolts. By the late 1990s, Tunisia was at a critical moment of political transformation towards dictatorship under Zine al-Abidine Ben Ali (1987-2011). Despite a brief democratic opening in the late 1980s, following Ben Ali's coup d'état against Tunisia's first President, Habib Bouguiba (1956-1987), Ben Ali's consolidation of power to the benefit of his political and economic circle, had been firmly established by the mid-1990s.

6. He never defended his doctoral dissertation, but has scholarly commitments to common law systems, as well as bottom-up direct democracy.

Innumerable of debates about democracy and the end of Ben Ali's regime occurred among outlawed and exiled political parties, unauthorized civil society and social movements, despite a widespread scholarly insistence that no meaningful opposition existed, in a context where discussion and practice about the potentiality of political change was entirely muted. Vibrant debates translated into open letters or pacts among the opposition, as well as into humorous political *imaginaires* turning Ben Ali political order on its head, thereby emboldening solidarity in resistance across class and political adherence.

This archipelago of dissent came together at moments such as the 2011 nation-wide movement that toppled Ben Ali, but the actors within were hugely divided in envisioning how democracy would come about (reform vs. revolution), what systematic transformations needed to take place, and who would be included or excluded from a transformed political space. Within these moments, democracy was invoked, referred to and written or conceived about in different ways, provoking a series of competing fantasies of, commitments to, and expectations from democracy. With Ben Ali's fall, these actors and movements with their competing ideas and expectations from democracy immediately filled the political landscape – this included the exiled *Ennahda* party, outlawed and underground leftist political parties, and a community of civil society movements, as well as human rights activists, who entered formal politics alongside old-regime figures and institutions.

The new political field from 2011 onwards invited a plethora of scholarship on the democratic transition, examining moments of hope (elections) or crisis (security or political derailment, economic downturn, contention against nascent democratic institutions) with specific attention to exemplary events defining the political present: NCA elections,⁷ a 2013 political crisis and the first threat to democratization,⁸ a national dialogue led by a civil society quartet that was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 2015, civil society writ large, a consensus-based power sharing agreements between Islamists and secularists, survey work measuring trust in political institutions to gauge public opinion on democracy, among other topics related directly to the institutionalization of democracy.

Studies on Tunisia's political transition have exhibited methodological and disciplinary diversity but remain driven by a commitment to liberal-institutional and electoral-based definitions of democracy. Thus, as opinion surveys (both international and Tunisian) were registering a diminishing trend in the public's trust in democratic institutions – especially political parties and parliament (The Arab Barometer found 15% of trust in parliament in its March 2021 survey) and increased trust in security institutions and the executive, especially the presidency – analyses did not prioritize an explanation of *why* this was occurring, but rather *how* to fix low popular support and political participation through platforms and incentives galvanizing popular appeal for this specific form of consensual democracy.

7. For example, Alfred Stepan. 2012. "Tunisia's Transition and the Twin Tolerations." *Journal of Democracy* 23(2): 89-103.

8. A noteworthy exception to this trend is Chantal Berman. 2019. "When Revolutionary Coalitions Break Down: Polarization, Protest, and the Tunisian Political Crisis of August 2013." *Middle East Law and Governance* 11(2): 136-179). Berman uses unique surveys of pro- and anti-government demonstrations during the 2013 political crisis to show how protest politics can shape political institutions.

What many of these analyses missed is that despite their dire prognostications, Tunisian activists, the scholarly community and informed citizens, across social classes and diverse regions, were partaking in political debates only somewhat related to the proceduralism or technicality of elections. Daily discussions would certainly address the rotation of power, but in a number of different directions, including candidates' historical reputation, their linkages and commitment to the revolution, relationship with ancient regimes, cultural-political production by parties and organizations, viability of social and economic plans, campaign financing, political orientations of powerful media institutions, and contested democratic institutions, including the electoral law. For a decade now, these issues would appear regularly as demands or grievances in protests and sit-ins but were rarely substantially addressed in the formal political sphere of Tunisia's democracy. Unsurprisingly, trust in electoral, parliamentary or representative democracy decreased.

Social movements with social media activism, public critique and pin-pointing the causes of a democracy in crisis, in addition to solidarity-building through political humor, all became a public routine of engaging politically. They, too, became the spaces to study the messiness of Tunisian politics, to engage with substantive critiques about an incomplete democratic system, and to capture the potentiality of what a democratic future should entail.

A number of overarching themes dominate public debate: why were political elites unable or unwilling to deliver on democratic promises

or meet the objectives set out by Tunisia's 2011 Revolution? Why could political parties or the government not deliver on the social service demands and address thousands of annual protests, sit-ins, and wildcat strikes demanding fair distribution, dignified work and living conditions, social justice (including environmental and alimentary)? Why has a meaningful fight on corruption, and an end to the societal problems that were introduced with the Revolution, been so difficult to attain? If nascent democratic institutions are legal, are they necessarily legitimate?⁹ How does popular will (i.e. the demands of the Revolution or demands in daily protests) figure into representative governance?

Tunisian citizens viewed elected officials and governmental appointments as largely lacking political competence or willingness, which incited an extraordinary amount of daily anger, frustration, and ultimately mistrust in democracy. Political scientist Mohamed Kerrou eloquently refers to this condition as the "dramatic destiny of a people in revolution," of those who became progressively visible through their mobilization against the stagnating visibility of a falling leader, and the irreconcilable logic of their replacement with a new group of appointed or elected representatives (Kerrou 2021, 28-29).

These debates, disappointments, and tensions – in addition to easily identifiable economic indicators and a measured decline in popular commitment to the kind of democracy that was constructed – constituted the conditions under which Kais Saied was elected by landslide victory in 2019. Combined with an exponentially higher visibility of these frustrations during the

9. The legality of rule versus perceived legitimacy of governance discussion have contoured political struggles throughout modern Tunisian political history. Law (*Qanun*), understood as the application of the law (security, justice) or rule by law (the legalistic state apparatus), does not necessarily equate the notion of 'rule of law,' the framework of protecting liberties and freedom while ensuring justice within liberal democracy. Both conflict with legal (*Shari'iyya Qanuniyya*) and popular understandings of legitimacy (*Mashru'iyya*), thus opening the opportunity to deem procedures such as elections legal but not legitimate. This was a principle theme in the summer protests of 2013, and again a principle theme from 2018 onwards.

pandemic, they constituted the political conditions beyond the reductionist account of economic downturn and standard development industry indicators, under which an event, such as July 25th, 2021 could occur and amass the popular support that it did.

In simple terms, expectations from democracy differed vastly, not only since Tunisia's onset of democracy-building, but also previously among the opposition and were propelled in almost non-reconcilable manners of large scale revolutionary social justice versus a commitment to a representational system that could not deliver. Clashes in vision and expectation became pronounced in 2013 during Tunisia's first political crisis when opponents called for the dissolution of the elected National Constituent Assembly (2011-2014) because of its delay in drafting a new Constitution within a set timeframe and other perceived failures in governance. As democratization scholars wrote of a democracy in crisis, protest participants on either side re-ignited a "legitimacy of/to rule" versus "legality of political delay" debate *within* a democratic context. A similar disconnect occurred once more during the 2019 elections and in June 2021, when debates in Tunisia reflected an equally cautious but significantly more nuanced and diversified political critique, first of populism on the rise (2019) and currently, the ambiguity between consolidation of power by the executive and the implication of popular will.

Orchestrated Opinions

The public euphoria of the 2011 uprisings provided an exceptional opportunity for political scientists and especially comparativists to engage with the histories, experiences, dreams, desires, languages, and societal conflicts of individual countries, while also integrating these

insights into the discipline's approaches and methods, thereby generating novel ways to produce knowledge. Thus, rather than evaluating recognizable formal political institutions for their effectiveness and comparing these to developed world standards, the sheer engagement in informal political channels such as protests, social movements, informal economic activity, and so on, also invited our scholarly attention to garner a comprehensive notion of the political present. The idea is not to fetishize extra-institutional political practice or vibrancy as something operating parallel to but discrete from parties, parliament, elections and government, but to theorize it together *with* formal politics to overcome the troublesome allure to pin decisive political moments – such as July 25, 2021 – on either the end of democracy or the return to authoritarian rule. The commitment to a binary political condition reproduces regime categories with their appearance of predictive flair, but little explanatory potential about the political messiness in which transformative events take place. I want to draw on an example from my final manuscript chapter, in which I connect Tunisia's authoritarian past to its political present through an analysis of discursive spaces that made the possibility of an attachment to the old regime not only salient, but also a highly popular theme for political actors. The construction of a before/after political life, in which a new democratic present that is consistently categorized as a democracy in crisis, a democracy under threat, a democracy that could derail, also depends on its juxtaposition to an unproblematic authoritarian past.

In the kind of routine politics comprised of contentious legal and historical debate and frustration with democratic institutions, another force has been at play: old regime voices that have invested in a media, public discourse, and opin-

ion survey industry that has created an *it was better before the Revolution/I long for the life before the Revolution* narrative that worked to discredit post-Revolutionary democratic gains, while also producing the space for political newcomers, including media moguls turned presidential candidates, former regime members in legislative seats, and surprise winners such as President Kais Saied.

Since 2011, Tunisian public opinion surveys linked to powerful and highly politically divided media outlets have worked to produce a periodization that structures how respondents reflect about the Revolution and democratization. The powerful production of how respondents reflect about the past, I believe, has created new categories of analysis that pit an uncomplicated 'before' against a frustrated present, and thus contribute critical explanatory value to such findings as low trust in democratic institutions to the conditions under which Kais Saied would win elections or the popular support he received for the "undemocratic" moves of freeing parliament and temporarily consolidating power in his own hands.

But to return to the discursive space produced by opinion surveys – in 2012, just a year after the Revolution, a major Tunisian newspaper published findings that 42% of Tunisians missed the Ben Ali era. Subsequent surveys in 2013 and 2014 (during the height of the political crisis) asked whether "Tunisians regret[ed] the fall of the regime and of Ben Ali," whether "Ben Ali governed the country better than today's rulers," or whether respondents agreed that "the revolution has deepened social disparities between rich and poor." Tunisia's political present which has been defined by dwindling support in nascent democratic institutions has been made possible through this kind of form of knowledge

production and cooptation of what, in simplest terms, people talk about. By creating a comparison of an unrealized present with a known past, citizens are precluded from responding to other choices that perhaps identify a better future. What if respondents are presented with a third choice of a *different* kind of democracy? What if respondents are given the choice between what kind of political practice is most meaningful to their understanding of democracy? What if respondents are asked how they envision their role in political decision making?

The nostalgia among some Tunisians for the previous era, for the old regime, with a complete dismissal of its violent and repressive practice, as is not unusual across the globe, has given rise to a new type of political figure – both populist leaders like Kais Saied who have adopted the language of protest and revolution to galvanize public support and also popular deputies such as Abir Moussi, a cadre of Ben Ali's now banned political party. While both exemplify political forces that seriously challenge liberal notions of representative democracy by proposing their own versions, Moussi relies on a rhetoric of the past, on violent and derogatory speech against her opponents, on a self-aggrandizing way to live-stream her own attacks (usually with a megaphone) on other members of Parliament and government, all to build her political potential in a context that has made it possible. Her version of telling the "truth" is her practice of providing unfiltered images and sequences of her aggressive interactions with her political opponents on social media. What she claims to be unfiltered and uncensored information, of calling others out and thereby providing truth, is also the primary source of her appeal.

TV talk shows, social media debates, opinion articles and mainstream newspaper analysis

have all sustained this playing field, and thereby contributed to a stark binary in attitudes between past and present, which ultimately confused what public commitments to democracy mean. In my book, I write about how such questionnaires that capture diminishing trust in democratic institutions as an effect of an artificial before and after context, can contribute to overall frustration with the political present. The practice of lumping together the concepts of uprising, Revolution, and democracy by anti-revolutionaries, in surveys, media talk shows, commentaries, and other public venues, creates a space in which nostalgia for an authoritarian past can be actively produced. This powerful trend within democratization work has conflated terms and even memory, and rendered a paired down reading that citizens are unsatisfied with democracy, signifying the *political work* that is at stake.

Concluding Thoughts

By insisting that Tunisia is a case of successful transition to liberal democracy – from method to normative commitment about liberal democracy – political scientists reproduce the constraints of regime category research and prioritize minimalist procedural gains, notably elections. This political work also silences dissent and forecloses a discussion of democratic

difference, as has been occurring most recently since July 25, 2021. It also forecloses discussion of large-scale rejections of the predatory political economy that has gone hand-in-hand with democratization so far, and of citizens opting for the street or supporting exceptional executive measures rather than the institutions that people widely view as having failed them.

Analyses of Tunisian politics have fallen victim to our discipline's and the public policy realm's prioritization of liberal democratic procedural gains. Absent is discussion of the conditions under which a glorification of the previous dictatorship, for instance, has been made possible and how public longing and nostalgia for an old order were reintroduced. When complex public emotion and reactions become pared down as sudden and simplistic desire for dictatorship, the scholarly results are haphazard assumptions are best, and essentializing at worst. A dominant body of scholarship on the political present and a decade long democracy experience has turned a blind eye to the tremendous anxiety that Tunisians navigate daily, a history of political debates that reemerges regularly, and the effect of new powerful political spaces. This unawareness has consequences for how Tunisia is represented, as it has for our theorizations about politics. ●



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MODERATE ISLAMIC GROUP AND DEMOCRATIC REGRESSION IN INDONESIA: Implications for the Inclusion-Moderation Thesis

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Why does a religious group that has long promoted moderate political norms engage in intra-Islamic sectarian rhetoric and other practices that contribute to democratic regression in a country previously thought to have consolidated its democracy? How does this contribute to scholarship on the moderation of religious parties and movements and more broadly, to scholarship on democratization and authoritarianism? An analysis of different strategies adopted by Indonesia's largest Muslim organization, Nahdlatul Ulama (NU), in response to changing political and social circumstances over time can help to answer these questions. This is important, as new forms of identity politics, populism, and polarization are impacting and dividing countries and regions across the globe.

More than a decade after the Arab Spring, the initial optimism that it would lead to further democratization in many Muslim-majority nations, has given way to deep pessimism. Democracy failed to take root in affected countries like

Egypt, Libya, and Yemen. Furthermore, Muslim countries that have been considered to have successfully consolidated their democracies (e.g., Turkey and Indonesia), are now regressing back into semi-authoritarian, if not outright au-

thoritarian rule. While scholars have focused on the role of a cohesive anti-democratic ruling elite (e.g., Bayulgen et al 2018; Warburton and Aspinall 2019) and populist leadership (e.g., Sandal 2021; Power 2018) as primary actors responsible for demo-

cratic regression in Turkey and Indonesia, few scholars have focused on the role of moderate Islamic groups and their political actions, which have contributed to democratic regression within their societies.

There is already an abundant scholarship on the inclusion – moderation thesis, which tests its applicability various religious parties and organizations worldwide (notable works include Kalyvas 2000; Schwedler 2006 & 2011; Wickham 2004; Tezcur 2010; Cavatorta and Merone 2013; Jaffrelot 2013; Pahwa 2017; and

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Abdullah 2018). Over time, the discussion over the theory has shifted from a universalist assumption over whether Islamic groups can accept democratic norms to the rejection of such explanations, to focusing on explanations that put moderation (or immoderation) of religious groups within specific societal and historical contexts. For instance, Jaffrelot (2013) asserts that moderation should not be viewed as a linear and unidirectional movement, but instead depends on a religious group's strategies vis-à-vis their competitors and its perception toward its rival in different time period. Pahwa (2017) also posits a similar argument, stating that intra-group ideological rivalry might motivate an Islamic party or group to backtrack from its earlier commitment to promote moderation.

In this article, I argue that scholars should pay more attention to understand the role of 'moderate' Islamic groups in the regression of democracy in Muslim-majority democracies. Here, I define 'moderation' as: "movement away from an unyielding ideology to one which is more malleable" (Abdullah 2018, 408). This article focuses on the Nahdlatul Ulama (NU), the largest Muslim organization in Indonesia and in the world. The NU claims approximately 90 million followers, making it the largest Muslim-majority organization, and a politically significant religious organization in Indonesia – the third largest democracy in the world and the largest Muslim-majority nation. Currently, about 229 million Indonesian citizens (out of 270 million) identify themselves as Muslims (World Population Review 2021).

