

SOUND POLITICKS

*The Official Undergraduate Journal
of Political Science at the
University of Pennsylvania*

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By: Kate Samuelson & Jordan Rosman

**“MAY THE FIRST PRINCIPLES OF SOUND
POLITICKS BE FIX'D IN THE MINDS OF YOUTH”**
- BENJAMIN FRANKLIN (1749)

LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

2017 is set to be one of the most critical political years of our time. Now and in the future, there is a strong need for nuanced dialogue about the social, political, and economic phenomena that define our world.

Unfortunately, on U.S. college campuses, political discourse is too often hindered by myopia, groupthink, and echo chambers. In this context, *Sound Politicks* aims to provide a tolerant forum for all opinions and ideas. The journal nurtures energetic debate on political issues of pressing concern while cultivating respect for opposing viewpoints. Composed of articles written by passionate Penn students, it sheds light on complex dilemmas from around the world.

The articles in this year's edition contribute to debates in international affairs. The first, written by Parker Abt, concerns Estonia's strategy of cultural and structural integration into the European Union. The second, written by Patrick Goodridge, examines approaches to improve relations between Taiwan and the People's Republic of China. The last two articles study issues in the Middle East, a region of crucial importance to world politics. Mena Shanab illuminates the experience of Iraqi refugees in Egypt, while Hani Warith examines the role of ethnic grievances in the onset of the Syrian Civil War.

The following articles are thoroughly researched and persuasively argued. After reading them, we encourage you to discuss the issues they raise with friends and strangers. Through critical thinking and listening, we can find solutions to the political challenges of the 21st century.

Sincerely,

Jordan Rosman

Kate Samuelson

Jordan Rosman and Kate Samuelson
Co-Editors-in-Chief

SOUND POLITICKS is the official undergraduate journal of political science at the University of Pennsylvania. It is published annually and covers a wide range of political topics.

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ESTONIA

SAFETY THROUGH EUROPEAN UNION INTEGRATION

BY **PARKER ABT** (C'19)

MAJOR: HISTORY

With a population under two million, Estonia is a small state, possibly even a micro state according to some political scientists.¹ Under a realist perspective, small states are policy takers whose fate is in the hands of the large states that choose to intervene in their affairs. Due to a variety of factors, Estonia worries that Russia is a threat to its sovereignty. It seeks protection from the West, represented by two institutions, one primarily military (NATO), the other primarily economic (EU). Regarding the EU, Estonia's goal is to use the collective might of its 27 member states against Russia, to have the EU "speak [to Russia] with one voice."² Its 2010 National Security Concept states, "Estonia strives for a strong and unified European Union. Deepening integration within the European Union strengthens the sense of cohesion and provides better protection against security threats."³

As a small state, Estonia's policy options are limited. In the context of international relations:

Small states are those states which are stuck with the power configuration and its institutional expression, no matter what their specific relation to it is. For instance in the Euro-Atlantic, the United States, Germany,

France, and Great Britain are considered great powers, because they are able to change the conditions for policy-making through their actions. Should...France choose to...fundamentally change its policy within the EU, this would radically change [the EU] and therefore conditions for policy-making in the region, but if...Austria fundamentally changed its policy within the EU, the consequences would mainly be felt by [the country] itself. Therefore, [small states] cannot reasonably threaten to leave, transform, or destroy the institutional structures. For this reason they are expected to face a different set of challenges than the great powers.⁴

While small states do not have to be universal policy takers, as realists would argue, they still do not have the ability to radically change EU diplomatic and bureaucratic frameworks like great powers do. Under Anders Wivel's framework of Small State Smart Strategy, small states must work within existing EU institutional frameworks and must frame novel policy ideas as working in the common interest of the whole EU per the existing framework.⁵

This paper will argue that Estonia, as a small

1 Steinmetz and Wivel, *Small States in Europe*, 6.

2 Kasekamp, "Estonia: Eager to Set an Example in Europe," 104.

3 National Security Concept of Estonia," 10.

4 Steinmetz and Wivel, *Small States in Europe*, 7.

5 Wivel, "From Small State to Smart State," 26; Grøn and Wivel, "Maximizing Influence in the European Union after the Lisbon Treaty," 529.

state, believes the best way to guarantee EU protection is to completely integrate itself into the EU.⁶ Estonian integration efforts take two primary forms.

First, Estonia tries to work through domestic channels (internal) to earn a European identity. This paper will analyze two internal attempts at Europeanization, one through the quick liberalization of its economy after it gained independence from the Soviet Union and the other through its efforts to homogenize its diverse population to have a European cultural identity. In the most positive analysis of Estonia's progress on the internal front, Estonian Foreign Minister Urmas Paet writes, "Our [EU] membership has become so self-evident in just a couple of years that it needs no highlighting. Indeed, it is rather difficult to believe that until quite recently Estonia was not part of the EU." The underlying strategy is that its European identity will spur the EU to come to Estonia's aid early and often if ever threatened by Russia.

Second, Estonia works with other nations (external) to integrate its infrastructure and institutions with the rest of the EU. It aims to display how Estonia contributes value to the EU and to become so intertwined in EU affairs that Estonia's seizure by Russia would have tangible negative ramifications on the rest of the EU. EU powers would then feel compelled to defend Estonia for more than the mere moral reason that they ought to defend all fellow EU members from attack.

ACCESSION TO THE EU

As Estonia's Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) is happy to point out, the country's accession process to the EU was relatively quick and straightforward. In 1995, just four years after the collapse of the Soviet Union granted it independence, and only one year after the final Russian troops withdrew,⁷ Estonia signed an association agreement with the EU. To emphasize its high level of Europeanization even at this early stage, the MFA notes that Estonia is the

only country to have been granted an EU association agreement without a waiting/transition period from the initial signing of a free trade agreement.⁸

Two years later, to the surprise of most analysts, Estonia officially began the EU member accession process, the first former Soviet state to do so.⁹

The Estonian MFA considers it a remarkable achievement that, by 2004, Estonia became a full-fledged member of the EU. Indeed, further analysis of the accession process reveals that the accomplishment is so remarkable because, ironically, Estonian reception to the EU was not as rosy as the MFA initially wants to admit. Yes, the political parties in control of the Estonian government did what they could to quicken accession through the swift passage of constitutional amendments and adaptation of EU policy positions.¹⁰ However, support for the EU was not universal among the government and the people.

Though it was eventually defeated, a portion of the government argued that EU accession, in ceding sovereignty to the EU, violated the Estonian constitution, which proclaimed that "the independence and sovereignty of Estonia are timeless and inalienable."¹¹ Furthermore, only 67% of Estonians supported EU accession in the required 2004 accession referendum, which was the second lowest level of support among the ten nations admitted to the EU in the 2004 enlargement.¹² Nevertheless, Estonia's EU integration continued with speed; in 2011, Estonia joined the Eurozone.

In addition to the great economic change that came with entering the Eurozone, the event was remarkable because it occurred right as other Eurozone nations questioned the Euro's viability due to a debt crisis. Estonia received appreciation from the European Commission president for increasing confidence in the currency through adaptation and, presumably,

⁸ Ministry of Foreign Affairs, "Estonia and the European Union: Association Agreement."

⁹ Kasekamp, "Estonia: Eager to Set an Example in Europe," 100."

¹⁰ Ibid., 99–101.

¹¹ "Constitution of the Republic of Estonia."

¹² For an in-depth analysis on the 2004 referenda, see: Doyle and Fidrmuc, "Who Favors Enlargement?"

⁶ Quoted from the forward to: Tael, Estonia's Way Into The European Union, 6.

⁷ Mole, The Baltic States from the Soviet Union to the European Union, 143.

some political capital, which would have been priceless for any small state. In addition, then Estonian Prime Minister Andrus Ansip referred to Eurozone integration as vital to Estonian national security, which stresses how Estonia feels safer each time it integrates into the EU further.¹³

Despite the urgency and value placed on EU integration that the government exudes, there does not appear to be as much exuberance among the people. The MFA claims that about 80% of Estonians support EU membership and that “support among Estonians for the EU proves that our people have understood and see the benefit of the common European rules and values.”¹⁴ It is easy to infer from this statement that the MFA believes support for the EU demonstrates European identity. From 2004–2008, the MFA-commissioned pollster finds that, indeed, support for the EU was increasing and had passed 80% by 2008. Yet, polls conducted by the EU Commission over the same time span indicate support levels consistently about 15% lower. This is not to say that Estonia possesses weak European identity. In fact, many countries consistently display support rates below 50% in the EU Commission poll. Rather, it appears the MFA believes that extraordinarily high support rates are necessary to prove a European identity.