This article discusses how despite the reputation of the NU as a moderate Islamic organization – which had helped Indonesia achieve its democratic transition during the 1990s – it made a conscious decision to align itself with the regime of current Indonesian President

Joko Widodo in order to exclude rival groups that threaten its religious authority by using intra-Islamic sectarian rhetoric and policy. This article fills an important gap in the literature on inclusion-moderation thesis and comparative democratization, by introducing a new causal pathway where a moderate Islamic organization may engage in anti-democratic actions that lead to democratic regression. The pathway discussed in this case study could potentially be utilized by other scholars to examine how sectarianism and intra-Muslim rivalry may contribute to democratic regression in other Muslim-majority nations like Turkey, Tunisia, and Malaysia.

I shall examine this new pathway in the following subsection. First, I discuss the NU's historical background, focusing on how it became one of the key organizations which played a role during Indonesia's democratic transition and consolidation in the late 1990s and early 2000s. Next, I analyze how the challenges from the Islamists that led to increasing intra-Islamic religious competition in the 2000s and 2010s triggered a decision by the NU leadership to reinvent the organization's ideology. In turn, this contributed to the revival of long dormant sectarian rhetoric between NU and other, more ideologically conservative, Islamic organizations. Finally, I detail how do these developments motivate NU to align itself with Indonesian president Joko Widodo's effort to repress his Islamist rivals and how this alignment contributes to the democratic regression currently taking place in Indonesia.

NU's Role in Indonesian Democratic Transition

Founded in 1926, NU has played an important role in Indonesian politics starting from the country's independence. NU was one of sev-

eral Islamic organizations that were included as participants in the country's Constitutional Democracy Period (1950-1959), first as part of the Masyumi Party, and later when it formed its own political party. During this period, NU maintained a platform that sought to change the secular Indonesian constitution to become an Islamic state. However, it was also pragmatic enough to be willing to work together with secular nationalist parties, notably the Indonesian Nationalist Party (PNI), that ruled the most part in this period. NU also supported Sukarno, Indonesia's founding president, when he abolished the parliament and assumed authoritarian rule in 1959. In return, Sukarno awarded it the control over the Ministry of Religious Affairs, which allowed it to issue rules and regulations related to Muslim affairs in Indonesia (Feith 1962).

NU also worked closely during the early years of Sukarno's successor General Suharto. However, in the 1970s NU began to take a more critical tone to oppose policies initiated by the Suharto regime, particularly those that it saw as contradictory to Islamic (*sharia*) law, notably on the regime's effort to promote its secular nationalist ideology *Pancasila* (five principles). Suharto responded by stripping the organization from its long-held Religions Affairs ministership position and significantly cut government subsidies for its Islamic boarding schools (Bush 2009, 70-71). Furthermore, in 1982 Suharto issued a decree which required all civil society and religious organizations to adopt *Pancasila* as their sole ideological principle or be classified as illegal organizations. The decree was primarily directed against the NU, as it was considered as one of the regime's most significant political oppositions.

Faced with an imminent threat of its dissolution, NU leaders were forced to choose whether

to continue to oppose the Suharto regime or to accept the *Pancasila* to avoid further reprisal. This dilemma was resolved in 1984, when Abdurrahman Wahid – a grandson of NU's founder, was elected as the organization's new chairman. Wahid immediately declared NU's acceptance of the *Pancasila* as its official ideology and revoked its platform that called for Indonesia to be an Islamic state. Instead, the organization endorsed the principles of human rights, religious tolerance, and pluralism to respect Indonesia's multi-cultural and multi-religious heritage (Arifianto 2021b, 90). Hence, NU moderated its ideology in response to increased exclusionary policies enacted by the Suharto regime and avoided further state reprisal. This is identical to the "moderation through exclusion" mechanism identified by Cavatorta and Merone (2013) in their study of Tunisia's *Ennahda* (Renaissance) Party during the same time period (1980s) as well.

The moderation strategy adapted by Wahid enabled the NU to regroup, reinvent its ideology, and reframed its political strategy. By the early 1990s, the organization re-emerged as a leading opposition against the Suharto regime – which by that time was experiencing a decline in its power. This resulted in the NU's formation of an alliance with the secular nationalist Indonesian Democratic Party of Struggle (PDI-P), led by Sukarno's daughter Megawati Sukarnoputri, calling for Suharto's ousting. Despite facing severe repressive measures, their call for Suharto's removal finally resulted in a popular protest movement, which led to his resignation in May 1998. It marked the end of his three-decade authoritarian rule and the beginning of Indonesia's second democratic period.

In October 1999, Wahid was elected as Indonesia's first democratically elected president. However, he immediately had a falling out

with his coalition partners that put him into the presidency, including Sukarnoputri, who served as his vice president. This culminated into the successful impeachment of Wahid in July 2001 (Bush 2009). However, Wahid's removal did not mean an end of NU's increasingly prominent role in Indonesian politics. Politicians affiliated with NU – from its two affiliated political parties, the National Awakening Party (PKB) and the United Development Party (PPP) – were consistently represented in the cabinet of each Indonesian president post-1999.

Ideological Competition and Declining Religious Authority

However, having an ample political representation does not guarantee the NU's ability to retain its religious authority among Indonesian Muslims. Over the past two decades, NU's authority has been challenged by more conservative Islamist groups, many of which were forbidden to operate in the public sphere during Suharto's authoritarian rule. These groups include the *Tarbiyah* ('Nurture') Movement influenced by Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood; Hizb ut-Tahrir Indonesia (HTI), a branch of the transnational Hizb ut-Tahrir (Party of Liberation) movement which called for the establishment of a global caliphate state; and dozens of small Salafi-influenced groups. The most infamous of the latter was the Islamic Defenders Front (FPI), which became notorious for its unprovoked and brazen assault against religious minorities – including Ahmadis, Shi'a Muslims, and Christians – over the past decade (Facal 2020; Barton et al 2021).

Increasing intra-Islamic competition from these Islamist groups have resulted in the "pluralization of religious authority" that shifts the power to speak for Islam in Indonesia away from main-

stream Islamic groups like NU towards smaller, yet more ideologically conservative groups (Slama 2017). From 2010 onwards, NU leaders become concerned that the organization is losing its religious authority and political influence towards these Islamist groups. They began to organize a campaign to make NU's identity to be visibly distinct from its competitors by rebranding its long-standing theological premises under a new name called *Islam Nusantara* (archipelagic Indonesian Islam). Essentially, NU claims that it is grounded in an 'authentic' Islamic teaching that had taken roots in Indonesia prior to the arrival of Wahhabism and Salafism during the 20th century, in contrast to the Islamists' teaching (Arifianto 2020, 126).

NU leaders also began to revive sectarianist rhetoric that had differentiated the organization from conservative Islamists which hold 'reformist' ideology during the 1920s and 1930s. During this period, NU followers viewed reformist Muslims as "a threat to the core beliefs and practices that made up the fabric of their religious life" (Bush 2009, 32). Similar sectarian rhetoric resurfaced after NU's declaration of *Islam Nusantara* ideology, directed against Islamist groups such as FPI and HTI. For instance, senior NU cleric Mustofa Bisri declared that these groups represent "...Saudi Islam – a grasping and materialistic Islam: coarse, cruel, and savage" (Loveard 2016). Beyond divisive rhetoric which portrays Islamist groups as foreign, radical, and potentially dangerous, NU also deployed Ansor, its youth paramilitary wing, to forcefully disrupt and disband proselytization events and public rallies sponsored by FPI, HTI, and other Islamist groups, notwithstanding the fact that these organization had obtained appropriate permits from the authorities to legally held these rallies (Arifianto 2020, p. 129). As a result, the organization was condemned by hu-

man rights activists and scholars for violating freedom of expression and religious freedom of these groups (Mietzner 2018; Arifianto 2021a).

These sectarian assaults were not just directed against Islamist groups, but also against other moderate Islamic groups like Muhammadiyah - Indonesia's second largest Islamic organization. For instance, NU chairman Said Aqil Siradj made a declaration that "all mosque prayer leaders, Islamic law judges, and Ministry of Religious Affairs officials have to come from NU. Otherwise, they may lead the faithful astray" (Nuary 2019). This assertion was widely interpreted as an insult on Muhammadiyah, whose clerics also serve as mosque leaders and civil servants in the Ministry of Religious Affairs and other ministries as well. Hence NU's sectarian assault was not just directed against its Islamist rivals, but against its moderate competitors, as well.

Political Alignment with Widodo Regime

In addition to launching verbal and physical sectarian assault on its rivals, NU leaders also strengthened their alliance with President Joko Widodo, who has also been very threatened from the political gains made the Islamist groups over the past few years. Accordingly, his regime enacted repressive measures against the Islamists. HTI was banned in July 2017, followed by FPI in December 2020. Over the past year, FPI supreme leader Rizieq Shihab and other key leaders were arrested, tried, and convicted against legally dubious charges. The President has extended the power of the Indonesian Armed Forces to civilian roles such as rural development, civic education, and the mitigation of COVID-19 pandemic (Sambhi 2021). Regime critics - from all ideological persuasions - have been charged under the Law of

Electronic Information and Transactions, which imposed hefty penalties for allegations of promoting 'fake news' that threaten to 'polarize' Indonesian society over the internet and social media (Arifianto 2020, 129). All these measures resulted in the gradual regression of Indonesia's ranking in the Freedom House's Global Freedom Score, from a score of 65 in 2017 to 61 in 2020 (Sambhi 2021).

On the other hand, Widodo awarded his NU allies handsomely by bestowing the Vice President position to former NU supreme leader Ma'ruf Amin and the Minister of Religious Affairs position to former Ansor chairman Yaqut Cholil Qoumas. He also channeled numerous financial payoffs to the organization and its leaders, for instance, channeling billions of dollars in state funds as subsidies for Islamic boarding schools run by NU clerics, for an agricultural credit scheme to support low-income NU farmers, and for Islamic micro-finance institutions sponsored by the organization (Arifianto 2021a, 136). NU leaders responded to this political and financial patronage by making further statements that raises questions about their commitment to democracy. For instance, NU chairman Siradj made a statement in November 2019 declaring that his organization is supporting the abolishment of direct presidential election (Arifianto 2021b, 78). NU politicians - along with those from other parties which are members of the president's coalition - have advocated the adoption of this measure as part of a set of constitutional amendments to be introduced in the Indonesian parliament, likely during the first half of 2022 (Bland 2021).

Hence, Indonesian democracy continues to regress as Widodo further strengthens his grip on power - a prospect that has alarmed numerous scholars whom have studied it (e.g., Power 2018;

Mietzner 2018; Warburton and Aspinall 2019). Yet the NU remains institutionally committed as the regime's most prominent Islamic ally. NU's current alliance closely resembles its alignment with the Sukarno regime during the late 1950s, where both formed an alliance of convenience to ban and repress Masyumi, a reformist conservative Islamic party which then became the leading opposition against Sukarno's increasingly authoritarian rule. It resulted in the collapse of Indonesia's first democracy in 1959 (Feith 1962).

Conclusion

In conclusion, the Nahdlatul Ulama case illustrates a potential new causal pathway to explain why moderate Islamic groups backtrack from their earlier commitments to promote political moderation. The pathway is formed by several variables, notably intra-religious competition and declining religious authority. To protect further erosion of its authority, NU has engaged in sectarianist actions against its rivals and aligns itself with the Widodo regime. The latter adopted repressive measures to repress and exclude the Islamists from the public sphere. In the process, both contribute to the ongoing the

democratic regression affecting Indonesia over the past few years. Ideological differences have not caused NU to backtrack from political moderation. Instead, backtracking has been caused by the NU leaders desire to acquire more power and patronage from the Widodo regime.

The pathway shown in this case study is generalizable and can be utilized by scholars of religion and politics who seek to explore the role of different Islamic groups in affecting the democratic regression in numerous Muslim-majority countries over the past decade. Future studies could examine whether a similar pathway can also be found among Islamic parties or movements in Turkey, Tunisia, and other Muslim-majority democracies that have regressed to become an illiberal democracy or even a fully-fledged authoritarian rule. Finally, this case study is also of interest to comparative politics scholars working on topics like democratization and authoritarianism, ethno-religious conflict, and populism, since its insights may help them to understand how sectarian actions taken by a moderate Islamic group against its intra-religious rivals contribute to ongoing democratic regression in a Muslim-majority society. ●

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HOW PARTIES RESPOND TO WEAK PARTISAN ATTACHMENT: Evidence from India

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In March 2020, four-time member of parliament Jyotiraditya Scindia quit the once-dominant Congress Party to join the ascendant Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP). The Harvard-educated Scindia, a member of one of India's most prominent former royal families, was once a core member of the Congress Party who benefitted significantly from the party's largesse and was considered a future chief minister of the Indian state of Madhya Pradesh.

In consolidated Western democracies, defection from such core members of major parties is exceedingly rare. In India, defections from core party members are neither unusual nor new. In common parlance in India, it is referred to as *Aaya Ram Gaya Ram* politics (Ram came and left), a reference to politician Gaya Lal who famously shifted party allegiances three times in a space of two weeks in 1967. Over the past five years, 433 sitting state-level or national-level parliamentarians, constituting 9.2% of India's 4664 state and national legislative seats, have switched parties and re-contested the election (Association for Democratic Reforms 2021). Recent waves of democratization have revealed that such defection and "floor crossing" is a

more general phenomenon in developing world democracies – observed in countries as varied as Brazil (Desposato 2006) and South Africa (Booyesen 2011).

This lack of filiality to the party among rank and file legislators is what I refer to as *weak partisan attachment* in developing world democracies. What impact, if any, does this weak partisan attachment have on the evolution of party structures and systems in the developing world?

One might imagine that such high rates of defection suggest greater agency of individual politicians and thus candidate-centered politics, but the opposite seems to be true. In the 2014 Indian national election, a sitting member of parliament had only a 53% chance of being renominated to stand again for election. Even if renominated, an incumbent had just a 50% chance of being re-elected (Sircar 2018b) for an overall incumbency rate of 27%.¹ Such patterns have been observed in Africa as well. An analysis of elections across 12 African countries from 1996 to 2017 revealed that only 57% of sitting parliamentarians are renominated with a 55% re-election rate conditional on renomi-

1. This pattern is true at the state level as well. In India's largest state, Uttar Pradesh, the proportion of first-time members of legislative assembly (MLAs) has been at least 60% in each election since 1977, with 78% of MLAs being elected for the first time in the most recent state elections (Verniers 2021).



Less academic attention, however, is given to how weak partisan attachment of legislators structure the incentives of parties themselves.

nation (Bowles and Marx 2021). By contrast, in the United States House of Representatives, the incumbency rate has been more than 80% in each election since 1964 (and over 90% in each election since 2014), and a 2004 study of 25 industrialized countries found a mean incumbency rate of 68% (Matland and Studlar 2004).

A large number of developing world democracies are thus characterized by high defection rates and low rates of incumbency and renomination, severing the representative link between legislators and citizens as politicians are no longer driven by re-election or career incentives (Klašnja and Titiunik 2017). Less academic attention, however, is given to how weak partisan attachment of legislators structure the incentives of parties themselves. Across a number of articles, I have written about how Indian political parties respond to weak partisan attachment, with a focus on centralization of party structures, political attribution of welfare delivery, and differences in party financing. Indian parties today are broadly characterized by low intra-party democracy and personalistic politics, and I argue that this structure emanates from the evolution of parties to deal with weak partisan attachment.

In this piece, I explore the implication of this “evolutionary” understanding of party structures for research on party behavior in developing world democracies. I conclude that more emphasis is required on understanding the historical evolution of parties and the decisions of its leaders, instead of a focus on the representative link between citizens and legislators at the constituency level.

Centralization of Power in the Party System

At the time of India’s independence from British colonial rule in 1947, the Congress Party was the dominant party in the Indian system. As a federal country, India required significant negotiation between its states and the central government. This pattern of accommodation and patronage to local factions became known as the “The Congress System” (Kothari 1964). By the 1990s, the electoral dominance of the Congress began to fade away, and various regional factions generated electorally successful state-level political parties (Ziegfeld 2016). By my calculations, the effective number of parties (ENP) across state-level assemblies would grow from 4.3 in 1986 to 8.3 in 1996.²

But with the ostensible democratization of the electoral space came a curious form of political centralization. Among the most electorally successful political parties to emerge in the 1990s were the Janata Dal (Secular), Janata Dal (United), Nationalist Congress Party, Rashtriya Janata Dal, and the Trinamool Congress. Each one of these parties has functioned as a “family-owned firm,” in which the party is either headed by the founder or a direct relative of the founder with notably low intra-party democracy. Why did this happen?

One answer lies in the baseline weak attachment legislators have to parties. In such a context, a new party cannot depend on the popularity of individual candidates and legislators who can readily defect elsewhere to cultivate a stable party vote share (Lee 2020). The optimal strategy is to centralize the political appeal of the party to citizens on the leader of the party,

2. The effective number of parties (ENP) is calculated as the mean of inverse of the squared proportion of seats held by each party (Laakso and Taagepara 1979).

often through using the party organization and state institutions for deification of the leader. Because the political appeal is centered on party leaders, the party's vote share is largely immune to defections of individual legislators or political actors at the constituency level.

This pattern of intra-party centralization at the state level is also observed at the national level in India by the ruling BJP and Prime Minister Narendra Modi (Sircar 2020), who himself was a dominant leader in the Indian state of Gujarat. But whether at the state level or the national level, the impetus to centralize and its consequences are similar. As I have argued, the centralization of power creates a political appeal for the party that hinges on the perceived integrity of the political leader, even on issues of economic delivery. This is the antithesis of a model in which citizens hold their direct representative accountable for the quality of economic performance.

These empirical patterns are evident in trajectory of the Trinamool Congress (TMC), a regional party from the Indian state of West Bengal, headed by charismatic leader Mamata Banerjee. Banerjee was an important leader in the Congress Party, leading the state's Congress Party youth wing and rising to be a cabinet minister in the central government. In December 1997, she defected from Congress and founded the TMC; since 2011, the TMC has controlled the government in West Bengal. In the 2021 state election, the TMC appeared to face a stiff test from the BJP, which is now dominant in India's national politics. In the run-up to the election, using its financial and institutional might, the BJP engineered the defection of 34 of TMC's sitting legislators (about 15% of the party's legislators), including many high profile names

("34 West Bengal Legislators Went from TMC to BJP" 2021). The TMC countered with a campaign focused on the personage of Mamata Banerjee with the slogan "Bengal wants its own daughter." In the 2021 election, the TMC won in a landslide – winning 215 out of 294 seats in the election. In the aftermath, many of those who had defected from TMC sought to come back to the party. Moreover, Mamata Banerjee's nephew, Abhishek Banerjee, was elevated to the general secretary of TMC, thereby securing political succession in the TMC within the family.

Given the larger role of personalistic politics in many developing world democracies, this understanding of the compatibility between political incentives to centralize power and electoral success may broaden our understanding of why such politics continues to persist in many settings.

Welfare Delivery and Political Attribution

If parties have increasingly centralized power in their leadership, how do we grapple with the role of individual legislators in Indian politics? Bussell (2019) shows that legislators spend a significant portion of time conducting "constituency service" with ordinary citizens, often to help them avail of government benefits. Even beyond legislators, scholars of India have consistently shown that citizens reach out to local intermediaries or members of local village councils (called *panchayats* in India) to make claims on the government for various benefits (Kruks-Wisner 2018; Auerbach and Thachil 2018; Auerbach 2019). Yet if parties were so beholden to lower level actors for the delivery of benefits, we would be unlikely to see such low renomination rates.³

3. It is important to note here that when parties do renominate candidates, there is some evidence of incumbency effect for good economic performance (Jensenius and Suryanarayan 2021).

In tandem with the centralization of political power described above, political leaders have adapted to India's welfare architecture by centralizing "political attribution" for the delivery of benefits. I have recently focused my research on how parties have responded to a greater scale of targeted benefits to citizens by focusing political attribution for economic delivery on the top leadership of the party in lieu of more local actors (Aiyar and Sircar 2020; Sircar 2021).

Recent work on India shows that parties have done so through two key adaptations. First, technological changes, along with innovation in universal identification in India through the Aadhar program, have enabled efficient direct benefit transfers to bank accounts for a number of government schemes, effectively "cutting out the middleman" and bypassing local intermediaries and other political actors (Wilkinson 2021). This greater investment in targeted benefits is what Arvind Subramanian (2019) has referred to as the "public provision of essential private goods and services." Second, concurrent with direct transfers, parties have become far more sophisticated in branding government schemes in the image of the political leader (the chief minister of a state or the Prime Minister). This is carried out through carefully targeted advertising, media management, and control over the party organization (Aiyar and Sircar 2020).

There are two things to note in adjudicating the apparent puzzle between a robust class of political intermediaries and local legislators and the centralization of political attribution. First, India can be classified as a "weakly institutionalized party system" (Mainwaring 1998), in which the basis for connections between voter

and party are not strongly ideological in nature but rather rooted in economic delivery.⁴ But the allocation in various benefit schemes are decided by the state and national executives, not at the constituency level. Thus, while local legislators may be important for connecting citizens to the state, they do not have a major role in deciding allocations. Second, the selection of candidates is still a highly centralized process (there are no primaries for any major party) and thus the renomination of candidates is endogenous to larger party goals (Farooqui and Sridharan 2014). This means that irrespective of local performance, centralized parties with low intra-party democracy are unlikely to consistently renominate the same candidate to prevent entrenchment of local power.

The important political role of intermediaries and local legislators has been a major area of research across the developing world. But, as I have argued here, this research sits uncomfortably with the levels of centralized, personalistic politics typically observed in such settings. Further research into how parties adapt by centralizing political attribution can help us gain a better picture of how parties engage with citizens in developing world contexts.

Political Financing and Candidate Selection

One of the key features of the Indian political system in recent years has been the proliferation of wealthy, self-financing candidates, often with criminal backgrounds (Vaishnav 2017). In an analysis of national elections in India from 2004 to 2014 (Sircar 2018a), I show that the median reported wealth of candidates has grown

4. It should be noted here that this does not mean that aren't discernible ideological dimensions Indian politics, only that these ideological cleavages may not be determinative of party competition and candidate selection. Indeed, Chhibber and Verma (2018) identify key axes that characterize the Indian ideological space.

by 330% in nominal terms (116% in real terms). The Indian system does technically have spending limits, but they are not well-enforced, so in practice there is no upper bound on campaign spending. India is also one of the few countries in the world without state funding of parties or explicit regulation of a party's finances (van Biezen and Kopecký 2007).

Nonetheless, the Indian case may be instructive in understanding political financing in developing world democracies. I have recently tried to understand why Indian candidates are increasingly self-financing, and what it says about how parties adapt to political financing in the context of weak partisan attachment.

In the United States, another country with very high levels of campaign spending, self-financing candidates are actually *less likely* to win the election (Steen 2006). In the United States, most electorally successful candidates are better at raising funds from outside sources and need not spend their own money. In particular, the marginal electoral impact of this outside money is significantly greater than the marginal impact of personal wealth, because outside money financially bonds the candidate to a larger electoral coalition.

In India, given the low renomination and incumbency rates, candidates are unlikely to secure significant outside funding. Moreover, given the centralized nature in which nominations for candidates in constituencies are decided, and the lack of information about who will contest from which constituency, there is little incentive for any investor to contribute to any individual candidate's campaign *a priori* (Farooqui and Sridharan 2014). Also, the level of centralization within parties (as described above) suggest that individual legislators are unlikely to have sig-

nificant policy impact, so there is little benefit in lobbying them. This is not to say that India is devoid of outside political funding; rather, this outside funding is more likely to be a direct contribution to a political party and not given to an individual candidate for its campaign. These are features that are likely to be common across many developing world democracies.

Self-financing candidates emerge as critical to successful political parties because money wins on the campaign trail in ever more expensive elections. Campaigns are very costly, and with little assistance from outside or party funds, candidates must fall back on their personal wealth to run a good campaign. To understand the relationship between the personal wealth of candidates and elections, I conduct two core analyses on candidates to be members of parliament between 2004 and 2014. First, I look at the subset of competitive parties (those finishing within the top two in the constituency given that India is a first-past-the-post system), and I show that candidates in competitive parties are approximately 20 times wealthier than candidates for non-competitive parties. Second, I look at the set of competitive candidates, which again I define as a candidate finishing in the top two at the constituency level, to understand the relative role of personal wealth. Among competitive candidates, the wealthier candidate is 5 percentage points more likely to win the election. At the 85th percentile of wealth difference between competitive candidates (where the wealthier candidate is about 10 times wealthier), the wealthier candidate is predicted to win 65% of the time. Taken together, these data provide meaningful evidence that the most competitive parties select the wealthiest candidates, and that personal wealth (and its correlates) is plausibly impactful for winning elections.

There are reasons to be troubled by the dependence on self-financing candidates. First, if candidates must have great wealth in order to join a competitive party, only a small percentage of the population can reasonably hold office, leading to a highly non-representative population of legislators in terms of wealth. Second, if parties systematically select candidates primarily based on wealth, as opposed to other factors, such as education or previous constituency service, then the population of legislators will be of lower quality in terms of constituency representation. Finally, and most importantly, if campaigns must be self-financed, then candidates may reasonably view contesting elections as an economic investment, leading to greater levels of corruption in office as legislators try to recoup the costs of contesting elections. Given common features across developing world democracies, the growing literature on political financing in India may be instructive in a broader context.

Concluding Thoughts

The goal of this piece has been to explicate how the literature on Indian parties can inform the evolution of party structures, welfare policy, and political financing in developing world democracies. In the West, a modicum of partisan attachment among candidates is broadly assumed. As I have tried to show here, once this assumption is taken away, as in India and much of the developing world, parties and party leaders respond with centralization of decision-making within the party and political attribution among the population. This centralization also prevents local political actors from building stable bases of support and forces them to use personal wealth in order to contest elections.

An important implication of these findings is that constituency-level and legislator-level

analyses need to be handled with care in developing world democracies. If parties evolve to build a stronger link between the top leader of a party and the citizens, then analyses focusing on responsiveness at the constituency level may be misplaced – as that is not the level at which voters are holding the government accountable. This is particularly true when there are weak re-election incentives for legislators.

Moreover, India, like many developing world democracies, has seen its party system take shape under fairly weak state capacity and near-universal franchise. Given weak partisan attachment, parties in India have evolved in a manner that look quite different from Western democracies. Further research into the historical evolution of party structures and systems across the developing world can act as important corrective to a literature on party organization that often takes the West as a starting point. Understanding this “high-level” evolution of parties can also provide some balance to the political economy literature on developing world democracies, which is often focused on issues of local and constituency-level politics.

Finally, this discussion speaks to the pitfalls of taking the existing political structure as given when trying to understand the incentives of various political actors in contexts without partisan stability and weak partisan attachments. In India, the sheer number of political parties, the scale of money in elections, and the structure of welfare policy have all rapidly changed in the past three decades. What I have suggested here is that, where applicable, we take the weak partisan (and possibly ideological) attachments of politicians as a starting point in understanding how political structures are likely to evolve in the future. ●

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RULING NETWORKS AND INTRA-REGIME TRANSITIONS

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Authoritarian regimes have most often been classified according to their institutional features and measured using minimalist criteria. While the relevance of authoritarian institutions is well established, typologies rooted in these institutions often fail to capture important features of regimes. Conceptualizing authoritarian regimes as ruling networks and creating typologies that are rooted in the topologies of these networks, centrality of leaders and other elites and the domains in which the most central actors reside may help better capture intra-regime dynamics and inter-regime differences. Rather than viewing authoritarian states ruled by networks that deviate from institutional mappings as exceptions, I argue that this conceptualization is broadly relevant (Svolik 2012). The importance of authoritarian networks in shaping regime support and political behavior within states, particularly in the Middle East, has been emphasized by scholars, but such analyses generally focus on the relationship between regime

actors and peripheral notables (Heydemann 2004; Haddad 2011; Kononenko and Moshes 2011; Mazur 2021).

This work extends the intuitions of scholars who have examined elite networks in the Middle East, and authoritarian politics more broadly, by arguing that further work should be done to categorize authoritarian regimes according to the relevant features of their networks in order to better understand regimes and the relative strength of leaders within them. It is my contention that conceptualizing authoritarian regimes as ruling networks will provide a dynamic framework amenable to the creation of measures that better capture the locus, distribution and consolidation of power in authoritarian regimes.

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distribution and consolidation of power in authoritarian regimes. Beyond helping us improve upon and add to our typologies and measures associated with authoritarian regimes, a network-based conceptualization will allow researchers to capture important changes that occur within regimes, even when the identities of those in power and the institutional frame-



work of the state are unchanged. Such transformations can have a profound influence on both political stability and the policies produced by the state.

After a brief discussion of the conceptualization of authoritarian regimes, this piece will explore the relative usefulness of a network-based approach in describing the changes that occurred within Syria due to the hereditary succession of Bashar Al-Assad. While traditional measures that rely on institutional features do not capture the fundamental transformations that occurred in Syria due to Bashar Al-Assad's succession, the ruling network was altered drastically. This analysis highlights the potential usefulness of a network-based approach to authoritarian regime classification, but it does not aim to provide an exhaustive discussion of how such classifications should be constructed.

From Coalitions to Networks

The authoritarian regime-type classifications and conceptualizations that currently dominate the literature often fail to capture the heterogeneity in authoritarian systems where institutionalized hierarchies do not match the patterns of observed authority (Svolik 2012). In such contexts, rather than the institutions of the state delineating the boundaries of agency among the powerful within the regime, they obfuscate the latent networks that shape the regime's authority structure. Measurements that capture typologies rooted in the institutions of the state or ruling coalitions, whether they be associated with parties, military juntas or some other group, may not capture the essential features of the regime. To better understand the distribution of power, internal threats to leaders and where leaders may allocate the resources of the state, I propose moving beyond a coalition-

al or institutional logic to a network-based approach to conceptualize these regimes. Rather than advocating for one particular broad typology, this short piece presents the argument for the development of a flexible set of typologies that may better characterize the salient features of authoritarian regimes.

Perhaps the most influential authoritarian typology is that offered by Barbara Geddes, which classifies authoritarian systems as monarchical, military, party, personalistic and hybrid regimes (Geddes 1999; Geddes et al. 2012). Each of these regime types carries with it different sets of implicit institutional constraints placed on leaders, both with regard to whom leaders answer to and the degree to which these leaders cede power to elites within institutions that act as credible commitment mechanisms (Gandhi, 2008; Magaloni, 2008). Many of the other typologies commonly utilized by political scientists establish different categories, measure categories differently or incorporate electoral openness within their framework, yet the underlying premises and classification systems resemble one another (Cheibub et al. 2010, Wahman et al. 2013).

There are two potential issues associated with a reliance on such typologies that were aptly discussed by Milan Svolik (2012). First, the core features of the authoritarian regime types that characterize such schemes are dimensions of a broad set of regimes and can often be found simultaneously in the same regime. Second, the institutions that are often used to build such typologies do not provide an accurate picture of the distribution of power within the state. While Svolik (2012: 19-45) offers his own multidimensional conceptual framework and measurement strategy that incorporates the characteristics of leadership entry and political affiliation, my

current work hopes to provide a lens that builds on his crucial intervention into this literature.

The characteristics of an authoritarian regime can also be described using the terminology of selectorate theory (Bueno de Mesquita et al, 2005; Bueno de Mesquita and Smith, 2011). In its simplest form, selectorate theory provides a parsimonious lens into how the size of a winning coalition, the group of individuals necessary to keep a leader in power, and the selectorate, the group of people who can play a role in determining who may take power, shape the decisions made by leaders. While selectorate theory provides insight into how the structure of the regime may influence policy, and more recent applications have added nuance to the basic model (Bueno de Mesquita and Smith, 2017), it does not provide a framework for the analysis of transitions in power or intra-regime dynamics. Moreover, the line between members of the winning coalition and the genuine selectorate is often blurry and fluid. Changes in the makeup of whom among the elites is favored and afforded greater say in policy making could influence the distribution and nature of the benefits afforded to regime insiders.

A conceptualization of authoritarian regimes as ruling elite networks provides a flexible framework that allows us to capture both inter- and intra-regime differences and changes more accurately. In particular, the network centrality of leaders and elites, the structure of regime elite networks and the domains in which centrally located elites operate may be particularly valuable to understanding political dynamics in authoritarian settings. A network-based dynamic framework for understanding authoritarian regimes is amenable to the creation of parsimonious qualitative typologies by examining the domains in which the regime's powerful elites

operate, yet it can also capture changes that traditional typologies generally do not. For example, leadership changes that seemingly operate within the same institutional framework often do not produce changes in how regime types are coded. However, the succession of a new leader is a potentially destabilizing event in large part due to the differences in the new leader's relationship with regime elites. Any change in leadership will necessarily change the structure of the ruling network and the centrality of the leader within such a network. Such changes can be drastic or minor, but a change in leadership produces changes to the ruling network that can have potentially large consequences on the stability of—and policies produced by—the regime.

In many ways, conceptualizing authoritarian regimes as networks preserves the important features of the typologies that have traditionally been used and consolidates various paradigms into one framework. Authoritarian regime classifications that measure regime types using the characteristics of leaders implicitly utilize networks to understand regimes. Measures of a leader's consolidation of power do the same when attempting to understand the strength of leaders relative to elites within their regimes. Moreover, a ruling networks strategy does not eschew the importance of institutions as either relevant features of the political landscape or potentially important components of measures of regime types. Rather, it extends the logic of existing conceptualizations to account for both a broader set of contexts and salient features of authoritarian regimes.