CULTURAL INTEGRATION: CONVINCING THOSE AT HOME AND ABROAD OF EUROPEANIZATION

One reason EU support may not be as high as desired is that 30% of the population is ethnically Russian, remainders of the Soviet period when Russia attempted to “Russify” Estonia.¹⁵ When Estonia gained independence, this minority were stuck in a country that was not theirs. Popular Estonian sentiment said that “[ethnic Estonians] are the masters in this land, that this is their republic” and that

granting citizenship to the Russian minority would be “legalizing the colonists’ presence in Estonia.”¹⁶¹⁷ The government moved to declare the Soviet occupation illegal and that the newly independent Estonian state not a new state, but rather a restoration of the state that existed during the interwar era.¹⁸ The implication of this legal determination was that the only people who could claim Estonian citizenship were those who could trace their roots back to interwar Estonia. Everyone else had to apply for citizenship, the test for which required proficiency in the Estonian language. The Russian minority was shell-shocked. Not only was Estonian one of the hardest languages to learn in all of Europe, but also the minority felt they had been cheated since Russian was the official language when they moved to Estonia.

To quicken the homogenization of the country, the government passed the Law on Aliens in 1993, which forced the 494,000 resident aliens to apply for citizenship within a year or face deportation.¹⁹ Estonia may have felt the need to rush because it wanted to quickly re-establish its European identity; Estonians view Estonian, but not Russian culture as European; the country could not claim to have a European identity with such a large non-European contingent present.²⁰

However, the EU demanded that Estonia work to peacefully and fairly integrate its Russian-speaking minority as a condition of accession. The EU called the Law on Aliens deplorable and stated that for Estonia to join the EU, citizenship for the Russian minority was not even a question. The homogenization of Estonia into a European identity is an implicit step toward integration, which, while important, did not outweigh the explicit step toward EU integration (i.e.

16 Mole, *The Baltic States from the Soviet Union to the European Union*, 90.

17 Ibid., 89.

18 Schulze, “Estonia Caught between East and West,” 363.

19 Rannut, “Estonianization Efforts Post-Independence,” 428; Schulze, “Estonia Caught between East and West,” 364.

20 Mole, *The Baltic States from the Soviet Union to the European Union*, 154.

13 Kasekamp, “Estonia: Eager to Set an Example in Europe,” 101.

14 Ministry of Foreign Affairs, “Estonia – 10 Years in the European Union.”

15 Rannut, “Estonianization Efforts Post-Independence,” 425–26, 429.

following EU demands on peaceful integration of the minority). Multiple studies show that the abrupt relaxation of citizenship requirements that took place in the aftermath was due to European and not Russian pressure.²¹

Nevertheless, Estonia still feared becoming the linguistic equivalent to Canada.²² Upon joining the EU, Estonia undertook a set of policy initiatives meant to slowly but steadily integrate the Russian speaking minority through Estonian language education at schools, Estonian immersion programs for adults, and marketing programs to support Estonian identity.²³ These programs represent a balancing act between international standards for respecting minorities as well as a desire for homogenization. The programs have only been marginally successful in encouraging Estonian language acquisition by the minority and their effect on the minority's feelings of European identity has been dismal. Though the amount of non-Estonians who are proficient in the Estonian language grew from 14% in 1989 to 38% in 2000, the rate has since slowed due to official government positions which stress the social equality of non-Estonians.²⁴ Additionally, despite social pressures that have made Russian parents want their children to become bilingual through school, the government has kept having to lower Estonian language proficiency goals.²⁵ In 2010, the New York Times published a story about ethnic Russians feeling pressured and uneasy about the demands to learn Estonian and, in 2015, polls run by the Estonian Ministry of Defence showed deep divides among ethnic Estonians and non-Estonians in their attitudes toward European institutions.²⁶

By acceding to the EU's demands of attempting

to gently integrate the Russian minority, by purposely being a policy taker instead of policy maker, Estonia achieved further EU integration. This specific policy may not benefit Estonia's short-term interests because it gives Russia a foothold in the country, if for nothing else than to utilize its soft power influences. In fact, most of the minority population supports the Centre political party, whose platform includes the lessening of sanctions that the EU imposed on Russia due to their involvement in Ukraine. Nevertheless, Estonia's language integration policies will lead to better European cultural integration in the long run because the Russians will slowly attain the Estonian cultural identity, which strongly emphasizes European ties per current government literature.

The integration of the Russian speaking minority will continue to be a long-term goal of Estonia in its quest to attain a European identity through internal change. Fortunately, Estonia has already succeeded in another one of its Europeanization projects: economic liberalization. The opening of Estonia's economy to the western world in the 1990s, as well as its shift to an EU-ready market economy, allowed Estonia to appear (on paper) European in a remarkably short amount of time.

While under Soviet control, Estonia's economy was centrally planned and most pillars of a market economy were absent. In the late 1980s, Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev paved the way with "perestroika" for Soviet nations such as Estonia to explore independent economic policy avenues. During this time, Estonia took important steps forward by opening its first independent bank and laying the groundwork for an independent Estonian currency, the kroon, which was implemented in June 1992, shortly after the Iron Curtain fell.²⁷

Still, the Estonian economy had many steps ahead of it in its development. Since the EU was primarily a trade union, free trade in Estonia was essential for the EU to consider it for admission. Despite the reforms made during the period of perestroika, trade with nations outside of the Soviet sphere of influence encom-

21 Schulze, "Estonia Caught between East and West," 365, 385.

22 Mole, *The Baltic States from the Soviet Union to the European Union*, 92.

23 Rannut, "Language Policy in Estonia," 15.

24 Rannut, "Estonianization Efforts Post-Independence," 430.

25 Schulze, "Estonia Caught between East and West," 363.

26 Levy, "Estonia Raises Its Pencils to Erase Russian"; Kivirähk, "Public Opinion and National Defence."

27 Feldmann, "Free Trade in the 1990s," 518.

passed less than 1% of Estonia's total trade. Further, the collapse of the Soviet Union in December 1991 shocked the Estonian economy, causing its GDP to tumble 14% in 1992 and remain negative until 1995.²⁸

In response, Estonia embarked on the quickest economic liberalization campaign of all the post-Soviet states. Despite the economic crisis, Estonia pegged its infant currency to the Deutschmark and adopted a currency board. Estonia also modernized its system for foreign direct investment (FDI) by aligning it with systems in place in most western states, resulting in a burst of FDI that made Estonia's FDI per capita the largest of any country for the 1990s. Most importantly, Estonia became a bastion of free trade by eliminating import quotas and tariffs, a notable exception being those on Russia, and even these were eventually eliminated. Unique-
ly, Estonia's steps toward free trade were unilateral; other post-Soviet states only took these steps when told to by the EU as a condition of accession. This demonstrates Estonia's determination to Europeanize as quickly as possible.

Not only were their efforts rewarded with EU accession, but they were the only post-Soviet country to be chosen for the prestigious Luxembourg Group, the group of countries who would be able to officially integrate into the EU first during the massive wave of EU accessions that took place in the 2000s.

Some scholars attribute the rapid liberalization of Estonia's economy to weak internal lobbying groups which allowed the government, without much opposition, to make the economy EU-friendly through free trade policies. Traditionally, these lobbying groups would vouch for the protection of domestic workers in the face of outsourcing; however, these

had to be rebuilt anew following the collapse of the Soviet Union. In particular, the Soviet collectivization of agriculture meant that farmers' unions did not exist. When the collectives were broken up into small farms, it took a relatively long time for the farmers to band together in defense of their best interests. This weakness of this special interest group was particularly important for Estonia, since most of the economy centered on agriculture during the 1990s. The farmers' weakness allowed the government to eliminate tariffs on agriculture, marking Estonia as one of the few nations in the world to do so.²⁹

Another important aspect of Estonia's quick economic transformation is that it was up to the ethnically Estonian, relatively unified Riigikogu to make all the decisions. As discussed previously, the govern-

ment has almost uniformly advocated for quick EU integration since Estonia gained independence. Opposition from the Russian-speaking minority, roughly a third of the population, was not significant enough

to have any foothold in the Riigikogu of the 1990s and therefore could not change Estonia's economic policies. Uniformity in the government reached by excluding a portion of the population can change the economy, but it cannot change the sentiment of those excluded. Consequently, Estonia has, at least presently, far more of a European identity on paper than it does on the ground and in the eyes of its people.

EXTERNAL INTEGRATION: BECOMING AN EU CONTRIBUTOR AND NORM ENTREPRENEUR

One key weakness of the EU is its dependence

29 Feldmann, "The Fast Track from the Soviet Union to the World Economy," 544.

on non-EU member states for energy, primarily oil and natural gas. Most EU natural gas imports come from Gazprom, a Russian state-owned company. The EU is also heavily dependent on Ukraine and Belarus where most Gazprom pipelines run. Punctuating the risky relationship between the EU and these nations, in 2006, EU states as diverse as Hungary and France lost 40% of their natural gas supply when Russia shut off the Ukrainian pipeline that fed them due to a dispute over missed Ukrainian payments. However, Estonia, in particular, is relatively insulated from the volatility of the natural gas market due to heavy investment in its electrical grid, which utilizes domestic stores of oil shale to be as energy independent as possible. In fact, Estonia owns the world's two largest power plants powered entirely by oil shale. Even still, Estonia relies on natural gas for 15% of its total energy consumption, all of which comes from Gazprom. As a country seeking to lose its Russian ties and integrate into the EU as much as possible, Estonia would welcome any plan to reform EU policy on natural gas.³⁰

Primarily in response to the Ukraine gas debacle, the EU ratified the Third Energy Package in 2008, which planned to relieve European countries of their reliance on Russian energy. One facet of the Third Energy Package was the Baltic Interconnection Plan, which aimed to connect the Baltic energy markets to those of other EU member states. This project progressed slowly as the EU Commission completed various feasibility studies and by 2011, all the Baltic states were still 100% dependent on Russia for natural gas and Gazprom even owned a 37% stake in the leading private Estonian gas company, Eesti Gaas.