From Assad to Assad

One might expect little to change upon the ascent of a hand-picked hereditary successor,

such as Bashar Al-Assad, to the presidency in a stable autocratic regime. And, if we were to rely on traditional typologies, we would see little change in such situations. Geddes' authoritarian regime typology codes Syria as a party-personal-military dictatorship both before and after Hafez Al-Assad's death (Geddes et al. 2012). For the democracy-dictatorship index, the transition in power in Syria did not result in any coding changes; Syria remained a military regime. Yet, the changes that occurred in Syria that were seemingly a result of the succession were profound. This section provides a brief examination of how the change in leadership in Syria affected the ruling network, and how this, in turn, produced important changes to the policies produced by the regime.

While the focus of this brief discussion is the succession of Bashar Al-Assad, it is Hafez Al-Assad's 1970 coup d'état that perhaps most poignantly captures the threat posed by elites forming powerful networks within regimes. The coup that brought about Assad rule in Syria was made possible by Hafez Al-Assad's gradual cultivation of strong ties with lower-level officers in the military. Absent the development of such a network, he would not have found himself in a position to challenge Salah Jadid and the many Ba'ath Party elites who stood behind him. His ability to seize power was fundamentally associated with the structure of the ruling network allowing him to marshal the human resources needed to overthrow Jadid.

Hafez Al-Assad's reign was eventually characterized by stable autocratic rule, yet it would take approximately a decade and a half for him to consolidate power. Although Hafez faced minor internal challenges in the immediate aftermath of his coup, and a protracted external challenge

from the Muslim brotherhood, it was his brother, Rifaat, who would present the most dangerous threat to his rule after Hafez became ill in 1983. Rifaat's control over the Defense Companies, an elite force meant to check any threat that might emanate from the military, his relationship with military officers and his connections to certain well-positioned party elites made him a formidable opponent to Hafez. Nevertheless, Rifaat's attempted coup was rebuffed by Hafez as he regained strength and was able to win back control over the military, yet the aftermath of the challenge did not simply preserve the status quo. Rather than punishing Rifaat in the immediate aftermath of the coup attempt, Hafez would elevate him to vice president while weakening his network within the party's regional command and restructuring the coercive apparatus of the state before exiling him (Drysdale 1985).

It is only in the aftermath of Rifaat's failed coup attempt and the weakening of potentially powerful networks controlled by elites that Hafez's regime could be characterized as a stable autocracy. The regime elite network that dominated Syrian politics was fractured and there was no viable competitor to Assad. By restructuring the ruling network, Hafez was able to increase both his centrality within the regime and reduce the centrality of his nearest possible competitor.

This would produce the most stable period in Syria's regime elite landscape. This stability is perhaps exemplified by the longevity of the cabinets formed after Rifaat's failed coup. *Figure 1* presents the government duration and survival rate of cabinets formed in Syria from 1966 to 2020. Hafez Al-Assad's last three cabinets lasted 937, 1702, and 2814 days.¹ These are the three longest lasting cabinets in Syria's short history. Although the upper echelon of the

1. For the purposes of this analysis, any change in the composition of the cabinet is coded as a new cabinet.

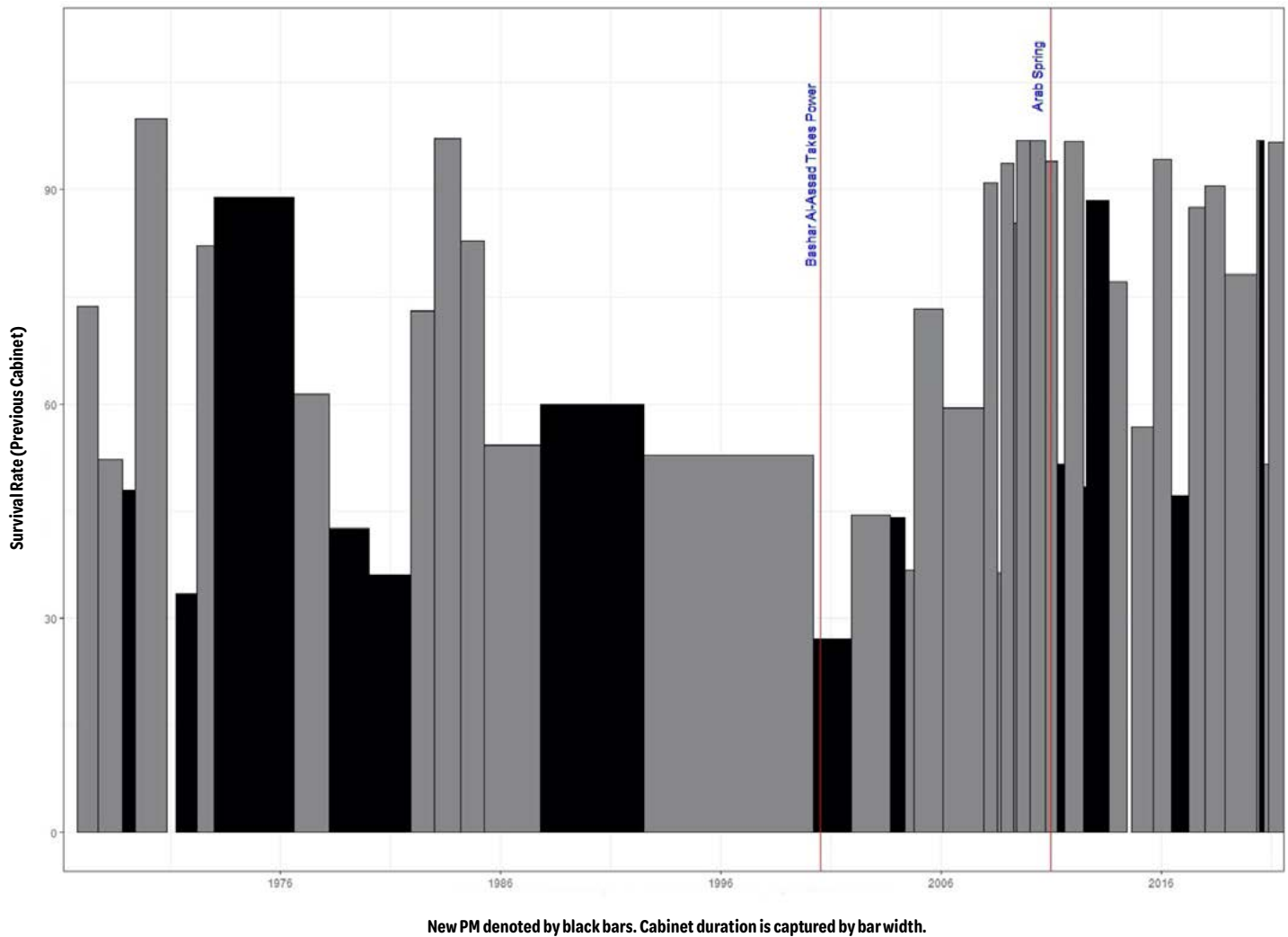


Figure 1: Syrian Cabinet Duration and Survival Rate (1966-2020).

bureaucratic elites was relatively stable during this period of time, they persisted in a weakened and fractured state.

Much of this period was also characterized by stability in both the trajectory of economic policy and the identities of economic elites. While Hafez’s reign was uncompromising and politically repressive, it fostered an environment with relatively predictable rules for operating small scale economic enterprises that would not threaten the regime. Corruption was pervasive, but it was of a nature that allowed room for the petit bourgeoisie to maneuver (Hinnebusch 1993; Hinnebusch 1995). It was in the interest of the regime insiders and military officers who

took bribes that these businesses persist. As such, this period was characterized to a large extent by a broad state/military bourgeoisie that benefited from constrained private markets (Haddad 2011). Syria’s relatively closed socialist economy did open up gradually in the 1990s due to the need to stimulate economic growth; nevertheless, its economy remained heavily restricted and controlled.

Bashar Al-Assad was not initially groomed to be president, and he was more closely tied to the cosmopolitan urban regime elites than those who operated in the political and coercive spheres. Yet, upon the death of his brother, Bassel, he was quickly escorted up the ladder of

Syria's military and political hierarchy. Moreover, Bashar was increasingly taking on a greater role in policy making and authority over crucial issues in the late 1990s, reducing the power of other regime elites (Bronson 2000). This was undoubtedly to the consternation of some regime elites who may have perceived themselves to be more capable than Bashar and suitable successors (Bronson 2000; Drysdale 1985). In these years, a more reclusive and ailing Hafez worked to shape a regime that would be more likely to support Bashar's succession.

While the weakness of regime elites may be associated to some extent with the strength of the ruler, it is the capacity of potential competitors to challenge chosen successors after the death of the leader that is perhaps most relevant in evaluating the likelihood that power will be transferred to a leader's preferred heir. Many strong autocrats have failed to pass on their rule to a chosen successor, and the Syrian context was not necessarily favorable to hereditary succession (Brownlee 2007). Nevertheless, Bashar was able to successfully take power upon his father's death due, in large part, to elite fragmentation.

Rather than continuity, Bashar Al-Assad's ascent to the presidency led to rapid and meaningful changes to Syria's political landscape. The cabinet formed in 2000, months before Hafez would pass away, produced greater turnover than any new cabinet formed after 1966, including the government formed after Hafez Al-Assad's 1970 coup (*Figure 1*). The most powerful elites would remain in their positions for some time—perhaps due to fears that they might try to usurp power if directly targeted—yet their networks would be disrupted immediately. During the early years of the regime, Vice President

Abdelhalim Khaddam, a longtime presence in the Syrian political landscape and supporter of Hafez, would grumble most loudly about the direction of the regime and establish himself as the primary potential competitor to Bashar. The tumultuous first five years of Bashar's reign are often considered to be a period where Bashar Al-Assad was attempting to consolidate power, and it was in 2005 that he was able to reign in or eliminate potential threats, including Khaddam.

Yet, even after 2005, the regime was constantly in flux, never settling into a stable political elite network. The regime's bureaucratic networks and political party were destabilized in an effort to strengthen Bashar's position, and members of Hafez's regime were gradually replaced by individuals with weaker ties to other elites and strong ties to those close to Bashar. More importantly, his regime rapidly liberalized Syria's economy in a manner that shifted the locus of power away from political/military actors to cronies in the private sector. Syria's liberalization process produced an economic order that was hierarchically structured with Rami Makhoul, the president's cousin, and eventually his company, Cham Holdings, at the top.² This liberalization process allowed the president to strengthen the position of close allies who could balance against the power of entrenched political and military elites. Although other companies and elites thrived in this environment, the implicit approval of Makhoul and Cham Holdings was required in order for larger enterprises to be formed. What emerged was a liberalization process that organized the private sphere hierarchically under the stewardship of Makhoul, and this effectively reshaped the nature of the relationship between private sector actors and political/military regime elites. Ultimately, this

2. It should be noted that Makhoul also possessed strong ties to individuals in the security apparatus.

produced a counterbalance to the entrenched political elites operating within the party and the government.

Many of the regime's elites resisted the liberalization process early on. While contrasting policy preferences were expressed by holdovers from Hafez's government and new entrants into the higher echelons of the bureaucracies, these expressed preferences were not necessarily truthful representations of their beliefs. For example, Abdelhalim Khaddam had staked out a pro-liberalization position prior to Bashar's presidency (Barout 2011). After Bashar took power and instituted a number of policies opening up various industries, Khaddam became one of the more vocal opponents of liberalization. This shift appears to be due primarily to political considerations.

Traditional conceptualizations of authoritarian regimes and the consolidation of a leader's power would not capture the changes that occurred within the Syrian regime. How might a network-based conceptualization of the regime help explain the changes that occurred within Syria? First, it was Hafez's coup-proofing via the fracturing of elite networks that allowed Bashar to take power. Second, the transition from Hafez to Bashar took the regime from a leader with a relatively high degree of network centrality within the political, bureaucratic and coercive networks of the regime to a leader who was relatively peripheral. Finally, Bashar's close

ties to kin and elites operating in the private sphere and weak ties to political networks incentivized shifting the locus of power away from party elites and toward those operating in the private sphere and security apparatus. This produced meaningful political and policy changes similar in magnitude to those which might be experienced in a transition from a large to small winning coalition or party-centered to military-centered authoritarian regime.

Conclusion

In many regards, the Syrian regime and Bashar's succession within it are exceptional, yet the distribution of power within authoritarian regimes is often unconstrained by institutional arrangements (Svolik 2012). As such, conceptualizing regimes as networks may help us better understand the characteristic features of a broad set of regimes rather than just those with relatively strong institutions. This does not imply that institutions do not matter. They play an important role in shaping networks, can produce mechanisms for leaders to credibly commit to power sharing and may help us understand the latent network structures of regimes. However, beginning with a conceptualization of regimes as ruling networks may provide a more flexible approach that is capable of capturing the relevant features of a broader set of authoritarian regimes within a unified and logically coherent framework. ●

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LGBTQ MOVEMENTS IN THE MENA: Reflection on The Politics of Marginalization and the Need to Move Away From the Margins of the Discipline

by *Samer M. Anabtawi*



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The year 2011 marked the beginning of tremendous changes in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA). While the world was anxiously watching the Arab Spring unfold in Egypt and Tunisia, in another corner of the region, conservative clerics in Kuwait were calling for a *fatwa* against SpongeBob Squarepants. Bob the cheery yellow sponge – accused of being wimpish and behaving like a girl – was described as an insidious Western threat aiming to make Arab and Muslim children gay. While the outrage against SpongeBob hardly made a splash at the time, bizarre as it was, the story was a harbinger of a decade of escalating anti-LGBTQ moral panics.

The recent proliferation of LGBTQ social movements and countermovements in the MENA merit special consideration from comparative politics scholars who are interested in the study of social movements, authoritarianism, public opinion, identity politics, populism, and law and courts under autocracy. For example, in my research on LGBTQ legal mobilization in Tunisia and Lebanon, I draw on theories of legal mobilization to explain why activists and lawyers have managed to successfully challenge anti-LGBTQ

laws where we least expect them to, while the efforts of their peers in more democratic systems floundered. I find that the movements that shifted the focus away from pushing for the decriminalization of homosexuality and began challenging the application and enforcement of the law within the judicial branch itself, managed to pry open the legal structure and create further legal opportunities to capitalize on in future cases (Anabtawi, forthcoming in ALQ). In an edited volume on the global rise of *Fifth Column* politics, I draw on the case of Palestinian LGBTQ activism to advance our theoretical understanding of the novel framing approaches that stigmatized groups have been deploying successfully to combat state-sponsored homophobia (Anabtawi 2022).

What we can learn from the study of LGBTQ movements in the MENA – how they survive under repression, how they successfully affect authoritarian policymaking, and how their work alters majoritarian sentiments – has the potential to challenge and advance what we know about minority politics, regimes, autocratic institutions and repression among other theoretically and normatively important topics.



Homosexuality, a topic that had long been taboo to discuss in the Arab world, has forcefully entered into the public sphere in recent years.

In this essay, I begin by offering a glimpse of the successes and challenges that have punctuated the trajectory of LGBTQ movements in the MENA. In light of the expansion in the field of global and comparative LGBTQ politics, I reflect on the serious regional gap that has emerged in this emerging field and why comparative politics scholars should engage more deeply with

the study of LGBTQ identity politics in the Arab world. Finally, based on my research in the MENA, I make a theoretical intervention on our conceptualization of authoritarian repression. I argue that a functionalist lens which uncritically treats anti-LGBT repression as a strategic tool in the hands of calculated regime elites often misses the mark. Instead, I advocate

for a deeper engagement with the sources and types of repression that are inflicted on marginalized groups under autocracy. On the flipside, I caution against treating state-sponsored homophobia as mere “backlash” or a mechanical reaction to the rising visibility of queer groups in the region, especially when the research and the reality on the ground prove that anti-LGBTQ movements often pre-empt and precede LGBTQ mobilization or visibility (Paternotte 2020; Bishin et al 2020).

Between Hostility and Opportunity

Homosexuality, a topic that had long been taboo to discuss in the Arab world, has forcefully entered into the public sphere in recent years, especially with the proliferation of satellite tv, the internet, and social media. Competing media narratives on LGBTQ identities and rights abound, and they actively shape attitudes and beliefs about LGBTQ people in the region, often in ways that fan the flames of homophobia. In fact, for channels like Aljazeera Arabic, or

even Russia’s Sputnik Arabic broadcast, the subject has become an obsession. The Qatari and Russian funded media outlets were quick to report to their Arabic-speaking audiences that the American TV channel Nickelodeon “revealed” that its famous character SpongeBob is gay. Aljazeera’s other headlines and op-eds alert their followers to Hollywood’s and Netflix’s promotion of homosexuality to Arab children.