In 2012, a plan finally developed that favored Estonia. Contracted by the EU Commission, the consultancy firm Booz Allen Hamilton conducted a study concluding that the most efficient method to achieve the goals of the Baltic Interconnection Plan was an underwater pipeline between Finland and Estonia that would open the Finnish gas market to the Baltic states.

The pipeline became known as the Balticconnector, which would allow liquefied natural gas to

travel through the Gulf of Finland from Finland to Estonia, before being distributed among the Baltic states. 2016 saw major progress in the Balticconnector and hence natural gas independence for Estonia due to a series of interventions by the Riigikogu. In March, a Finnish state owned gas company signed a deal with its Estonian state-owned counterpart to start construction on the pipeline, which is currently expected to be completed in 2020. One reason for the previous construction delay was that a private Finnish company backed out of its construction contract. The involvement of the Estonian state-owned entity from the start highlights the government's urgency to complete the pipeline as well as its ability to fill in place of Gazprom-backed Eesti Gaas. Meanwhile, the Estonian parliament recently raised the excise tax on natural gas to bolster the domestic electricity industry and decrease the flow of natural gas money to Moscow while the Balticconnector is constructed. Furthermore, in early September, a private Estonian firm bought out Gazprom's stake in Eesti Gaas, which primes it to participate in the new natural gas market that the Balticconnector will enable.³¹

By acting as a conduit for the spread of EU produced energy, Estonia adds value to itself as an EU member. It provides an irreplaceable outlet necessary for the economic success of other EU members, particularly its sister Baltic states. The pipeline is by no means a game changing phenomenon that makes Estonia untouchable to Russia compared to what it was before. Yet it is one of the discreet ways that Estonia, as a small state, involves itself in EU affairs and slowly builds its political capital as an EU member.

Another project that demonstrates Estonia attempting to integrate into the EU's infrastructure is Rail Baltica, a high-speed railroad that will connect Tallinn to Western Europe via the other Baltic States and Poland. On the surface, the logic for building Rail Baltica is simple; the only other train routes connecting the Baltics to the rest of the EU pass through Kaliningrad or Belarus. Rail Baltica will be a much more direct and better engineered (higher potential

for speed than the old Soviet infrastructure) route to travel from Western Europe to the Baltics.

The interspersion of Europeans to Estonia and Estonians to the rest of Europe will on both sides increase the Europeanization of Estonia. Indeed, the foreign minister of Estonia believes that one crucial benefit of Rail Baltica is that it will help Estonia escape the remnants of Russia's sphere of influence.³² For one, the railroad will increase trade between Estonia and Western Europe, which will allow Estonia to be less reliant on Russia's economy. Furthermore, visiting Europeans may find that they feel a connection to Estonia as a country that shares their values and that is worthy of defending. Estonians visiting Europe, particularly the Russian minority, may feel more of a European connection and therefore further support the activity of the government to become further integrated into the EU.³³

One major role that Anders Wivel believes small states can play to increase their prominence, as part of Small State Smart Strategy, is that of norm entrepreneur. Small state norm entrepreneurs attempt to leverage their enhanced knowledge of certain special interests to convince the EU to adopt specific policies toward these issues.

As a norm entrepreneur, Estonia has led the EU in cyber technology policy. For years Estonia has been at the forefront of the tech revolution, starting with its initiative to install computers in almost all of its classrooms during the late 1990s to facilitate language learning, especially the teaching of Estonian to non-native speakers. In the 2000s, Estonian president Toomas Ilves would use cyber advancement as his main selling point when describing Estonia's accomplishments and value to the countries he visited. His efforts paid off. Today, Estonia is world-renowned for its integration of computers into many aspects of everyday life, earning it the nickname e-stonia. The country has developed a virtual identification program for its citizens to vote in parliamentary elections and pay taxes entirely in cyberspace.

Estonia's reputation as a cyber "nirvana" has made the country important to the EU, particularly when dealing with cyber security, given the direction EU citizens are going in terms of adopting computerized technology. Starting in 2003, Estonia vouched for the creation of a center for the study of cyber security. Its fears were confirmed in 2007, when Russia attempted to hack many essential aspects of Estonia's cyber infrastructure. This event proved to Europe that cyber security would play a pivotal role in future affairs. In response, a year later, NATO opened the Cooperative Cyber Defence Centre of Excellence in Tallinn. A major fruit of this center was the Tallinn Protocol, the first set of rules ever developed to guide cyber warfare. In addition, Estonian experts have taken a leading role in EU committees on cyber infrastructure, most notably (now former) President Ilves, who was selected to head a committee on the development of cloud computing. Another accomplishment of Estonia's efforts with cyber security as a norm entrepreneur came in 2016, when German Chancellor Angela Merkel visited Estonia for discussions with the prime minister regarding the role Estonia can play in modernizing Germany's cyber infrastructure. Overall, Estonia's reputation as a cyber expert has allowed it to play an important role in shaping EU policy and it appears that this policy area will only become more important with time.³⁴

Another area where Estonia attempts to make a measured, but important contribution is through foreign policy. Wivel asserts that that small states have the best chance to influence EU foreign policy as a norm entrepreneur toward non-EU neighboring states because the other EU members will defer to the small states' judgement. For Estonia, this means that its expertise should be most valued when dealing with Russia. However, Estonia has managed to make contributions to the EU regarding other nations relatively near its borders, such as those included in the Eastern Partnership -- most notably Ukraine, Moldova, and

32 Tigasson, "Rail Baltic Would Prevent Estonia From Turning Into a Backwater."

33 Kaasik, "Thoughts on Rail Baltica."

34 Sarapik, "Prime Minister Hopes for Development of Digital Cooperation between Estonia, Germany."

Georgia.³⁵

Weakening Russia's sphere of influence is merely an ancillary aspect of working with the Eastern Partnership nations. Some scholars suggest that the more profitable motive for Estonia is to help these countries build functioning democracies and then take credit for their successes within the EU. In its marketing to these states, Estonia presents itself as an EU member nation that can comprehend the situation of the states, being a small former Soviet state with an ethnically diverse populace that quickly developed into a thriving democracy. To further portray itself as the steward of Eastern Partnership nations, Estonia allocates about ten million Euros per year to NGOs that bring Eastern Partnership citizens to Estonian universities for education and training. For two of the most promising EU candidates in the Eastern Partnership, Georgia and Moldova, Estonia built the Centre of Eastern Partnership in 2011 to train their officials in the philosophy and methods of European governance. The general movement from importing European values in the 1990s and 2000s (economic liberalization and embrace of multiculturalism) to exporting European values in the 2010s is a purposeful one meant to demonstrate Estonia's level of European integration. The logic is that Estonia is so European now that it can successfully export EU virtues.³⁶

FUTURE OUTLOOK

Now that Estonia is exhibiting growth as an EU member, the question remains: is Estonia European enough to warrant protection based on their cultural and structural integration? One encouraging sign was the Bronze Soldier Crisis of 2007. The government's removal of a monument to Soviet soldiers triggered a protest by young ethnic Russians. Sensing an opportunity to pounce, Russia attacked Estonia's cybersecurity infrastructure. Throughout the event and its aftermath, the EU steadfastly supported Estonia. In one poignant moment, the president of the EU Commission said at a news conference, with Vladimir

Putin sitting next to him, that an attack on Estonia was an attack on the entire EU, echoing the phrasing of the NATO charter which states that an attack on any NATO member will be treated as an attack on all NATO members.

Even so, the Bronze Soldier Crisis was only a miniature crisis that may not reflect the European response to a full-scale Russian invasion. Currently, there is no chance for the EU/NATO to send troops to Estonia quickly enough to prevent its seizure by Russia. Once this occurs, it may take many months and thousands of casualties to free it, a cost that many Europeans may view as too high.³⁷

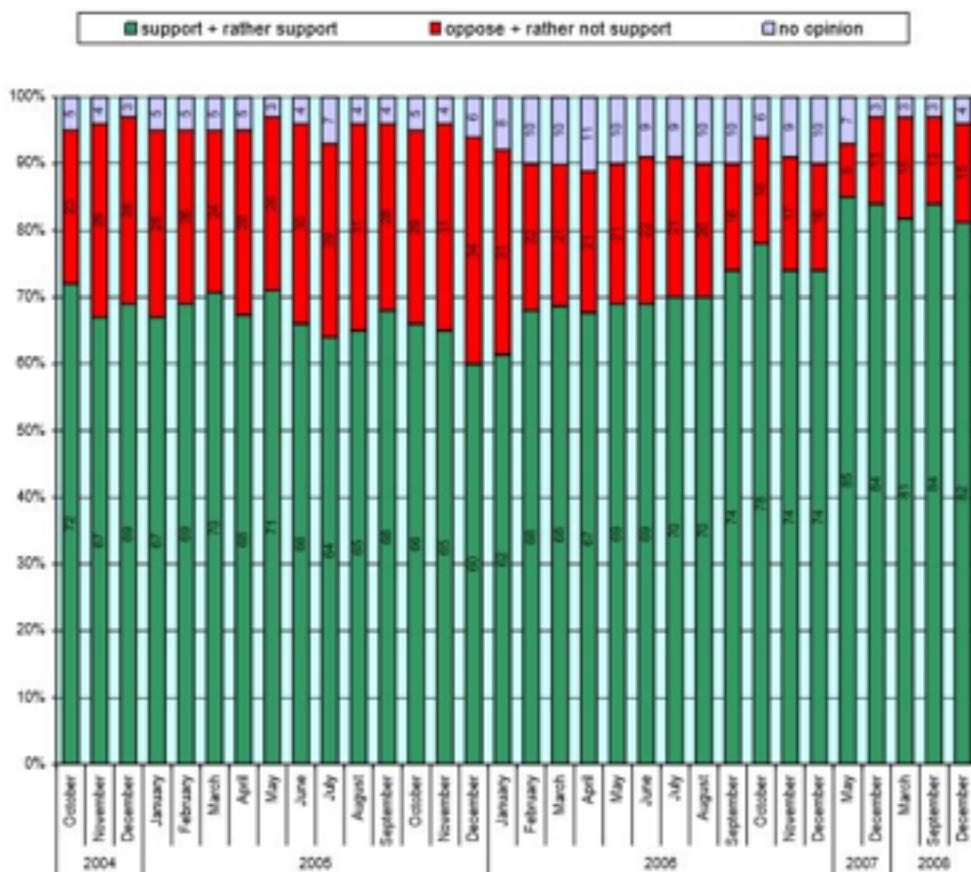
Undeniably, Estonia has become vastly more integrated into the European identity than it was years ago. It is also likely that most of the EU views Estonia as a valued contributor. But, at the end of the day, Wivel's Small State Smart Strategy may not prove enough.

³⁵ Pastore, "Small New Member States in the EU Foreign Policy."

³⁶ Made, "Shining in Brussels?"

³⁷ Chivvis, "The Baltic Balance."

Opinion of Estonian Voters on EU Membership 2004-2008

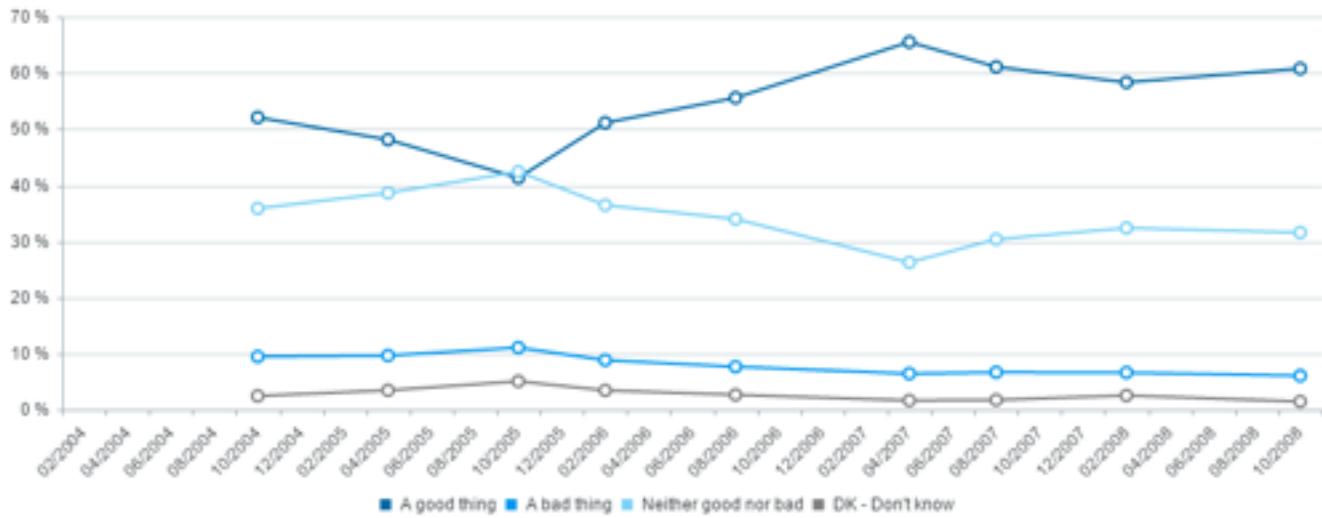


Source: Estonian Market Opinion Research

http://vm.ee/sites/default/files/content-editors/web-static/469/EU_Public_Opinion_Dec2008.pdf

Generally speaking, do you think that (your country's) membership of the European Union ... ?

Generally speaking, do you
think that (your country's) membership of the EU is ... ?
Estonia (from 02/2004 to 10/2008)



Source: EU Commission

<http://ec.europa.eu/COMMFrontOffice/publicopinion/index.cfm/Chart/index>

TABLE 2. Milestones in Estonian Economic Policy Reform

1989	First private bank formed.
1990	Price liberalization started; abolition of state trading monopoly.
1991	Independence from the Soviet Union; small-scale privatization started; first wave of trade liberalization; law on foreign investment enacted.
1992	New Deutschmark-pegged currency board; new center-right reformist government led by Mart Laar; large-scale privatization started; bankruptcy law enacted.
1993	Establishment of Estonian Privatization Agency on the Treuhand model; abolition of almost all remaining tariffs; Baltic free trade agreement signed.
1994	Completion of small-scale privatization; full current account convertibility according to IMF Article VIII; full capital account convertibility; removal of remaining nontariff trade barriers; introduction of flat tax.
1995	Economy starts to grow after 36 percent contraction between 1990 and 1994; start of WTO accession negotiations; free trade agreement signed with EFTA and Ukraine; Association Agreement with the EU; application for EU membership; commercial code enacted; centrist government formed after the general election.
1996	Free trade agreements signed with Czech Republic, Slovakia, and Slovenia.
1997	10.6 percent GDP growth—the highest in Europe; European Commission recommends Estonia as one of six candidates on fast track to EU membership; free trade agreement with Turkey; last remaining (insignificant) tariffs abolished.
1998	Free trade agreements with Poland and Hungary; commencement of EU accession negotiations; Europe Agreement came into force; pension reform law adopted; EU-compatible competition law adopted.
1999	Three-party center-right government formed after general election; Estonia becomes 135th WTO member; law on introducing customs tariffs adopted.
2000	Customs tariffs on agriculture against third countries introduced. Tariffs due to go up to EU levels upon accession.
2001	Privatization agency closed after completion of railway privatization; steps taken to create unified financial supervisory organization to oversee banking, insurance and securities.
2002	New two-party coalition government with Reform and Center Party led by Siim Kallas; Estonia invited to accede to the EU and NATO.

Source: Feldmann, Free Trade in the '90s, 2003

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DIRE STRAITS

HOW CAN THE PRC AND TAIWAN FINALLY FORM THE ONE TRUE CHINA?

BY **PATRICK GOODRIDGE** (C'17)

MAJOR: LINGUISTICS

ABSTRACT

PRC-Taiwan relations have for the past half century revolved around the issue of Chinese solidarity under a unitary political body. This paper proposes three hypothetical strategies for achieving unity that each state historically desires. It further weighs the implications and challenges of each strategy. The first of these strategies is the realist approach in which China (the PRC) forcibly subdues Taiwan's superior military capability. The second is the liberalist approach in which China entices Taiwan with economic incentives and other ostensibly cooperative, mutually-beneficial measures. The third is the idealist approach in which China grants Taiwan key ideological influence in Chinese politics. This paper argues that the liberalist approach -- China developing significant economic trade relations -- is the best solution to overcome the persistent ideological gap that precipitated China's fragmentation and restore one true China.

Taiwan's government, the Republic of China (ROC), and mainland China's government, the People's Republic of China (PRC) both have claimed validity as the one and only legitimate "China." The dispute originated in October of 1949 when, during a brutal civil war, ruling nationalist forces that would eventually form the ROC fled from Communist forces to Taiwan, establishing Taipei as a capital. This situation resulted in two de facto states -- the Re-

public of China (ROC) in Taiwan and the People's Republic of China (PRC) in mainland China, both officially claiming to be the legitimate government of China itself. The US, NATO, and most Western nations recognized the exiled Taiwanese government as solely legitimate, while the Soviet bloc recognized the PRC as so. However, in 1979, the United States switched allegiances from the old Chinese government to the mainland PRC in order to leverage power against the USSR. Mainland China then reached out to Taiwan with an effort to normalize relations known as the "Three Links": transport, commerce, and communication. Taiwan responded unwillingly with its "Three Noes": No contact, no compromise, no negotiation. In 1992, the ROC and PRC agreed that there was only one China, but still disagreed as to which government was the legitimate government.¹ Numerous proposals were offered by both sides to resolve the dispute. One is the "One country, two systems" policy, which would establish Taiwan as one of China's autonomous regions, like Hong Kong, and another is the push to make Taiwan an independent country with its own national identity. In 2005, however, the PRC passed an

¹ Noah Lingwall, "The Taiwan Problem: If It Ain't Broke, Don't Fix It," *The Diplomat*, August 10, 2015, , accessed January 27, 2017, <http://thediplomat.com/2015/08/the-taiwan-problem-if-it-aint-broke-dont-fix-it/>.