Hostile discourses have gone beyond tapping into fears about western decadence and its impact on the region’s moral fabric and family values. In some instances, LGBTQ citizens are accused of being collaborators with a foreign enemy, a *fifth column* and a risk to national security. In Palestine, many firmly believed and perpetuated the idea that being gay or lesbian made one an easy prey for blackmail by Israeli intelligence agencies seeking to recruit local informants (Anabtawi 2022). Stigma with homosexuality became tied to treason and espionage, further alienating members of the community. In Egypt, a police raid on an alleged night club on a Nile cruise in the early 2000s resulted in a sensational trial of 52 men who were suspected of engaging in homosexual activity. The men were tried before an Emergency State Security Court. Their names, occupations and addresses were published in national newspapers, and the trial itself was aired on national television. Over the past few years, news stories about Egypt’s National Security Agency arresting suspected LGBTQ people and torturing them have become routine.

Despite the structural impediments to mobilization in this region, LGBTQ mobilization in the Arab world contributed to major milestones. In Lebanon, a recent cascade of court rulings denied the application of a French-era law that criminalizes “sexual relations that go against

nature” to same-sex relations. In Tunisia, a commission set up by late president Essebsi to update Tunisia’s laws considering the new constitution has recommended the repeal of Article 230 of the Penal Code, which criminalizes homosexual relations. In Morocco, LGBTQ rights groups, legal support groups, and on-line publications emerged and took root. In 2017, the Moroccan government took an unprecedented step in accepting three Universal Periodic Review recommendations from UN member states concerning LGBTQ rights. LGBTQ pride marches and rallies, organized by Lebanese, Tunisian, and Palestinian queer activists have also become more frequent and visible. Throughout much of the region, LGBTQ movements made a demonstrable impact on how media outlets covered issues related to sexuality and gender expression. Real changes in the hearts and minds of these movements’ audiences are also reflected in the new local partnerships and alliances that LGBTQ groups have forged with civil society organizations and powerful societal actors.

The Missing Region in Comparative LGBTQ Politics

The rise in anti-LGBTQ hostility in the MENA – both state and non-state sponsored – coincided with two major trends that have evolved over the past decade. First, there was a massive expansion in visible LGBTQ mobilization and a remarkable growth in LGBTQ social movements and initiatives throughout the region. Second, there was tremendous growth in the area of LGBTQ politics research and a growing network of political scientists within APSA and other professional associations whose research careers focus on queer related topics in the discipline (Paternotte 2018; Mucciaroni 2011). The first pattern has been mostly missed – and in fewer

instances dismissed entirely – among political scientists, even among those driving the growth in LGBTQ politics research.

The burgeoning research on transnational LGBTQ movements often points to the dominance of repressive and socially conservative regimes and the rising tide of Islamism as factors that would make the MENA region a least-likely case for the genesis of a viable LGBTQ rights movement. This perception was sufficient for many scholars interested in LGBTQ identity politics to focus their attention elsewhere. This questionable presumption resulted in a lacuna in political science research on LGBTQ issues. While the comparative field has highlighted the growth, strategies, and challenges facing LGBTQ in Eastern and Western Europe, East Asia, and Latin America, research on gay and Trans rights movements in Africa and the Middle East remains sparse. Other disciplines, such as sociology and anthropology have made impressive inroads on this front, as there have been numerous studies published over the past decade (e.g. Chamas 2021; Magued 2021; Mahadeen 2021; Atshan 2020; Borillo 2020; Nagle 2018; Moussawi 2015; Dalacoura 2014; Naber and Zaatari 2014; Georgis 2013; Needham 2013). Nonetheless, the vast majority of what has been published focuses on singular countries or movements. This leaves the door open for us to engage in much needed comparative analysis.

Among the reasons why the MENA is understudied in the field of LGBTQ political science is the fact that it remains heavily focused on the themes of political opinion and public policy. When it comes to studying majoritarian attitudes toward sexual minorities, public opinion scholars are impeded from including the MENA region due to the scarcity of data. Aside from the Pew Poll of 2013 which asked citizen about

their tolerance for homosexuality in several countries in the region, the only successful attempt to gather reliable data on this question was carried out by the Arab Barometer in 2020, when it embedded a list experiment in its fifth survey to gauge respondents' tolerance of homosexuality. Future research should exploit the advancements in online survey technologies and services to test empirically how resonant various framings of LGBTQ rights are among Arab societies.

On the policy front, no legal changes have occurred in the region when it comes to LGBTQ rights and protections. LGBTQ politics scholars interested in policy adoption and diffusion have thus focused their attention on states that have decriminalized homosexuality in recent years or enacted same-sex marriage or adoption laws. Nonetheless, focusing exclusively on policy change risks overlooking an equally consequential variation in policy *enforcement*. While all countries in the MENA rely on anti-LGBT articles in their penal codes, there is much variation in when, why, how often, and against whom they enforce them. I try to fill this gap by examining the diverging and uneven patterns of enforcing anti-LGBTQ laws in Lebanon and Tunisia. Yet, more systematic explorations of within- and cross-case variation in the enforcement of anti-LGBTQ laws is needed.

Aside from the institutionalist bias in our treatment of LGBTQ identity politics, there are structural hurdles that have contributed to the scarcity of work on this topic. Many states in the region do not grant access to scholars, especially ones from other states in the MENA. When I embarked on my dissertation research as a Palestinian passport holder, I was denied visas to Lebanon and Tunisia, and a permit by the Israeli government to travel to Haifa and

Jerusalem to interview queer organizations. Safety concerns in countries like Egypt or the Gulf states are exacerbated for research subjects and scholars alike. The threat is often compounded when the researcher is from the region itself and lacks the protection of a Western passport. LGBTQ scholars from the MENA who are drawn to the study of queer politics in their countries have often refrained from specializing in the topic for fears of being outed in their communities and the potential consequences for their family members who reside in the region.

However, lacking access to data or filedwork does not necessitate writing off the topic altogether. In fact, the information we need to study social movements outcomes are often in plain sight. LGBTQ mobilization in particular takes place in virtual space. Organizations working on constructing new meanings and understandings on sexual orientation and gender identity are increasingly doing this work publicly, and relying on social media platforms like Instagram and Twitter to reach local audiences. Most of their activities, rallies, and events are well-documented and shared on their platforms, often with the intention of engaging LGBTQ citizens who are unable to come out and join the movement physically. For example, the Palestinian organization Al-Qaws live streamed its rally against homophobia on all social media platforms, and later reflected on how their event titled "Rallying Cry for Queer Liberation" gave a sense of empowerment to members of the community who did not feel safe to identify with the organization publicly. The fact that these groups document and archive a vast portion of their work, posters, promotional material, conferences, and workshops gives us a treasure trove of data that is useful to study these movements. Innovative research methods, such as relying on

virtual or online ethnography (Androutsopoulos 2008) or a quantitative analysis of digital texts, can be vital tools to overcome access hurdles and allow for regular monitoring of discursive strategies and direct observation of how these organizations interact with their audiences.

Why Should the Study of MENA LGBTQ Politics Become More Central To the Field of Comparative Politics?

The rapid expansion of LGBTQ mobilization and the equally noticeable conservative whiplash we witness in the MENA merit serious attention – not only from those who have interest in LGBTQ issues or the region itself, but from comparative politics scholars more generally. Broadly speaking, Gary Mucciaroni reminds us that “beyond its intrinsic importance, LGBT politics contributes to a broader understanding of politics, power, social movements, public opinion, policymaking institutions, urban politics, and the relationship between science and public policy” (2011, 17).

Studying LGBTQ topics in the context of the MENA contributes to our stock of knowledge on broader themes of crucial interest to the discipline writ large. First, it is imperative to note that the increase in violent state repression against LGBTQ citizens is not a MENA-specific trend. This growing hostility appears to coincide with a more systematic pattern of scapegoating and exclusion orchestrated by populist right-wing political actors all around the world (Ayoub and Page 2019). Homophobia, transphobia, and fearmongering campaigns targeting minorities more generally are now classic tools in the repertoire of populist authoritarian figures, many of whom instrumentalize “traditional values” to bolster their legitimacy. This is equally true in Europe as it is in the Middle East, and it is like-

ly to worsen the longer we see democracy in decline around the world. Last year, data collected by ILGA (a transnational pro-LGBTQ organization) showed “an increase in hate speech by religious and political leaders in 17 European nation” (Wyatt 2020). When we take a closer look at Poland’s 100 “LGBT-free zones,” Brazil’s president Jair Bolsonaro’s homophobic outbursts at journalists whenever he’s questioned about corruption, or the highly publicized arrest campaigns against LGBTQ Egyptians by the Sisi regime, we notice a troubling trend worldwide. Understanding anti-LGBT animus in the MENA in light of this broader trend rather than bracketing it as Middle Eastern exception has major consequences for identifying the policy recommendations and tools needed to tackle homophobic violence.

From a comparative politics standpoint, we have much to gain from advancing our understanding of the relationship between autocratization and populism, on the one hand, and the strategic use of repression against marginalized groups, on the other. In order to do so in a truly comparative fashion, we ought to avoid bracketing the issue of gay rights and repression in the Arab world, or even the global backlash against LGBTQ communities as issue- or region-specific phenomena. In the next section of this essay, I will draw on my recent work which studies the connections between authoritarianism and anti-LGBTQ repression.

Second, studying LGBTQ identity politics in the context of the MENA is also consequential for the study of social movements. What we observed in the past decade or more is a real puzzle. If the MENA region is indeed a “least likely case” for the emergence – and survival – of LGBTQ rights mobilization, then there is much that we can learn about the strategies and tac-

tics that contributed to their survival and steady progress in spite of their highly precarious condition. After all, homosexuality remains virtually criminalized all throughout the region – whether through direct anti-sodomy laws or laws constructed loosely around the preservation of public morality. Similarly, the percentage of the population in most MENA countries that express tolerance toward homosexuality hovers around the single digits.

Two Images of Repression

The question of anti-LGBTQ repression is often asked as such: Why would regimes focus their repression on sexual minorities even though they do not pose a viable threat to the regime? (e.g. Tschantret 2019). Asking the question this way assumes that authoritarian decision-making in every issue-area is determined almost entirely by concerns about its longevity and survival. This assumption is not entirely correct. At least – it is not correct all the time. While it is true that some anti-LGBT crackdowns are orchestrated strategically by the upper echelon of the regime, much of the violence, police harassment, arrests, and home raids experienced by sexual minorities are not the product of a centralized decision-making process. My empirical examination of the cases of Lebanon and Tunisia reveal that violent acts against LGBTQ citizens happen at a very micro-level. Decisions can be made in a local rural precinct or even by a small unit of low-ranking police officers stationed at a street corner.

Yet, throughout much of the literature on this subject, anti-LGBTQ violence, arrest campaigns, sensational trials of gay people, and homophobic discourses are understood as instruments in the hand of the regime. Scholars and analysts argue that there are fundamental strate-

gic benefits autocrats accrue from pursuing homophobic crackdowns. Repressing LGBTQ minorities diverts attention from the regime's shortcomings, scandals, and economic underperformance (Bahgat 2001). It gives autocrats the opportunity to portray themselves as the "guardians" of the nation against western decadence and outbid their Islamist competitors (Grimm 2014). High profile incitement campaigns against sexual minorities help regimes to 'perform' sovereignty and strength vis-à-vis the pressures they face from the international community (Pratt 2007). Systematic repression and arrest campaigns against LGBTQ citizens can also demonstrate high coercive capacity (Korycki and Nasirzadeh 2013). To target an "invisible" group puts on full display the regime's surveillance capacity. By focusing their repression on sexual minorities, regimes arguably signal "to potential defectors that the regime can effectively monitor and punish them" especially since "sexual minorities have few outward markers of their difference" (Tschantret 2019, 2).

These functionalist arguments, which locate the explanation at the macro-level will fail to account for many of the "quotidian" forms of repression. And thus, we must recast the question and ask, when do authoritarian regimes repress LGBTQ minorities, and how do we distinguish when such repression is deployed strategically? To answer this question, I argue that we must examine whether repression appears as a sustained and systematic pattern, and examine empirically whether high level officials are involved in orchestrating anti-LGBTQ crackdowns, and whether the regime makes any attempts at institutionalizing anti-LGBTQ measures.

In the case of Egypt, for example, the functionalist argument seems to hold. Since General Sisi assumed power, hundreds of Egyptians have

been arrested and tortured all throughout the country on suspicions of being gay. There have been frequent raids on bathhouses where men are believed to engage in same-sex sexual acts. The police have also consistently relied on the use of gay dating apps to entrap LGBT citizens. Raids and trials are recorded and shown on television to shame the victims. State institutions take an official stance on these episodes of repression. Al-Azhar's head of Fatwa Committee reportedly called for expelling homosexuals and the country's prosecutor-general made public homophobic statements (Grimm 2014). In 2017, pro-regime lawmakers introduced an anti-LGBTQ bill to the parliament that would imprison citizens who engage in or promote homosexual acts. The legislative dimension points once again that anti-LGBT repression is systematic and multi-pronged.

Meanwhile, in the Palestinian Territories, the police issued a homophobic statement in 2019, banning the queer organization Al-Qaws from carrying out events in the West Bank and called on citizens to report anyone they suspect of engaging in "suspicious" activities or being a member of this organization. The statement resulted in huge public consternation and a barrage of threats to the organization and its members. A functionalist explanation cannot account for the banning of Al-Qaws or the police spokesperson describing LGBTQ activists as "foreign agents". In fact, for a long time the topic was overlooked entirely by the regime. And unlike the case of Egypt, there have not been any long systematic campaigns to selectively target and punish LGBTQ Palestinians. A more in-depth

search reveals that Palestinian Authority figures hardly ever touch on the subject of sexuality. Following pressure from human rights groups and civil society organizations, the police statement disappeared from their website. A close examination of the case would not link this repression and incitement episode to strategic action and calculation by the regime. Instead, this appears to be a reactionary form of repression carried out by the police following public controversy in regard to a workshop that Al-Qaws held previously in the city of Nablus. The public controversy that preceded any action from the police offered the police an opportunity to show that they are in control. This episode suggests that this type of repression is the result of short-term and ad hoc calculations by the coercive hand of the state and not necessarily a function of long-term regime calculations.

Differentiating between strategic repression and reactionary repressions is a reminder to scholars of authoritarianism, and the MENA more generally, that the phenomenon of repression is not monotonous. Variation in timing, frequency, and motive matter, as does the location of decision-making. These distinctions will also equip us with a better understanding of the varying conditions that sexual minorities face and allow for a better response in terms of empowering local initiatives. In order to further examine the concept of repression and the connection between repressing LGBTQ groups and authoritarianism, we must engage more seriously and systematically with the politics of identity in the MENA region and how it factors into autocratic governance. ●

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INDIGENOUS MOVEMENTS, PARTIES, AND THE STATE: Comparative Lessons from Latin America

by *Carla Alberti*



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Indigenous peoples in Latin America have mobilized for decades to defend their rights using different strategies and through myriad organizations.¹ Recent developments illustrate the advances resulting from these mobilization efforts, as indigenous leaders and organizations have made significant inroads in politics. Indigenous movements, however, continue fighting for their rights throughout the region. For instance, indigenous movements in Ecuador took to the streets to resist president Moreno's neoliberal reforms. In the last few years, the Minga indigenous movement in Colombia has participated in protests in the country's main cities demanding the protection of their rights. In Chile, a Mapuche woman, Elisa Loncón, became the president of the recently inaugurated Constitutional Assembly.

In this essay, I detail some of the main topics related to indigenous movements and their political participation in Latin America. Furthermore, I draw on existing research on indigenous politics and my own work, and argue that, despite many improvements resulting from those mo-

bilizations, Latin American states have limited the implementation of some indigenous rights, especially those that empower indigenous people the most, such as prior consultation and autonomy, when these clash with the interests of the national governments that claim to support them. I further illustrate these tensions with the case of Bolivia, where an indigenous-based party, the Movimiento al Socialismo (MAS), began ruling the country in 2006. Additionally, I show how the implementation of indigenous rights is also being affected by another challenge indigenous groups in the region are facing, namely organized criminality and its encroachment on their territories. Lastly, I outline the broader implications of this argument for research on comparative politics more generally.