“anti-secession” law, allowing it to use “non-peaceful” means to reintegrate Taiwan. Finally, in 2014, several high-profile negotiations between the nations marked their first direct government contact since 1945.² The two discussed how to improve relations between trade and travel, but reconciliation still seems far off.³ Here, we propose three means by which “one China” could be unified by its two governments, each of which is grounded in one of the major theoretical frameworks of international relations: the realist approach in which China (the PRC) forcibly subdues Taiwan using its superior military capabilities or threats thereof; the liberalist approach in which China entices Taiwan with economic incentives and promises of cooperative relations; and the idealist approach in which China gives Taiwan ideological influence in Chinese politics.

The first approach involves China forcing, threatening, or coercing Taiwan into joining the mainland government. In this realist approach, China could take Taiwan by force, making use of its superior military capabilities to invade and occupy the island.⁴ In such a situation, China’s advantage would be apparent—the PRC expends \$106.4 billion per year on its military capabilities, a 10 percent increase from last year, which vastly outpaces Taiwan’s \$8.888 billion.⁵ China’s People’s Liberation Army could unleash the 1,500 missiles it has deployed against Taiwan, which would likely make quick work of pre-determined strategic military and industrial targets on the island. After missile attacks, the PLA could use both aircraft and amphibious vehi-

cles to mount an actual invasion. From there, China could seize Taipei, or force Taiwan’s government to surrender if casualties are great enough. While such a scenario is certainly plausible, it poses a number of challenges for the PRC and is far from an ideal unifying strategy for China. For one, there are features of Taiwan that may make an invasion a taller order than may seem at first glance. Geography (the water barrier), together with U.S. support, would provide powerful means to Taiwan for blocking an invasion, as would Taiwan’s defensive missile systems on its elevated, defensible west coast. Additionally, though China has the world’s largest standing army, it is hampered by what’s been called its “negligible logistical capacity,” as well as by a quantity-over-quality military structure that lacks strategic capability to carry out complex maneuvers.⁶ The critical question is whether or not the U.S. would provide military support to Taiwan in the scenario of Chinese aggression. For the U.S., war with China over Taiwan is arguably the most dangerous threat that U.S. security policy faces in the coming decade.⁷ However, many in Beijing believe that the U.S. lacks the national will to pursue a war against China to save Taiwan, and that if it did intervene, it may be frightened by even low casualties into an early withdrawal. However, it’s likely that, once the U.S. had made the momentous decision to gear up for combat against a power like China, it would not quit easily after suffering a small number of casualties. U.S. intervention is therefore a factor that the PRC must realistically weigh in the case of a decision to take Taiwan by force. Another way the PRC could exert its power and force Taiwan to submit would be to blockade the island, which the PRC could attempt with its

² Bai Yang, “CPC, KMT leaders to meet in Beijing,” CCTV.com English accessed January 27, 2017, <http://english.cntv.cn/2015/04/24/ARTI1429843795262929.shtml>.

³ “China and Taiwan: Trade has made them ‘frenemies’” CNNMoney, accessed January 27, 2017, <http://money.cnn.com/2015/11/05/news/china-taiwan-trade-economy/>.

⁴ J. Michael Cole et al., “War in the Taiwan Strait: Would China Invade Taiwan?,” *The National Interest*, accessed January 27, 2017, <http://nationalinterest.org/feature/war-the-taiwan-strait-would-china-invade-taiwan-11120>.

⁵ J. Michael Cole et al., “War in the Taiwan Strait: Would China Invade Taiwan?,” *The National Interest*, accessed January 27, 2017, <http://nationalinterest.org/feature/war-the-taiwan-strait-would-china-invade-taiwan-11120>.

⁶ Betts, Richard K. Christensen, and Thomas J., “China: Getting the Questions Right,” *The National Interest*, December 22, 2000.

⁷ G. John Ikenberry, Jisi Wang, and Feng Zhu, *America, China, and the Struggle for World Order: Ideas, Traditions, Historical Legacies, and Global Visions* (New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015).

large number of submarines and mines.⁸ Taiwan's close distance to the mainland and its dependence on foreign trade enhance the potential effect of blockades. The PRC might thus be able to severely damage the island's economy regardless of missile defense batteries. This seems to be a more prudent option for China that avoids direct engagement, but it's likely that the repercussions from the U.S. and Taiwan's other trade partners would be damaging to China's reputation or even provoke aggression from the American navy. Clearly, the realist approach offers as many risks and challenges as it does benefits to the PRC. The fact that the outcome of an aggressive, brute-force invasion and that an American reaction to such a maneuver is difficult to predict makes the realist approach a precarious method of dealing with Taiwan.

The second approach consists of the two states fostering economic and diplomatic cooperation. This liberalist approach was the aim behind China's "one country, two systems" policy, which dictates an economic relationship between the PRC and smaller autonomous regions, such as Hong Kong and Macau. While Taiwan has resisted this policy in the past, the steps the PRC has taken to liberalize its trade, such as joining the WTO in 2001, should help foster trust that China will be a reliable economic

partner.⁹ Additionally, current trade values between the mainland and Taiwan are encouraging; in 2014, trade between the two sides reached US\$198.31 billion, with exports from Taiwan to the mainland reaching US\$152 billion. However, Taiwan's Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) took power last May after defeating the incumbent Kuomintang (KMT) in a landslide 56% to 31% victory last January, and the DPP remains staunchly committed to Taiwanese independence. This poses the risk that the DDP's nationalism could undo all of the peaceful progress made between the PRC and the KMT since 2006, when Hu Jintao, then general secretary of the CPC

Central Committee, met with then-KMT chairman Lien Chan in Beijing. That same year, the two parties established an annual cross-Straits economic and cultural forum to serve as a crucial communication platform. Since the DPP advocates economic liberalism in addition to nationalism, its stance of renewed independence may be at odds with the economic gains it could make from a continued trade relationship with mainland. In any case, it's likely that progress with Taiwan under the DDP will be less swift than with the KMT, as Taiwan president-elect and DDP leader Tsai Ing-wen has denounced the 1992 consensus of the one-China principle, claiming that "no such consensus exists", and that most Taiwanese

⁸ J. Michael Cole et al., "War in the Taiwan Strait: Would China Invade Taiwan?," *The National Interest*, accessed January 27, 2017, <http://nationalinterest.org/feature/war-the-taiwan-strait-would-china-invade-taiwan-11120>.

⁹ "China's Bottom Line," *The Economist*, March 17, 2015, accessed January 27, 2017, <http://www.economist.com/news/china/21646571-chinese-leaders-send-warnings-taiwans-opposition-party-ahead-elections-next-year-chinas-bottom>.

people oppose it.¹⁰ In order to placate Taiwan in this situation, the PRC must make an offer that is financially appealing enough to induce Taiwan to join the PRC in some unified capacity. This could come in the form of investment, which has already begun in Taiwan's technology sector (In the weeks ahead of Taiwan's elections, state-linked Chinese firms launched a \$3 billion cross-strait investment grab). Closer trade ties and a certain degree of mutual dependence between the countries would help reconcile political differences and restore diplomatic trust. This would become even more likely if Beijing were to introduce liberal domestic reforms, which, however unlikely, the democratic Taiwan may respect. But these points may be irrelevant, as in the end Taiwan, like the rest of the world, has little choice but to engage with China, the world's most-populous country and second-largest economy.

China's best bet to absorb Taiwan using this liberalist framework involves asserting its economic-might to develop a long-term relationship in which Taiwan is dependent on China for some type of unification to be impossible for Taiwan to resist.

The third, idealist approach is perhaps the most untenable, envisioning the PRC giving Taiwan ideological influence in Beijing or otherwise embracing the same democratic norms as does Taiwan. One of these norms is respect for human rights, which the PRC has maintained it is improving upon. However, Human Rights Watch was critical of China in its 2015 World Report, declaring that China "remains an authoritarian state, one that systematically curbs fundamental rights, including freedom of expression, association, assembly, and religion, when their exercise is perceived to threaten one-party rule."¹¹

This issue is crucial, as one of Taiwan's fears of association with China is the threat of authoritari-

an repression apparent in centralized rule. If China could liberalize its systems, it may be able to convince Taiwan that joining the PRC wouldn't radically limit democratic freedoms currently enjoyed by the Taiwanese. This is, however, very unlikely given how dependent on authoritarian rule the Communist Party of China remains.

Cross-strait relations are still far from resolved. In order for China to unite, and before a compromise can be reached, the PRC and Taiwan must balance benefits to each.

Consequently, the current liberalist status quo, in which both states are benefitting, must be maintained and even further developed over a long period of time. This is the best way to overcome the persistent ideological gap that caused the countries to break from one another in the first place. The realist approach threatens the security of both nations, and would be especially harmful to the PRC's reputation by further damaging its relations with the US and America's allies in the region. The idealist approach is unlikely to succeed, especially in the short term, because of the democratic limitations of one-party rule in China, and the risk of the same strict rule being imposed on Taiwan. The best solution is for the PRC to continue gradually to liberalize its economy and political systems enough to convince Taiwan to create not just a united China, but a prosperous and free one as well.

¹⁰ Bai Yang, "CPC, KMT leaders to meet in Beijing," CCTV.com English accessed January 27, 2017, <http://english.cntv.cn/2015/04/24/ARTI1429843795262929.shtml>.

¹¹ "China," World Report 2015. Human Rights Watch, January 25, 2016, , accessed January 27, 2017, <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2015/country-chapters/china-and-tibet>.

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IRAQI REFUGEES IN EGYPT

DISPLACED, DISPOSED AND DISREGARDED

BY **MENA SHANAB** (C'19)

MAJOR: NEAR EASTERN LANGUAGES & CIVILIZATIONS

ABSTRACT

In Egypt, the absence of appropriate legislation for the provision of official legal protections has left its refugee population trapped in a state of legal and political limbo. Egypt was met with an influx of displaced Iraqis but lacked an appropriate national framework that was equipped for managing asylum and refugee problems. The 2003 U.S invasion of Iraq resulted in the catastrophic displacement of over two million Iraqi refugees into neighboring countries such as Jordan and Syria and, further away, Lebanon and Egypt. After the bombing of al-Askareya mosque in Samarra in 2006, the flow of Iraqi refugees was at its highest. The Egyptian government's strict labor and visa restrictions as well as its perception of Iraqi refugees as temporary visitors, not permanent residents, has designated Egypt as a de facto transit country. Foreign domestic workers are excluded from the Labor Codes in Egypt which hinders their economic mobility and further compounds their marginalization. Not only are these refugees barred from accessing the job market, but other basic social rights such as healthcare and education are inaccessible—Iraqi refugee children have zero access to public schooling. Due to their precarious legal status and inaccessibility to basic rights and services, Iraqi refugees in Egypt understand that there are few prospects for sustainable solutions.

INTRODUCTION

Styling itself as the champion of Pan-Arabism since the golden years of Gamal Abdel Nasser, Egypt has always held itself in high esteem as the preeminent

Arab country. However, the Arab Unity framework idealized by Nasser and other prominent Arab leaders during the mid-20th century did not envision, nor account for, a form of permanent integration of other Arabs into their own countries. Paradoxically, the Arab Unity model—which has endured until today—pushes Arab citizens of other states to identify with Arab identity without presenting a coherent legal framework for the integration of Arab refugees. This is evidenced by the absence of a comprehensive legal instrument for managing refugee affairs in Egypt. Furthermore, the fragmentary legislation – along with stringent residency, labor and education laws – has had an adverse effect on the livelihood and socioeconomic status of the thousands of displaced Iraqi refugees living within its borders.

The 2003 U.S invasion of Iraq resulted in heightened sectarian violence and the catastrophic displacement of over two million Iraqi refugees into neighboring countries such as Jordan and Syria and, further afield, Lebanon and Egypt.¹ After the bombing of al-Askareya mosque in Samarra in 2006, the flow of Iraqi refugees reached its peak, with Egypt having about 150,000 Iraqi refugees flooding in.

In Egypt, the absence of appropriate legislation for the provision of official protections has left its refugee population trapped in a state of legal and politi-

¹ “Iraqi Refugees in Egypt,” Kenan Institute for Ethics at Duke, 2013, accessed November 26, 2016, <http://kenan.ethics.duke.edu/uprooted-rerouted/introductions/egypt.html>.

cal limbo. Egypt was met with an influx of displaced Iraqis but lacked an appropriate framework equipped for managing asylum and refugee problems. Furthermore, the Egyptian government's strict labor, residency and visa restrictions and its perception of Iraqi refugees as temporary visitors, as opposed to permanent residents, has designated Egypt as a de facto "transit" country. Foreign domestic workers are excluded from the Labor Codes in Egypt² which hinders their economic mobility and further compounds their marginalization. Although Egypt is a signatory to the UN 1951 Convention on the Status of Refugees, it has reservations on clauses concerning education, relief, labor

rights and social security.³ These refugees are barred from accessing the job market, and other basic social rights such as healthcare and education are not readily available to them. Thus, for the most part, Iraqis do not have access to state-run schooling.⁴

Due to their precarious legal status and inaccessibility to basic rights and services, Iraqi refugees in Egypt understand that there are few prospects for sustainable long-term solutions. Their realization of the transitional nature of their stay serves to alienate and psychologically distress the refugee population.

The Egyptian government's staunch refusal to grant permanent residency has labeled Egypt as a de facto transit country for many refugee groups for decades. From their refusal to grant residency to Palestinians after 1948 and 1967 to their inability to provide basic human rights to Iraqi refugees, Egypt has consistently shown that it is no savior to the Arabs.

In researching this paper, heavy use of public material was made. I examined a variety of primary and secondary sources. These included official Egyp-

tian legislation—primarily al-Jarīdah al-Rasmīyah (The Egyptian Official Gazette); newspaper articles; documents and publications from international humanitarian organizations;

published academic research; and numerous statistical surveys and ethnographic studies. In examining the most recent research available to the public, I found work dating from 2006 to 2015. These years offer the temporal scope of this paper.

To create a cohesive and easily-readable narrative, this paper is divided into five sections. The first section recounts Palestinian migratory flows into Egypt and the potency of their influence on Egypt's current policies regarding refugee integration. This section, although tangential, is vital because it provides necessary background on the condition under which Egypt's refugee integration framework was established. Section two is a broad overview of the Iraqi displacement into Egypt. It sets the temporal and spatial scope, contextualizes the refugee flows into Egypt and provides a profile of the Iraqi refugees. Section three outlines the existing Egyptian legal framework for refugees but, more specifically, for Iraqis that have often been adversely affected by class politics. Section four presents an assessment of

² Leila Hilal and Shahira Samy, "Asylum and Migration in the Mashreq," *Euro-Mediterranean Human Rights Network (EMHRN)* December 2008,.

³ Fargues, Philippe, Saeed El-Masry, Sara Sadek, and Azza Shaban. *Iraqis in Egypt A Statistical Survey in 2008*. The American University of Cairo: The Center for Migration and Refugee Studies, 2008. <http://schools.aucgypt.edu/GAPP/cmrs/Documents/Iraqis%20in%20Egypt%20Provisional%20Copy.pdf>.

⁴ "Iraqi Refugees in Egypt,"

"Due to their precarious legal status and inaccessibility to basic rights and services, Iraqi refugees in Egypt understand that there are few prospects for sustainable long-term solutions."

the adverse impact Egyptian legislation and policies have on Iraqi refugees and why those stringent laws make Egypt a de facto transit country. The conclusion reflects on the connection between the legislation and the Iraqi refugee situation and attempts to address the implications this has for current Syrian refugees displaced in Egypt.

SECTION 1: THE PRECEDENT SET BY PALESTINIAN REFUGEES IN EGYPT AND ITS EFFECT ON LEGISLATION

While Egypt was at the forefront of the Pan-Arab movement and the leader of the Arab nations during the Arab-Israeli Wars, it never granted full residency rights to Palestinians refugees who were displaced into Egypt in 1948 following the Nakba and in 1967 with Israel's massive territorial gains. Although there are no official figures on the size of the 1949 Palestinian influx into Egypt, credible estimates range from 11,000 to 13,000 people.⁵ The 1967 wave brought in 11,000 Palestinians mostly from the Gaza Strip.⁶ Egypt quickly gained a reputation as being a place where Palestinians were unlikely to receive a warm welcome. The rationale Egypt has ceaselessly articulated over the past eight decades is that in order to uphold the national Palestinian identity, Egypt would not grant Palestinians' permanent residency due to the belief in their right to imminent return. This unwavering attachment to UN resolution 194, which stipulates that "refugees wishing to return to their homes and live at peace with their neighbors should be permitted to do so at the earliest practicable date"⁷ has resulted in the adoption of various policies that maintain that Palestinians are temporarily displaced people awaiting return to their homeland.

Although some features of these policies have

been altered to better accommodate the disparate refugee groups pouring into Egypt, their protectionist essence endures until today. This is evidenced by how Egypt's government staunchly opposes integration on a local level and naturalization on the national level for Iraqi refugees today. In an interview, an Egyptian Foreign Ministry official explained how Palestinians are discouraging the Egyptian government from integrating Iraqi refugees into Egyptian society:

We are not encouraging Iraqi refugees to integrate in Egypt, although we don't forbid it either... But if the Iraqis were given the opportunity to integrate here, what would we do with the Palestinians? You know there are 50,000 Palestinians in Egypt.⁸

At the same time, Egypt's official line of solidarity with the Palestinian cause makes it inconceivable for it to treat Palestinians as asylum seekers pursuing a status determination procedure. The Palestinian refugees' influence on Egypt's legal framework and perception of refugees in general is imperative to understanding why Iraqi refugees are facing such stringent naturalization, labor and education restrictions currently. The presence of a large Palestinian refugee population in Egypt casts a shadow over governmental policy-making towards Iraqi refugees and on prospects for the progression of long-term methods to standardize the various aspects of refugees' stay.