Indigenous mobilization in Latin America

Indigenous peoples in Latin America began mobilizing along ethnic lines in the early 1990s. The mass protests that took place in Bolivia and Ecuador as well as the Zapatista rebellion

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in Chiapas, Mexico laid the groundwork for the emergence of a series of indigenous movements throughout the region.

Scholars have put forth several explanations to account for the emergence of indigenous mobilization in Latin America. While some underline the role of globalization and the instruments of international norms, laws, and organizations

Indigenous movements initially took to the streets to resist neoliberalism in general, posterior mobilization waves were directed against specific policies and political actors.

(Brysk 2000), others point to the implementation of neoliberal reforms across Latin America. Indeed, Yashar (2005) contends that neoliberal reforms made ethnic cleavages more salient by threatening indigenous groups' local autonomy. However, while neoliberal policies served as a motivational factor, these groups were capable of mobilizing only where there were trans-community networks and the political system

allowed freedom of speech and association. According to Rice (2012), these movements protested in order to contest neoliberalism, while at the same time challenging the region's traditional conceptions of democracy and citizenship.

While most forms of mobilization in the region have been peaceful, some movements have opted to take up arms and engage in rebellious actions. According to Cleary (2000), the absence of institutional channels through which indigenous movements could communicate their grievances to political leaders explains the emergence of indigenous rebellion in some Latin American countries.

Motivations for indigenous mobilization have also varied over time. While indigenous movements initially took to the streets to resist neoliberalism in general, posterior mobilization

waves were directed against specific policies and political actors that epitomized these economic reforms. For instance, Bolivia's indigenous movements joined forces with other popular sectors to halt the privatization of water in Cochabamba and later to stop the selling of natural gas through Chile. These mobilizations, which came to be known as the "water war" and "gas war," respectively, challenged the country's political stability so profoundly that they contributed to the toppling of then President Sánchez de Lozada (Centellas 2013). Ecuadorian presidents Abdalá Bucarám and Jamil Mahuad were also deposed, as CONAIE (Confederación de Nacionalidades Indígenas del Ecuador), the country's main indigenous organization, participated in a number of protests that led to their ousting (Rice 2012).

Indigenous movements and communities have also mobilized against natural resource extraction in their territories. Indigenous groups have long collaborated with environmental organizations and other local and international actors to protect their territories against extraction (Conklin and Graham 1995). Still, indigenous mobilization against extraction has spurred a series of conflicts between – and within – communities, states, and private companies in several Latin American countries (Bebbington 2009; Humphreys-Bebbington 2012). Amidst these confrontations, communities have demanded that states effectively implement prior consultations in cases of extractive projects or other interventions that might affect their wellbeing. Consultations have nevertheless not always empowered the communities, and the institution has only been strengthened when indigenous groups have been incorporated into the political system (Falleti and Riofrancos 2018). The weakness of the implementation of

prior consultation demonstrates that, despite several improvements, most robust rights are not those pushed forward by the regions' political leaders.

Overall, Latin American states have responded in different ways to the demands of indigenous groups. States have granted indigenous rights when faced with pressures from indigenous groups as well as international actors, and in different contexts, including severe legitimacy crises that led to constitutional reform processes and in peace talks aimed to end armed conflict (Van Cott 2001; Lucero 2013). According to Charles Hale (2005), Latin American states granted cultural rights to indigenous peoples as compensation measures. The author characterized the rights package most governments in the region have granted as "neoliberal multiculturalism," and argued that this model was not truly empowering (Hale 2005). Governments that espouse other political ideas, such as the leftist presidencies of Rafael Correa in Ecuador, Evo Morales in Bolivia, and Hugo Chávez in Venezuela, have differed from this model in that the indigenous rights enshrined in their respective constitutions are more robust than in most other cases in the region. Nonetheless, several tensions emerged in the implementation of the rights that empower indigenous people the most. Most notably, conflicts over natural resource extraction and autonomy recurrently pitted indigenous communities against these governments (Martínez-Novo 2014; Angosto-Ferrández 2015; Alberti 2019).

Indigenous parties

In addition to mobilizing, indigenous movements in Latin America also formed political parties and participated, with varying degrees of success, in electoral politics. Indigenous

organizations have created parties in several countries, including Bolivia, Ecuador, Colombia, Nicaragua, and Venezuela, among others (Madrid 2008; Van Cott 2005). As existing studies have shown, these ethnic parties performed quite differently in electoral terms. Scholars have explained this variation using different variables. Van Cott (2005), for instance, focuses on different factors, including social movements, institutional environment, and party system to account for the varying performance of indigenous-based parties.

Moving away from institutionalist approaches, Madrid (2008) focuses on indigenous parties' strategies to explain the success of the MAS in Bolivia. The author posits that the MAS's performance resulted from its "ethnopolitist" appeal, which made it inclusive, reaching out to the peasantry, urban workers, and the middle classes. Furthermore, in addition to an indigenous agenda, the MAS resorted to traditional populism in three ways: using an antiestablishment discourse; proposing redistribution, as well as nationalist and state interventionist policies; and relying on a charismatic leader. Madrid (2008) also contends that the electoral demise of Pachakutik, Ecuador's main indigenous party, resulted from its ethnonationalist turn in 2006. The MAS's rise to power was a watershed in Bolivia's history, placing indigenous issues at the center of the political debate. However, as I explain in the following section, several conflicts emerged between the party and some indigenous movements over the implementation of key rights.

Indigenous-based parties in power: The case of Bolivia

The MAS is a movement-based party that emerged in the mid-1990s (Van Cott 2005;

Anria 2016), and the only indigenous-based party that has managed to reach and maintain power at the national level. Its core constituent indigenous movements are the Single Syndical Confederation of Rural Workers of Bolivia (CSUTCB), the Syndicalist Confederation of Intercultural Communities of Bolivia (CSCIB), and the indigenous women's organization Bartolina Sisa. The party has had an ambivalent relationship with two other indigenous organizations, namely the Council of Ayllus and Markas of Qullasuyu (CONAMAQ) and the Confederation of Indigenous Peoples of Bolivia (CIDOB) (Salman 2010; Zegada et al. 2011).

The MAS gradually expanded from its strongholds in the coca-growing region of the Chapare, where it controlled several municipalities, improving its electoral performance in other regions and at higher levels (Van Cott 2005; Madrid 2008). In the 2005 general elections, the MAS's candidate, Evo Morales, won the presidency, initiating a period of continuous rule, which was only briefly interrupted in 2019 as a result of an electoral crisis that resulted in the resignation, and later self-exile, of Morales (Alberti 2021).

Bolivia under the MAS experienced myriad changes in terms of the relationship between indigenous people, the state, and political institutions. The new 2009 Constitution not only granted new rights, but also included the participation of indigenous people in the drafting process (Lupien 2011). As a result, indigenous groups in the country obtained a comprehensive rights package that included the recognition of Bolivia's plurinational nature, indigenous autonomy, and prior consultation, among others. However, simultaneously, a number of tensions emerged between the Morales government and

some indigenous movements and communities. In my own work, I have argued that these tensions were motivated primarily by the clash between two contradictory forms of incorporation, namely: populism and multiculturalism. Indeed, while populist leaders promote the unity of the people and are wary of the emergence of an autonomous civil society, multiculturalism grants cultural rights that divide the people and foster autonomous organizing (Alberti 2019).²

Conflicts thus emerged in areas that empowered indigenous movements and communities and fostered autonomous decision making. For instance, although indigenous autonomy was granted in the constitution, several studies have documented the obstacles communities have faced in order to effectively implement this right. In particular, the 2010 Framework Law that regulated the implementation of indigenous autonomy establishes that autonomies can only be implemented based on territories that have already been recognized, such as municipalities and First People's Communal Lands (Tierras Comunitarias de Origen). Additionally, the law imposes several bureaucratic requirements that communities have found hard to fulfill and a municipal logic that undermines indigenous self-governance (Cameron 2013). Moreover, the Ministry of Autonomy, which was not particularly successful at supporting this process, was downgraded to a vice-ministry in 2017 (Alberti 2019).

Prior consultation also emerged as a particularly problematic issue in the relationship between the MAS government and indigenous communities. Although prior consultation was strengthened in the 2009 constitution and was continuously implemented in the country,

2. I also argue that these same tensions have emerged between indigenous movements and the governments of Correa in Ecuador and Chávez in Venezuela (Alberti 2019).

the decline in the price of hydrocarbons, which were key to financing Morales's redistributive programs, led the government to pass four decrees that sought to weaken prior consultation. Moreover, Morales publicly stated that the country should not waste time conducting prior consultations (Falletti and Riofrancos 2018).

Conflict over prior consultation also emerged in other areas, most notably due to the construction of a highway that would cut across the Isiboro Sécure National Park and Indigenous Territory (TIPNIS). Many TIPNIS communities, primarily the Yuracaré, Chimán, and Mojeño peoples, complained about the way in which prior consultation was implemented. In particular, they argued that the timeline assigned for the discussions was not enough to carry out deliberations through customary law procedures, and that the information provided by government delegates was not accurate (see Alberti 2019). Tensions escalated to the point that communities decided to march to La Paz, Bolivia's capital city, demanding respect for their right to prior consultation. The marchers nevertheless faced severe police repression and clashed with pro-government organizations. The crisis that resulted from these mobilizations led the government to postpone the construction of the highway (Alberti 2015, Postero 2015). Still, recently, former President Morales resumed discussions over the construction of the highway across the TIPNIS (Correo del Sur 2021).

In sum, I have argued that, although the MAS brought significant symbolic and legal advancements for Bolivia's indigenous peoples, confrontations over certain rights, such as autonomy and prior consultation, have strained the relationship between some indigenous movements and the government, and contributed to divide the indigenous movement between those that

support the MAS's project and those that criticize it.

Conclusions: Recent Challenges and Broader Lessons

The tensions that I have described for the implementation of indigenous rights also apply to a rather recent area of research, namely: organized crime and its encroachment on indigenous communities. Thus, just like governments' interest in resource extraction and political control put limits on certain indigenous rights, pressures from organized criminal groups can also affect their effective implementation. Indigenous rights, such as autonomy, become problematic because they can provide communities with tools to fight organized crime. Indeed, research has found that regional autonomy in Mexico has helped communities resist criminal groups (Ley, Mattiace, and Trejo 2019). In such contexts, governments support these rights when they wish to reclaim control of the areas that lack state presence (Altamirano 2021) or when they are fully committed to an anti-drug program (Mattiace and Alberti 2021). Considering the expansion of organized crime across Latin America, incorporating indigenous communities and territories into broader research on criminal violence in the region can provide a more comprehensive representation of the challenges indigenous communities face in the implementation of their rights.

Lastly, by focusing on the conditions under which indigenous groups mobilize and organize politically, research on indigenous politics in Latin America can offer insights for the study of social movements more broadly. Similarly, studies that explore the reasons why Latin American governments decide to support – or not – indigenous rights can help shed light on the variation

in the granting and effective implementation of minority rights in comparative perspective. Moreover, understanding the tensions between different forms of incorporation, such as populism and multiculturalism, can also contribute to explaining the relationship between politics and ethnicity in other regions of the world. ●

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HOW SOUTHERN IS CENTRAL ASIA?

by *Shairbek Dzhuraev*



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Does Central Asia¹ belong to the Global South? There is no short answer to this seemingly simple question. The concept of the Global South remains peripheral in Central Asian studies, just as Central Asia is non-existent in the debates on the Global South. However, there is no good reason for such discrepancy to continue. The Global South is relevant to Central Asia in multiple ways. First, the key themes in the studies of Central Asia's state and politics highlight the region's essentially subaltern nature. Second, there is a small but growing regional scholarship that directly addresses many facets of Central Asia's "southernness". Therefore, a more pertinent question is not whether Central Asia is part of the Global South, but in what ways it is so. In other words, how "southern" is Central Asia?

Debating Central Asia's Global South credentials offers a (not so) hidden treasure in at least two ways. First, it will push scholars to rethink, revisit and move beyond the region's notorious "post-Sovietness". If Central Asia is an uneasy fit for the 20th century postcolonial literature, the Global South might offer a more appropriate framework to discuss the dependent and subaltern characteristics in the region's past and present. Second, seeing Central Asia as

part of the Global South will shed new light on the richness, nuances and conceptual limits of the latter. This region has something to offer to nearly any strand of the Global South literature, from postcolonial to post-liberal or post-Western. Below, the article proposes several observations on why and how Central Asia – Global South nexus has strong foundations. First, however, comes a brief digression on the mutual peripherality of Central Asia and the Global South.

Central Asia and the Global South: the sources of ambivalence

One apparent reason for the ambivalence about Central Asia's linkage to the Global South is the latter's fuzzy definitions. Thus, a study of democracy in the Global South classified Central Asia as part of the Global North due to its non-belonging to the Third World before 1991 (Pop-Eleches and Robertson 2015). Alternatively, Central Asia is undoubtedly part of the Global South if one defines it as a new name for the developing world as the United Nations or the World Bank appear to do (Clarke 2018). Moreover, a fine-tuned analysis would find Kazakhstan, a middle-upper economy, slightly "less southern" than Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan,

1. Central Asia, in this article, refers to five former Soviet republics, Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan.



Comparing Central Asia to Africa's poor and/or postcolonial countries often triggered emotional resistance, reflecting the recent Soviet-time view of the Third World as "others", not "us".

Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan, all in the lower-middle-income basket (The World Bank n.d.). In the language of South-South cooperation, parts of Central Asia will be found in the "south

of the South" as a receiving end of relations with the behemoths of the Global South, such as China or India. Finally, if one takes "global" as a departure from methodological nationalism, each Central Asian state will certainly have pockets of the North, just as Eriksen (2018) alludes to pockets of the South in parts of Norway.

Definitions aside, there is well-recorded reluctance among political and academic circles in Central Asia to apply the vocabulary of the Global South (Laruelle 2021, 211–12). Comparing Central Asia to Africa's poor and/or postcolonial countries often triggered emotional resistance, reflecting the recent Soviet-time view of the Third World as "others", not "us". The Soviet legacies, such as the high literacy rate, elements of the modern state and European culture, also served to justify how post-Soviet Central Asia was not up to such comparisons. The Russian-speaking Central Asia scholarship remains embedded within the Soviet-time vocabulary and training, another characteristic of the region's insulation from global perspectives of postcolonialism or the Global South.

Central Asians' reluctance about the Global South is not simply a matter of their present-day choice. Five former Soviet republics were part of the "Second World" until 1991. In other words, the 20th-century politics and debate of postcolonialism, the Non-Aligned Movement or the Third World, a critical context for the Global South, were not central for Central Asians. In 1991, Central Asian states were newcomers to

now a two-fold world and appeared to fit none. Mostly for the same reasons, Central Asia remained outside the interest of postcolonialism literature (e.g. Moore 2001; Heathershaw 2010).

The paucity of discursive engagement between Central Asia and the Global South, telling in itself, does not foreclose the linkage between the two. As the following sections suggest, the themes raised by the region's comparative politics and international relations literature place the region squarely in the Global South even when not saying so.

Non-modern non-democracies: comparative politics of post-1991 Central Asia

Thirty years after 1991, what does comparative politics of Central Asia tell us about the state, society and politics in the region? A thorough review of comparative politics literature is hardly possible in this article. However, the *Routledge Handbook of Contemporary Central Asia*, fresh from the print in September 2021, offers a fitting entry point. As co-editors (Isaacs and Marat 2021, 2–3) map the regional scholarship in the introduction to the volume, three themes top their list: nation-building, democratization and the "informal-formal paradigm." A brief look into each of these themes suggests Central Asian studies is hardly anything other than a study of a deeply "southern" part of the world.

The prominence of nation-building in regional scholarship is not surprising. In 1991, Central Asian Soviet republics "catapulted" into the world of nation-states. The landing was safe for most of them, at least compared to the republics of the former Yugoslavia. However, having formal elements of a state in place, Central Asia, it turned out, lacked nations. There were no polities, let alone nation-states, called Kazakhstan

or Uzbekistan, before the Soviet Union's "creation of nations" of Kazakhs and Uzbeks (Roy 2000). Thus, in 1991 Central Asian leaders faced the task of building a nation "from scratch," as Huskey (2003) wrote about Kyrgyzstan. The process was novel and painful, as Tajikistan's descent into civil war in 1992 reminds.

Another dominant theme in Central Asian politics is that of democratization. The 'end of history' paradigm of the early 1990s was hardly a choice of Central Asian leaders or societies. But all relevant parties agreed, back then, that Central Asia was part of the democratic transition. The developments on the ground gave little indication of such a transition. Competitive elections, political pluralism and freedom of expression remained non-existent in most of Central Asia, as seen in the annual measurement of the US-based Freedom House. Anderson's (1999) singling out Kyrgyzstan as an 'island of democracy' was a telling verdict on the region's democratic progress. Reflecting the "end of transition paradigm" (Carothers 2002), explaining Central Asia's non-democracies became a more relevant task (e.g. McGlinchey 2011; Levitsky and Way 2002; Lewis 2021).

Central Asia's travails with nation and democracy-building brought formal-informal to prominence as an appropriate framework of analysis. A particularly relevant starting point was a routine discrepancy between how policies are declared and executed. Democratic and modern state elements were adopted only to accommodate, intertwine with, or get subverted by, informal practices and actors such as clans, localism or clientelism of different forms (e.g. Schatz 2004; Collins 2004; Huskey and Hill 2013; Radnitz 2010; Hale 2014). An undue assumption of democratization in the region is the first problem leading to "informal" as a problem

(Juraev 2008). Furthermore, informal is easier defined by what it is not, and unsurprisingly, it came under challenge as "oversimplified" or "normative" (Isaacs 2014; Ismailbekova 2021).

The above topics by no means exhaust the regional scholarship on politics. However, they have a shared context: non-modern, undemocratic Central Asia. The lack of history of modern statehood is critical to understanding current Central Asia, but only if the model of a "modern state," with roots outside Central Asia, serves as a point of reference. Similarly, in the study of Central Asian politics, the formal-informal binary invariably correlates with the standards of the modern Weberian state and its deviations. In its turn, the assumption of Central Asian states being part of another democratic wave had little to do with developments in Central Asia. The shift to explaining authoritarianism in the region only underscores the continuing centrality of the golden standard of a political regime. Central Asia's Soviet or pre-Soviet past may occasionally feature in the above themes as part of the explanation (e.g. Dzhuraev 2012; Fumagalli 2016). But far more importantly, Central Asia's subalternity has been the context for such scholarship, not a mere variable.

International non(agency) of Central Asian states

The Global South, by most of its definitions, is central to international relations. This is not immediately obvious in the field's mainstream theories of the 20th century. For the neorealist theory, relations and events between states stem from their concern about survival and differences in relative power capabilities. The constructivist approach (Wendt 1999) challenges some of neorealism's taken-for-granted assumptions, pointing to "social," and

thus, changeable, roots of states' preferences. However, these grand theories remain agnostic to the roots of power imbalances, leaving the latter to more critically oriented approaches. What does the international relations literature in Central Asia reflect, then, on the region's "southernness" at the global level?

The single biggest proposition is the missing or denied agency of Central Asian states in the world of international relations (Dzhuraev 2021). Unlike counterparts in nation-building, democratization or development, the scholars of international relations hardly noticed the emergence of five independent states in 1991. International Relations is known for its preoccupation with big powers, and none of the Central Asian states counted as such. Therefore, closer attention to Central Asia's international relations was primarily a "side effect of geopolitics" (Dzhuraev 2021, 233). Hence the prominence in Central Asia of such concepts as the "grand chessboard," the "great game," or Mackinder's "Heartland." While entertaining for students and politicians, these topics commonly paint Central Asia as little more than a territory.

There are two distinct approaches in the regional scholarship addressing the above "lack of agency" problem in Central Asia's international relations. The first is a recognition that the region's countries have grown in their capacity to act internationally. As Cooley (2012) argues, Central Asian authoritarian regimes learned to set "local rules" of the "great game." Related is the literature that stresses Central Asian rulers' political interests (i.e. "regime interests") as the embodiment of these countries' agency in their foreign policies (e.g. Allison 2008; Anceschi 2010).

The above works represent the much-needed bridging of international relations literature

to that of comparative politics. However, the granted international agency remains partial. True, Central Asian states may not be pawns anymore but, perhaps, knights. However, if such an upgrade is only possible when multiple "great gamers" are willing to buy out local rule-setters, such agency remains of an ad hoc nature. Moreover, there is an inherent theoretical asymmetry if Central Asia's international actorhood is discussed through a schema of "regime interests of Central Asian rulers vs national interests of other powers." In short, the arguments pertain more to Central Asian subalternity than rediscovering its international agency.

The second approach accepts Central Asia's weak agency and offers a political explanation to it. Thus, Lewis (2015, 75) contends that Russia's influence in Kyrgyzstan is not simply a matter of power exercise but a reflection of legitimacy that such influence enjoys and is nurtured in Kyrgyzstan. Relatedly, Fumagalli (2016) points to domestic political changes in Kyrgyzstan as a precursor of the increased Russian leverage vis-a-vis that of the West in 2010. These arguments add nuance to the exercise of international agency by Central Asian states, even though the result, ironically, is the narrowing of Bishkek's "margins of manoeuvre," in the case of Fumagalli (2016, 371).

The overall message of the above works is Central Asia's international weakness, smallness and dependence. One sign of it is the focus of studies on non-regional powers' international relations, with Central Asia being at best the receiving end and at worst the context (e.g. Kluczevska and Dzhuraev 2020). Another indication is the nature of Central Asian states' international agency, reduced to the regime's parochial political interests or proactive dependence-seeking from the former colonial patron.

The literature discussed above is aware of the postcolonial roots of the problem but views it as part of a broader context. This leads us to the final section on Central Asia scholarship that is directly engaged with the themes of the region's postcolonialism and subalternity.

Maturing regional studies? The rise of critical approaches

The previous sections discussed how regional scholarship demonstrates Central Asia's Global South credentials without expressly saying so. However, there is a considerable body of works that directly engage with the region's subalternity both within and beyond postcolonial vocabulary. Three observations could be offered in this regard.

First, there is a debate on Central Asia's postcolonial nature. The earlier writings rarely went beyond the basic question: whether postcolonialism was relevant to post-Soviet Central Asia. Gammer (2000) brings up a host of compelling similarities between post-Soviet Central Asia and former French colonies in Africa, starting from non-desired independence to the nature of relations with the "mother empire." However, as Kandiyoti (2002) argues, comparing post-Soviet Central Asia to other postcolonial regions may not be helpful and would limit rather than help understand the specifics of the Soviet experience. In contrast, for Moore (2001), "an inflation of the postcolonial" was a worthwhile sacrifice if that was the cost of defining post-Soviet as postcolonial. More works came out recently on different colonial aspects of the Soviet or pre-Soviet experience of Central Asia (Adams 2008; Bisenova and Medeuova 2016; Heathershaw 2010; Kudaibergenova 2016; Tlostanova 2015).

Second, if Central Asia scholarship was a little late, or a slight outlier, in the postcolonial discourse of the 20th century, it has been at the forefront of critical "southern" themes of the post-1991. Thus, one finds compelling arguments on how the concepts of democratic transition, liberalism or liberal peace were not only external to Central Asia, as discussed earlier, but also proved unhelpful to understand the region (e.g. Owen et al. 2017). Central Asia's complicated relations with the global centres of power are reflected in the works on the neoliberal global order (e.g. Sanghera and Satybaldieva 2021), the global connectedness of Central Asian elites (e.g. Cooley and Heathershaw 2017) or discrepancies between donors' and local views on good governance (e.g. Kluczevska 2019). These are only snapshots of the literature, which has been lately on the rise (Laruelle 2021).

The final observation concerns the questions of who and how produces knowledge on Central Asia. There are growing calls to address the self-perpetuating dominant position of Western-based academics in regional studies. Marat and Aisarina (2021).

Conclusions

Organizing the world around mega-labels such as the Global South and the Global North is an exercise in intellectual heuristics that should never be taken for granted. Using these concepts requires allowing an unknown number of assumptions about the world. Also, such concepts are more often political than not. However, if social science requires such heuristics in order to produce interesting and potentially valuable insights about the world, they are here to stay and thrive. On that assumption, this article concludes there is a compelling case to

view Central Asia as a legitimate and interesting part of the Global South. Three concluding remarks illustrate it.

First, for comparative politics scholars more broadly, viewing Central Asia as part of the Global South will help enrich and sharpen the latter concept. This region, just as others, have its own set of unusual characteristics. For some, Central Asia is still part (albeit “southern”) of the Global North. For others, it may be the deep south of the South. Central Asia posed a difficult nut to crack for postcolonial approaches. For some, it may not qualify as a colonial at all, while for others, it is thrice colonial. Recent Central Asia works increasingly speak to broader themes of post-liberal or democracy (Long 2018; Owen et al. 2017; Lottholz et al. 2020), while the works on postcolonial international relations (e.g. Clapham 1996; Lockwood 2015) will prove highly relevant to the region. In short, Central Asia will have value to add to many concepts of what the Global South may (or may not) be.

Second, for Central Asia scholars, applying the lenses of the Global South sheds new light on present-day research topics of the region. The Global South is an inherently political, critical and subversive concept (e.g. Kloß 2017). This

opens new avenues to politicize, and depoliticize, some of the most prominent topics of the area studies, such as the nature of political regimes, corruption, the state weakness or external dependence. The Global South lenses will push more scholars to appreciate the historical and political roots of the concepts they use, another sign of a maturing field.

The final point is a little caveat about the limits of critical literature in area studies such as Central Asia. On the one hand, the regional scholarship is increasingly in sync with the Global South in the latter’s “subversive” meaning. There is a growing debate on historical and constructed dimensions of the region’s, and its scholars’, subalternity. This trend will grow as Central Asian studies is relatively young. On the other hand, the most compelling critical works on Central Asia is associated with scholars in privileged positions. They most probably read and write in English and received good training in critical social science (broadly defined). These remain luxuries in most parts of the region. So, just as some see postcolonialism as a product of “hegemonic centres of knowledge production” (Chanady 2008, 418), the Global South may, at least for some time, remain in the vocabulary of a relatively exclusive branch of Central Asian scholarship. ●



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Q&A WITH

RACHEL BRULE (*Luebbert Book Prize*)

What caused you to embark on this project?

The big question of our time: how can we tackle enduring inequality across social, economic, and political domains? States have powerful tools at their disposal: a monopoly over the use of violence, yes, but also the capacity to redistribute valuable resources and associated social status, reducing inequality. For me, the core puzzle was: under what conditions are state policies to advance social equality successful?

What is one main thing you want the project to be remembered for ten years from now?

Families are not only social but also political units: the outcomes of intra-family bargaining shape individual power from conception through old age and state policies alter power within families. In particular for women, these negotiations are critical, and yet mainstream political science has ignored most of this vast space of politics. I hope that a decade from now, political scientists will agree that my book empirically established the family as a fundamental unit of political analysis.

What in your data or findings surprised you the most? Why?

The first major surprise to me was that exposure to India's property rights reform, on its own, didn't fundamentally alter the likelihood that women would actually claim the property for which they were eligible. Another, positive surprise was that quotas for female elected heads of local government, which are widely dismissed in India as ushering in the rule of husbands as proxies for wives, were effective in enabling many women to claim substantial property rights.

What would you change or do differently if you went back and did this project again?

I would have more directly acknowledged and observed the families with whom I lived and studied in my ethnographic field research to be political entities from the very start of my research. I was always interested in the effect of political institutions on legal reforms, but I initially failed to see the family as one of these institutions. Had I recognized this sooner, I would have begun interviewing politicians and their local constituents much earlier about broader



processes of political negotiations, and sought to better understand the familial negotiations that precluded all engagement with the state.

What is the biggest still unanswered question that emerges from your research?

Under what conditions do societies and states shift from patriarchal norm systems – which value men, and their associated ideal types, over women and traits associated with the feminine – to more egalitarian systems which level the many hierarchies promoted by patriarchy? This question is not limited to gender, but also extends to race, ethnicity, and generational seniority. My book provides a window into the strategic instruments state policies provide for individuals to renegotiate hierarchy from the ground-up. However, there is much more work to do to explore opportunities for disrupting and renegotiating systems of power to achieve greater equality.

If another scholar does the same project ten years from now, do you think their findings would be different from yours? And if yes, in which ways?

Yes, I hope so! I would predict that longer exposure to governance by women will expand women's access to the state. This could lead to more effective bargaining by young women to secure property and enter marriages on their own terms, with benefits for their entire family. If so, this has the potential to reduce severe forms backlash to gender-equalizing reforms – work by brothers to intimidate sisters to renounce rights and female infanticide by parents concerned about being abandoned by their sons in old age – and tilt family negotiations toward empowering women across the full arc of their lives. ●





Q&A WITH

DANIEL GINGERICH (*Luebbert Article Prize*)

What caused you to embark on this project?

The scholarship on distributive politics in developing democracies features ample theoretical discussion of the role of vote secrecy in shaping phenomena such as clientelism and vote brokerage, but much less direct empirical evidence about how the effective secret ballot actually affected modalities of political engagement when it was introduced. My hope was that a well-structured historical project, with strong causal leverage and relatively precise measurement of outcomes, could offer a good deal to our understanding of how the secret ballot affected citizens' participation in elections.

What is one main thing you want the project to be remembered for ten years from now?

The Brazilian case offers a stark example of how so-called clean election reforms may, in fact, contribute to democratic backsliding. There are perhaps few institutional reforms more popularly associated with good government and the historical consolidation of democracy than the adoption of the secret ballot. Yet, in both Brazil (shown in my article) and the Southern United States (shown by others), the effective secret

ballot represented a frontal attack on political participation by the most vulnerable and economically downtrodden citizens. In both cases, this was by design. I want scholars and policymakers to appreciate this history as we consider contemporary political discussions about "election security" and "perfecting the democratic process."

What in your data or findings surprised you the most? Why?

To be honest, the central finding that the effective secret ballot had an enormous effect in disenfranchising functionally illiterate voters came as a bit of a surprise. Based on the US experience, I anticipated that there might be a disenfranchisement effect. However, the magnitude of the effect that I encountered in the data really did surprise me. After running the analyses and sharing my results, I scoured parliamentary debates and newspapers from the time period, only to find that disenfranchisement of functional illiterates was exactly what the proponents of the ballot reform had intended all along. In my view, this is why one does research – if you're never surprised, you're doing it wrong.



What would you change or do differently if you went back and did this project again?

I spent more time than I would like to admit setting up teams to collect, process, and clean the data. If I could do this all over again, I would hire a full time project manager to oversee the distinct tasks of the various research assistants involved in the project.

What is the biggest still unanswered question that emerges from your research?

In my mind, the biggest unanswered question is why the adoption of the effective secret ballot was utilized to strategically disenfranchise functionally illiterate voters in some settings but not in others. Danilo Medeiros and I take a step towards an answer to this question in a recently published piece in *Comparative Political Studies* (“Vote Secrecy with Diverse Voters”), but our empirical focus in that article is on the determinants of the preferences of individual politicians for or against the effective secret vote in a specific country (Brazil), rather than on cross-national differences. In the article, we argue that in order for the effective secret ballot to be used as an instrument of strategic disenfranchisement, illiterate voters need to make up a non-negligible proportion of the electorate and illiteracy must be correlated with a pre-ex-

isting political cleavage. But how often and why the effective secret ballot is actually used in that manner when said conditions prevail, is very much an open question.

If another scholar does the same project ten years from now, do you think their findings would be different from yours? And if yes, in which ways?

Yes and no. No, in the sense that I wouldn't anticipate that a scholar who at some point in the future went back to study the case of Brazil with some newly acquired data would produce results radically at odds with those in my article. At least I hope that that would not be the case! But if a scholar were to perform a similar historical study in a different country with different ballot design (perhaps owing to different electoral rules), then I certainly think it is possible that the findings would differ. In understanding the impact of the effective secret vote on disenfranchisement, the devil lies in the details of ballot design. The secret vote can be realized by a ballot that is easy for illiterates to navigate (e.g., mark an “x” next to an image representing your favored political party) or hard (e.g., write in the name or number of your favored candidate). The effective secret ballot in Brazil was intentionally designed to be difficult for illiterates to use. I would expect similar disenfranchising effects to be found only in other cases of unfriendly ballot design. ●





Q&A WITH

NIKHAR GAIKWAD, ERIN LIN AND NOAH ZUCKER (*Sage Paper Prize*)

What caused you to embark on this project?

This project has a serendipitous origin. Erin and Nikhar were presenting research at a conference on fieldwork titled, “In the Field: Political Science,” at the University of Rochester. Erin presented a paper related to the long-term legacies of conflict in Cambodia, and Nikhar presented a paper on the impact of matrilineal cultural norms on women’s political representation, with a concluding slide mentioning potential applications to the Cambodian case. Patriarchal norms are hard to disrupt, but periods of intense scarcity – like during the Cambodian genocide – can lead societies to abandon traditions that exclude women from the economic sphere, with salutary implications for women’s political representation. After several conversations, a plan was hatched to study this topic together, and Noah joined soon after.

What is one main thing you want the project to be remembered for ten years from now?