SECTION 2: OVERVIEW OF IRAQI DISPLACEMENT INTO EGYPT

The 2003 U.S-led invasion of Iraq created severe civil strife which formed the impetus for the mass forced migration of millions of Iraqis. Iraqi refugees began trickling into Egypt in 2003 immediately after the invasion. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) estimates that in total 4.7 million Iraqis were displaced in the conflict with 2 million outside Iraq's borders.⁹ After the bombing of al-Askareya mosque in Samarra in

5 Oroub El-Abed, *Unprotected: Palestinians in Egypt Since 1948* (Ottawa: International Development Research Centre, 2009).

6 David McDowall, *Palestine and Israel: The Uprising and Beyond* (London: I.B. Tauris, 1990).

7 "Resolution 194," UNRWA, December 11, 1948, accessed November 24, 2016, <http://www.unrwa.org/content/resolution-194>.

8 Ane Gerd Bele, "Living in Limbo: A Case Study of Iraqi Refugees in Cairo," *University of Oslo* November 2008.,

9 "Iraqi Refugees in Egypt,"

2006, the flow of Iraqi refugees reached its peak with Egypt having about 150,000 Iraqis living within its borders. The overthrowing of the Ba'ath regime and the deposing of Saddam Hussein resulted in the creation of an ineffective and vulnerable Shia-led transitional government. Violence and chaos erupted and engulfed the nation as militant forces from Sunni to Shia to Saddam supporters to regime sympathizers began clashing with one another. Instead of a smooth transition of power, Iraq experienced severe social, political and economic upheaval that disrupted the livelihoods of millions. A significant amount of Iraqis who fled are now scattered all over the Middle East.

With the current violence rippling through Iraq due to the presence of ISIS and the exacerbation of ethnic and sectarian divisions, there have been millions more displaced internally and externally. Since 2014, an additional three million were internally displaced, 426,000 refugees were externally displaced and 240,000 were taken in by neighboring countries in the region.¹⁰

Most of the Iraqi refugees currently living in Egypt came in between 2006 and 2007, having escaped brutal sectarian violence.¹¹ As of 2013, the UNHCR had only 8,000 Iraqis registered as refugees in Egypt, dropping from just over 10,000 in 2008. The latest registered population of Iraqis as of August 2016 is 7000.¹² These numbers are likely low estimates because not all refugees register with the UNHCR. It is near impossible to know the exact number of Iraqis present in Egypt at any given time due to the absence of a structured refugee resettlement and integration apparatus that would register them consistently. This is problematic since Egypt is host to the fifth largest urban refugee population in the world. Within its borders live Palestinian, Syrian, Sudanese, Eritrean, Ethiopian, Somali as well Iraqi

refugees.¹³ Iraqis settle primarily in urban centers—Cairo, Sixth of October City, Nasr City, Rehab City, Haram, Maadi and Heliopolis.¹⁴

This trend of resettlement out of Egypt can be attributed to Egypt's implementation of stricter visa restrictions in 2007 in an attempt to hinder the flow of Iraqis pouring in. Before that, Egyptian authorities regularly renewed tourist visas for Iraqis in Egypt. However, the Egyptian Ministry of Interior adopted stricter rules, telling Iraqis they should instead register with the UNHCR-Cairo. They then must endure an impenetrable bureaucratic process to ensure their stay.¹⁵ For the most part, Iraqis in Egypt have legal statuses that are not clearly-defined.

It is imperative to address the fact that there is no official consensus on numbers of Iraqis in Egypt. The contradiction in estimates and figures stems from the varying criteria for and the distinctions between refugees—recognized by the UNHCR—and migrants—those who do not formally request refugee status. In fact, many Iraqi refugees choose not to or are incapable of registering with the UNHCR office in Cairo. Iraqis are spread out in vast urban areas often on the outskirts of Cairo, making it hard for humanitarian organizations to locate them and reach out. The majority of the infrastructure of international governmental organizations and NGOs is focused on serving refugees mostly in Cairo. This means significant populations of refugees outside Cairo have trouble accessing aid or legal procedures.

Before the Syrian humanitarian crisis, the Iraqi displacement triggered by the 2003 invasion was the largest flow of refugees in the Middle East since the birth of Israel in 1948. Egypt has failed to properly address the burden of the Iraqi refugee crisis: it offers the refugees an environment where they are in a state of legal and social-political limbo. The domestic legal infrastructure will be examined and explored in the next section.

¹⁰ United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, *UNHCR Mid-Year Trends 2014*, (Geneva, Switzerland: UNHCR, 2015).

¹¹ Ibid.,

¹² UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), *UNHCR Egypt Operational Update, June to August 2016*, August 2016, available at: <http://www.refworld.org/docid/57fe2cd94.html> [accessed 14 December 2016]

¹³ Hilal, "Asylum and Migration,"

¹⁴ Yoshikawa, "Iraqi Refugees in Egypt,"

¹⁵ "Iraq: From a Flood to a Trickle," Human Rights Watch, April 2007, accessed December 11, 2016,

SECTION 3: AN EXAMINATION OF THE EGYPTIAN LEGAL INFRASTRUCTURE FOR REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT AND INTEGRATION

The Egyptian government has no comprehensive legal instrument to deal with refugee affairs and problems; instead, a variety of scattered domestic legislative initiatives loosely define refugees' legal status. Some of the most important legal provisions governing refugees include: Law No. 154 of 2004, which stipulates that Egyptian nationality is acquired only through descent¹⁶, preventing Iraqis

and other foreigners from being naturalized and effectively ruling out the possibility of full integration; Law no. 103 of 1985, which prevents foreign peoples from owning fertile land, desert land or agricultural property¹⁷; and Presidential Decree No. 89 of 1960, which bans foreigners who do not have appropriate travel documents from entering the country.¹⁸

The tenuous legal situation of Iraqi refugees and asylum-seekers is regulated by a plethora of fragmented laws and regulations. The Egyptian government adopted tougher measures regarding the entry and residency of Iraqis after being inundated with massive flows of refugees in 2006; however, as a signatory to the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees and the 1967 New York Protocol, Egypt

is under the obligation to respect the status given to Iraqis under the UNHCR. This obligation to follow UNHCR judgements stems from the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed in 1954 between Egypt and UNHCR. The MoU stipulates that the UNHCR would conduct the individualized Refugee Status Determination (RSD) interviews and that, in exchange, the Egyptian government would grant residence permits to those accorded refugee statuses by UNHCR.

"Iraqis should be able to smoothly integrate into Egyptian society due to their cultural and linguistic compatibility; however, it is exceptionally difficult due to political and legal constraints."

Those who pass the RSD interview are given a UNHCR refugee yellow card stamped by the Ministry of Interior's Department of Migration and Citizenship and the Min-

istry of Foreign Affairs. Refugees are entitled to a three-year temporary residency permit according to the Ministry of Interior's Decree No. 8180. However, this decree is not being actively implemented in Egypt due to a ministerial decision that provides refugees with a mere six-month residency permit so long as the refugee is considered a person of concern under the UNHCR.¹⁹

Iraqis should be able to smoothly integrate into Egyptian society due to their cultural and linguistic compatibility; however, it is exceptionally difficult due to political and legal constraints. Although refugees of all nationalities face difficulties, some are more pronounced for Iraqis—such as the ban on the right to public, state-run education, which is justified by Egypt's reservations to the 1951 UN Refugee Convention but violates Egypt's obligation under the Convention on the Rights of the Child (ratified by Egypt in 1990). Furthermore, Iraqis are subject to

16 Law No. 154-2004, Al-Jarīdah Al-Rasmīyah, 14 July 2004, p. 11.

17 Law No. 28-2004, Al-Jarīdah Al-Rasmīyah, 14 July 2004, p. 2.

18 Presidential Decree No. 331-1980, Al-Jarīdah Al-Rasmīyah, 28 May 1981.

19 Hilal, "Asylum and Migration,"

other discriminatory laws including restrictions on obtaining work permits and the prohibition of community-based organizations.

Egypt has ratified, and is obligated to respect, numerous international human rights treaties: the 1951 Refugee Convention and its 1967 Protocol; the 1969 Organization of African Unity (OAU) Convention Governing the Specific Aspects of Refugee Problems in Africa; the International Covenant on Economic Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR); the African Charter on Human Rights and People's Rights and several others.²⁰ Although Egypt acceded to the 1951 Refugee Convention, it made several reservations to five specific provisions: Article 12(1) (personal status), Article 20 (rationing), Article 22(1) (primary education access), Article 23 (public relief and assistance), and Article 24 (social security and labor legislation)²¹.