That communities develop new expectations of female behavior *once* the men and women in

traditional gender structures accept and take personal advantage of changing norms. Perhaps the most prevalent set of explanations for the impact of violence on women’s representation underscore the policies of post-war institutions (e.g., legislative quotas or democratic elections) that create opportunities for women to run for office. A burgeoning literature points to wartime female empowerment and its lingering effects on women’s preferences. What is missing from these accounts is an appreciation of the role of the remaining community members: how men and women in traditional domestic structures are also shaped by violence. Once these individuals find it beneficial to discard patriarchal norms, new avenues are created for the political advancement of women.

What in your data or findings surprised you the most? Why?

Though it emerged out of the theory, the strength of the findings for *male*-headed households was notable: in the wake of the genocide, women and girls became more autonomous and acquired substantially greater bargaining power even in traditional domestic structures with “senior males” present. These findings



provided striking evidence that the Cambodian genocide did more than drive widows into public life by necessity – it had enduring ideational and cultural impacts on how both women *and* men conceived of proper gender roles in the public domain.

What would you change or do differently if you went back and did this project again?

Conducting a truly multi-methods research design – which relied on in-depth ethnographic interviews with genocide survivors and political stakeholders, just as much as on large-*n* statistical analyses of the impact of violence on long-term indicators of women's economic autonomy and political representation – was new to us. It necessitated becoming proficient in field-based interview research techniques in sensitive environments while also analyzing original historical and contemporary datasets pertaining to one of the most horrific mass killings of the twentieth century. It would have been helpful to gain experience with a multi-methods design at a smaller scale before tackling such an expansive topic.

What is the biggest still unanswered question that emerges from your research?

There is still a lot to uncover about how cultural transmission works precisely: what kinds of information about female leaders are shared across households and generations, and when political resistance to female officeholders dissipates. In particular, we'd like to learn more about male backlash to female empowerment, and private transcripts might be easier to access with a male ethnographer, who can linger unobtrusively in areas such as coffee shops where men tend to congregate and gamble in Cambodia.

If another scholar does the same project ten years from now, do you think their findings would be different from yours? And if yes, in which ways?

A future study along the same lines would be an interesting test case for how changed norms endure over time. Will norms of gender equity grow stronger as more women become educated, economically active, and politically involved? Or will they fade, as genocide-era generations pass away or withdraw from public life? Our theory would anticipate the former, though identifying the *local* effects of genocidal violence may become increasingly difficult as people move out of afflicted communities, taking reformed gender expectations with them. ●



Q&A WITH

JACOB NYRUP AND STUART BRAMWELL (*Lijphart/Przeworski/Verba Dataset Award*)

What caused you to embark on this data project?

While the final product may look grand, the truth is that WhoGov has very humble origins and mostly is the by-product of mission creep. I needed a measure of cabinet stability in autocracies to test a hypothesis put forward in my thesis. After discovering that there was no existing data on this, I, encouraged by my supervisor Ben Ansell, decided to create a new dataset. Realising that the project would be too much for one person, I asked Stuart, a fellow PhD student, if he wanted to join.

As a baseline, we relied on the Chiefs of State and Cabinet Members of Foreign Governments directory, compiled by the Central Intelligence Agency for information on cabinet ministers. Initially, we only focused on coding autocracies. However, we realized that having a complete dataset would reach a larger section of the political science community, and thus we decided to add democracies as well.

By the time this process was complete, we had coded the cabinets of 177 countries over a fifty-year period, covering more than 50,000 cabinet members. Next, we decided to add bibliographic information such as gender, par-

ty affiliation, and year of birth to the dataset. Furthermore, we also classified over 100,000 different ministerial positions into different types.

Yet, while this was an enormous amount of work, we were lucky to get a lot of support throughout. Nuffield College and Aarhus University gave us funding, which allowed us to hire a small group of research assistants and country experts. In addition, we received so much support from scholars and friends from all over the world who helped with comments, moral support, and by checking, coding, and correcting the data for their respective countries.

What is one main thing you want the project to be remembered for ten years from now?

It is hard to point to one specific thing that stands out, particularly when the data set is very new, and we just are beginning to see research coming out. However, our main hope is that WhoGov will serve as an inspiration for graduate students who are interested in collecting their own data.

Collecting data as a graduate student can often seem daunting, especially when most of the



well-known datasets in our field have been created by senior scholars with, in many cases, large research grants. However, our experience with WhoGov shows that many other factors such as technical knowledge, dedication, vision, and, most importantly, collaboration and teamwork can be more important when it comes to producing original and important data. Graduate students more often than senior scholars excel in these things, and we hope that some of them will look towards WhoGov when embarking on their own projects.

What in your data surprised you the most? Why?

Looking back at it, we were surprised that something like WhoGov did not exist already. There is an enormous literature on cabinets and governments, and yet no time-series cross-sectional dataset on governing elites in a large number of countries existed. This meant that political scientists were unable to answer foundational descriptive questions, such as (a) which country has the largest cabinet? (b) which country has the highest proportion of female ministers? or (c) which type of regime has the most unstable cabinet? Naturally, this also hampers our ability to answer questions of theoretical importance. One of the amazing things about WhoGov is that we can look at the data both on the macro-level and on the individual-level since the data is so granular.

What would you change or do differently if you went back and collected the data again?

It is easy to think of ways we could have optimized the data collecting process. First, it may have been helpful to know where we were going

from the beginning, so we could plan the project from the start instead of gradually expanding the dataset. For example, we started out by adding the autocratic periods for many countries, and then we went back and added the democratic periods after we decided to also cover democracies. Another example is that we added gender and year of birth in two separate steps, meaning that we had to look up many ministers twice.

The upside of taking the process step-by-step is that it made the process much less daunting. We are not sure we would have commenced on the project at that point, if we knew how much work that lay ahead, although, in hindsight, it was worth all the work.

If another scholar does the same project ten years from now, what do you think they will do differently? And will they find different things?

We are not sure that another scholar would find different things, but collecting the data could easily have been better prepared and more streamlined. Since we did not have funding, we conducted the project piecemeal and without a grand goal in sight. Access to more funds, in conjunction with advances in optical character recognition and matching algorithms could make collecting WhoGov less burdensome.

However, we do not hope that such endeavours by other scholars will be necessary. We are committed to keep updating and working on WhoGov. Currently, we are updating it until 2021, and we have just set in motion a new project where we add variables such as education, ethnic identity, and previous occupation to the individual ministers. ●



Q&A WITH

MARC HELBLING, LIV BJERRE, FRIEDERIKE RÖMER, AND MALISA ZOBEL

(Lijphart/Przeworski/Verba Dataset Award Honorable Mention)

What caused you to embark on this data project?

The simple and surprising fact that there was hardly any data available that would have allowed to investigate immigration policies for a larger number of countries and across time. In the neighboring fields of integration and citizenship policies, first datasets had already been built since the mid-2000s, but it was not possible to systematically study to what extent border regulations have an effect on migration movements, how restrictive and liberal policies can be explained, or how policies changed over time. There were already some first studies that investigated specific subfields of immigration policies for a number of countries or individual years. This data was, however, not accessible and no encompassing dataset existed that would have allowed to study the causes and effects of immigration policies.

What is one main thing you want the project to be remembered for ten years from now?

Besides the fact that this dataset allows analyses that were not possible beforehand, we hope that it will also be remembered for its rigorous

and transparent conceptualization. When we started our project, we realized that existing work hardly defined what immigration policy actually is and hardly explained how it is measured. We invested a lot of time in thinking about the different dimensions and subfields of immigration regulations. Our aim was not to simply create one policy index but to have a series of indices that can be combined in different ways and allow the investigation of different aspects of immigration policies as they were discussed in the more qualitative literature. We also tried to be as transparent as possible in how we collected the data, measured the different dimensions and aggregated the data so that other researchers see how we proceeded and can improve it in the future.

What in your data surprised you the most? Why?

In a first relatively simple paper, we looked at the development of immigration policies over time. Given the conceptualization of our dataset we were able to disaggregate our data and investigate different sub-policy fields. This allowed us to show that certain regulations became more liberal over time, whereas others became more restrictive. Other scholars used our



data and other datasets to show how political parties affect the regulations of border controls. It appeared that there is no clear effect and that right and left-wing governments do not necessarily lead to more restrictive or more liberal immigration policies as most people would expect. These two examples show how important it is to have datasets that allow the systematic analyses of a larger number of countries and time periods to question widely held beliefs of a policy field.

What would you change or do differently if you went back and collected the data again?

We are currently updating the dataset for the years 2011 to 2018, and allowing comparisons overtime did not change anything in the conceptualization of the dataset. But even several years after the completion of the first dataset, we are still convinced by our design and approach and there is hardly anything we would have done differently, especially given the constraints of the resources we had. We were very lucky to receive over 1 Million Euro from the German Research Foundation for this 5-year project. While receiving such a big grant is already rather exceptional, it also makes clear that long-term institutional funding would be necessary to allow a continuous updating of such a dataset. Unfortunately, research agencies are rather hesitant to finance such research endeavors.

If another scholar does the same project ten years from now, what do you think they will do differently? And will they find different things?

Our database is limited to OECD countries, and this is also true for datasets in the fields of integration and citizenship policies. This can be explained by the fact that researchers prefer to do research in the geographical areas they know best, but also because it is easier to collect certain data in certain countries. This is, of course, more than justified if you collect this kind of data for the first time. It is great to see that more recent project initiatives started to include countries from all over the world that allow to investigate how states regulate border controls or naturalizations across different world regions where migration movements are often much larger than in the OECD world. This trend will certainly increase and future projects will be able to find new patterns of immigration policies and test new theories on causes and effects of these regulations. ●





Q&A WITH

NOAM LUPU (*Theda Skocpol Prize for Emerging Scholars*)

What made you to become a comparative politics scholar?

I've always been interested in politics. I got to college interested in studying modern European history, but I then took some political science courses, and the more positivist approach to understanding politics really appealed to me. My parents are both South American, so there was always discussion around our dinner table – and especially when we visited extended family – about what was going on in the region. So I ended up gravitating towards comparative politics, and Latin American politics in particular.

What is one main thing you want your research to be remembered for ten years from now?

More so than being remembered on its own terms, I think the best compliment is hearing that my research inspired someone to study the topic and ask a related question. More and more scholars are paying attention to political inequality and the kinds of questions I've worked on with regard to class inequalities. I hope that trend continues and I hope that my work inspires others to devote time and energy to these issues.

What in your research surprised you the most? Why?

People constantly surprise me. There's a tendency in our political discourse to dismiss the mass public as uninformed, irrational, and easily duped – particularly if you happen to disagree with people's opinions. That seeps into a lot of political behavior research and to our broader theories of politics. But I've found when I talk to people on the ground, they often articulate very nuanced ways that they make sense of the political world and arrive at their political decisions. The fact that these ways don't conform to our expectations often turns out to say more about us than it does about them.

What would you change or do differently if you went back and restart your research trajectory from scratch?

I would spend more time in the field. I learned so much from being in the field and talking to political actors, whether it was elected officials, party elites, or everyday voters. At times, I got to the point where I was hearing the same things over and over, and I felt convinced I had answered a question. But just as often, I would interview someone who sparked so many new insights and new questions.



What is the biggest still unanswered question that emerges from your research?

There are so many! Whenever I feel I've answered a question, ten new ones emerge. I see lots of unanswered questions about how parties shape their brands and how brand considerations affect party competition, as well as questions about how partisan identities interact with other identities. My work on political inequality raises the obvious question of why inequalities in representation emerge and persist, something that I'm continuing to think through. And my work on legacies of violence raises questions about the conditions that accentuate or attenuate these legacies and their persistence over time and across generations.

If another scholar does the same research you did ten years from now, do you think their findings would be different from yours? And if yes, in which ways?

Context matters a great deal, so as the political world changes from decade to decade, we should expect our research findings to change. The next step is to understand why the relationships we observed at one time look different at another time. So, I would hope the findings would be different – and that we could learn something new from that difference. ●





Q&A WITH

AMY ERICA SMITH (*Theda Skocpol Prize for Emerging Scholars*)

What made you to become a comparative politics scholar?

It sounds cheesy and may not be fully intellectually satisfactory, but I think I'm doing what I was meant to do. I was fascinated by people and peoples who were different from me from the very youngest age. One early childhood memory involves reflecting deeply at about the age of six on what I would much later learn to call white privilege. Another involves pondering the tree of world languages in the back of a dictionary at about the age of eight. Growing up in inner city Dallas, I was exposed to Spanish in my daily life, but I didn't begin to study Spanish until high school, and quickly fell in love with the language. Although I had planned to major in physics or chemistry when I was applying to colleges, the summer after high school I had an epiphany: I was going to use methods similar to those in physics and chemistry to study people (at the time, I wasn't fully aware of the term "social sciences"). So, it was the most natural thing in the world to become a Latin American Studies major with a focus on government during my undergrad at the University of Texas at Austin. I also

majored in an excellent interdisciplinary honors program called Plan II, which gave me few practical job skills but fantastic writing training and lots of latitude to indulge my curiosity.

As I finished college, the biggest internal conflict I faced was over whether to become a public servant or an academic. I served as an AmeriCorps VISTA for a year on the Texas-Mexico border, and then went on to a Master's degree at Cornell in City and Regional Planning, with a focus on community economic development. I only decided to return to get a PhD in political science when I became frustrated with working within bureaucracy. I was truly delighted to return to academia in my late twenties, yet the urge to make my work relevant to the real world persists. As I approach mid-career, I find that my most meaningful work has been driven by encounters with real people, and a desire to illuminate concrete policy and political problems. Reflecting on my trajectory in this way, it is little surprise that I am currently running for school board, motivated by my concerns over a rise in culture war politics in my own little college town.



What is one main thing you want your research to be remembered for ten years from now?

I assume this question refers to my research productivity to date – there’s still so much more I want to do. I would like my work to date to be known for an empirically careful, but theoretically expansive, explanation of the rise of culture war politics and populist authoritarianism in Latin America, and particularly, Brazil. I hope that my insights help to illuminate how social groups such as churches and parties interact to produce polarization, or the lack thereof, and to point the way for empirically careful and creative work by other scholars.

I am also proud of my research on gender, race, and academic productivity in the social sciences, which I have carried out across several research projects with different coauthors. I hope that this research helps all of us understand where we’re doing well as a profession and where we fall short, and points the way to a more fair and equitable profession a decade from now.

What in your research surprised you the most? Why?

One of my major ongoing projects relates to how religious groups in Latin America are interpreting and responding to climate change. This project comes out of my real-world encounters with religious Brazilians during fieldwork in 2014. At the time, the country was in the first year of a major drought that affected about half the country’s territory and about two-thirds of the population. As I was researching other topics, I found to my great surprise that the people with whom I was conducting research were spontaneously positing religious explanations of and solutions for the drought. For instance, some

people attributed the drought to insufficient prayer, and it was common to pray for rain. This serendipitous finding was so outside my own framework for understanding the natural world that I immediately started asking more questions. A large current research agenda is the result.

What would you change or do differently if you went back and restart your research trajectory from scratch?

If I could go back to the beginning of my PhD program in 2005, I would urge myself to follow my own instincts about which research questions were important to pursue. I very much doubted myself on these matters early in my career, and as a consequence I deferred to others’ judgment about what I should pursue. As I became more sure of myself, my research has gotten more ambitious and more real-world-relevant.

What is the biggest still unanswered question that emerges from your research?

Two big and related questions nag at me. The first is how to reduce the tenor of the culture wars at mass and elite levels, in order to promote an inclusive, tolerant, and democratic culture, in both Latin America and the US. We know a lot about how we got here, from my own work and that of many others. However, not enough work has considered how to ameliorate the situation. I suppose that in a sense, my candidacy for school board is a personal experiment in addressing this problem.

The second big question relates to how to muster public demand for action on climate change, both in Brazil and across Latin America. Latin Americans are very aware of and feel vulnerable to climate change, yet political systems have

proven incapable of channeling latent issue attitudes into political coalitions or voting blocs. I see this as a massive, tragic democratic failure. Instead, culture war politics, traditional clientelistic and personalistic politics, and security and crime drive electoral outcomes. The future of both Latin American polities and the planet may depend on getting this right.

If another scholar does the same research you did ten years from now, do you think their findings would be different from yours? And if yes, in which ways?

For the sake of Latin American polities and the planet, I hope that we have made progress on the big issues that nag at me within the next decade. Yet I also expect that the underlying psychological dispositions and processes driving both religiously-based culture wars and populist authoritarianism will persist. What will change, I hope, is how contexts and political stimuli channel those dispositions and processes. ●





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