The reservations made to Article 22(1) deny refugees the right to attend public schools. However, in 1992, the Minister of Education issued Ministerial Decree No. 24, permitting the children of refugees to attend public schools. Even though in Article 5 of the decree, it is stated that all non-Egyptians are only permitted enrollment in private schools, it does exempt children of UNHCR-recognized refugees. In theory, this sounds great but in practice many of the public schools are incapable of absorbing more students, so that the majority of Iraqis are forced to enroll in costly private schools. The UNHCR offers educational grants for private school tuition for yellow-card holding Iraqi refugees, but these grants do not cover all expenses, nor are they available for all refugees due to a lack of resources.

The Egyptian government also reserved the right to not comply with Article 24 of the Refugee Convention. This effectively excludes non-Egyptians from benefiting from social security. They may receive social security benefits after being employed in Egypt for at least ten years.²² To make up for the scarcity of social assistance from the Egyptian government, the UNHCR established a financial and social assistance program for refugees. However, due to the program's scarcity of financial resources, many refugees are denied assistance.

Although Egypt did not make any reservations to Articles 17 and 18 of the Refugee Convention, which protect the right to employment, many refugees find themselves unemployed or working low-paying jobs that they are overqualified for. Most Iraqis do not have access to the formal job market. They are not permitted to obtain work permits—as stipulated in Article 11 of the Ministry of Labor's Ministerial Resolution No. 390²³—which are necessary to access the formal sector. In order to gain access to the formal job market, they must either invest in Egypt—according to Law No. 56 of 1988 and Law No. 8 of 1997—or be on the board of directors of a company operating in Egypt, in accordance to the 1998 Amended 1971 Companies Law. These legal stipulations have created high refugee unemployment rates and incited mass anxiety. This economic immobility is one of the many difficulties that leads Iraqi refugees to seek resettlement, thereby recognizing Egypt as a mere transit state.

SECTION 4: IMPACT OF LEGAL INFRASTRUCTURE ON THE IRAQI REFUGEE POPULATION

Due to absence of a coherent national framework and the use of fragmentary legislation in dealing with refugee issues, many Iraqis are in precarious, unstable situations. They face challenges in navigating residency procedures and experience low wages, discrimination, unemployment and even extortion. Egypt's policies demonstrate a dismaying degree of intransigence and serve to alienate and further com-

20 "Ratification of International Human Rights Treaties - Egypt," University of Minnesota Human Rights Library, May 9, 2001, accessed December 12, 2016, <http://hrlibrary.umn.edu/research/ratification-egypt.html>.

21 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees, Declarations and Reservations, July 28, 1951, 19 U.S.T. 6259, 189 U.N.T.S. 137,

22 Ibid.,

23 Ministerial Resolution No. 390-1982, Al-Jarīdah Al-Rasmīyah, 13 June 1982.

pound Iraqi refugees' social and economic marginalization. Preclusion from establishing a livelihood further endangers the already vulnerable population, and heightens tensions between Iraqi refugees and Egyptian citizens. The stringency of the government's distribution of residency and work permits as well as the absence of financial assistance and access to education all have negative impacts on the refugees' overall well-being.

The Egyptian public's perception of the Iraqi refugee community as being composed of urban, highly-educated and highly-skilled individuals has contributed to a normalization of Iraqi scapegoating.²⁴ This false assumption that Iraqis are well-off—an impression formed

by the success of Iraqi businesses in neighborhoods in 6th of October—has stirred resentment among Egyptians. Furthermore, Iraqis are blamed for the rising prices of commodities and the sky-rocketing housing rates in Egypt. However, Iraqis' inability to access the formal job market, coupled with not receiving social or financial assistance, forces many to resort to unconventional methods of generating income such as child labor and prostitution in order to prevent impoverishment.²⁵ Any savings Iraqis may have brought with them are quickly depleted due to the severe inflation present in the Egyptian economy.

In terms of justice and protection, Iraqi refugees—many of whom are economically vulnerable and lack appropriate paper documentation—face a myriad of problems, including arbitrary arrest, de-

tention and an array of security restrictions.²⁶ Egypt's prohibition of the establishment of Iraqi community-based organizations or societies—due to fear of sectarian tensions and militia threats²⁷—means that Iraqis lack organized support networks. Internal communal strategies are crucial coping mechanisms for many displaced communities and, without them, Iraqis suffer from a sense of alienation and disconnect. However, other refugee groups have been allowed to establish these kinds of local associations.

“Iraqi refugees—many of whom are economically vulnerable and lack appropriate paper documentation—face a myriad of problems, including arbitrary arrest, detention and an array of security restrictions.”

ment's anti-Shi'a stance.²⁸

With Egypt's substantive reservations to the five articles of the 1951 Convention, access to social and economic welfare entitlements is very limited and this creates financial insecurity and, consequently, mass anxiety among the Iraqi refugee communities. The difficulties generated by their inability to work are exacerbated by the restrictions of other basic social rights, such as education and healthcare. Healthcare is available only to those with the financial capacity to handle the costs. The UNHCR partnered with Caritas and Catholic Relief Services, and

24 Yoshikawa, “Iraqi Refugees in Egypt,” Hilal, “Asylum and Migration,”

26 “Refugees in Egypt,” Egyptian Foundation for Refugee Rights, August 13, 2012, accessed December 14, 2016, <https://egyptianfoundation.wordpress.com/welcome/refugees-in-egypt/>.

27 Tarek Badawy, “Iraqi Refugees in Egypt,”

28 Joseph Sassoon, *The Iraqi Refugees: The New Crisis in the Middle East* (London: I. B. Tauris & Company, 2010).

together provide limited financial, educational and medical support. This assistance is available only to the most vulnerable refugees. This aid—on average a meager \$23 monthly—is granted only to victims of violence and torture, minors, single mothers and those with pressing medical conditions. The absence of decentralized access to the subsidized health care system is a huge contributor to the problem of affordability.

The transition to refugee life for Iraqis is exceptionally difficult and has a profound toll on their psychological well-being. Many have developed serious psychological and stress-related illnesses. Poverty, coupled with the ceaseless flood of bad news from Iraq, produces a lot of damaging stress and mental health problems.²⁹ The disruption of their life trajectories and the heightened sense of awareness of their temporality contribute significantly to their suffering and stress. Iraqis describe life in Egypt as “transit” or “temporary”, denoting the general sentiment that Egypt is seen as a transit stop even though opportunities for resettlement are scarce.³⁰ This sense of instability and insecurity is intrinsically linked to the social and institutional conditions of their displacement. Lengthy bureaucratic processes for legal recognition of refugee status—which is still considered temporary by legal definition—coupled with their low socioeconomic position exacerbates their sense of temporariness and further distresses them.

With finite savings, limited assistance, and precarious living situations, most Iraqis in Egypt are emotionally distraught and seek resettlement. However, resettlement is not easily accessible because the UNHCR’s strategy prioritizes vulnerable cases with urgent protection or medical needs. In 2011, only 500 of the 70,000 Iraqis in Egypt were resettled to the United States.³¹ With their prolonged stay, di-

minishing remittances, economic immobility and grim prospects for resettlement, Iraqis are in a state of legal and political limbo and the Egyptian government is not providing them with the legal protections and assistance necessary for their survival and general well-being. The constant insecurity and uncertainty of life in Egypt, the trauma from the violence and persecution they experienced in Iraq, and the sense of dislocation and exile associated with forced migration all contribute to a deterioration of mental health and general well-being among Iraqis.

Conclusion: The Iraqi Refugee Experience and its Applicability to Syrian Refugees

As one of the Arab regional host countries bound by a plethora of international human rights treaties, Egypt has a responsibility to absorb, resettle and protect refugees from all nationalities throughout the Middle East and Africa. However, as evidenced by its absence of a comprehensive legal framework and its fragmentary—often contradictory—legislations, Egypt is failing to address the residential, financial, social, psychological and education needs of Iraqi refugees.

From the Palestinians to the Iraqis and many other refugee groups who have come in between, Egypt, throughout its history, has demonstrated an extreme reluctance to sponsor refugees. Looking at this history and taking into consideration Egypt’s current economic woes, the future seems bleak for Syrian refugees hoping to integrate into Egyptian society. Egypt has consistently exhibited an apathetic attitude and a degree of intransigence through its enforcement of debilitating and discriminatory legislation for refugees.

As of August 2016, the UNHCR reported that there are 187,838 people of concern—refugees and asylum seekers of more than 50 nationalities—in Egypt. 116,175 of those are Syrians. The total population registered in 2016 is 66% higher than in 2015 and 47% more than 2014. With its reservations on the 1951 Refugee Convention, Egypt is still staunchly refusing to grant refugees the full rights stipulated in the convention. This means that Syrian refugees are facing the same residential, educational and economic restriction that Iraqis face. Furthermore, Syr-

29 Sassoon, *The Iraqi Refugees: The New Crisis in the Middle East*

30 Nadia El-Shaarawi, “Living an Uncertain Future: Temporality, Uncertainty, and Well-Being Among Iraqi Refugees in Egypt,” *Social Analysis* 59, no. 1 (January 1, 2015), doi:10.3167/sa.2015.590103.

31 Ibid.,

ians are also constrained by the same social and economic stratifications. This is evidenced by current data from the Egypt Vulnerability Assessment for Refugees (EVAR).³² It indicates that the socio-economic status of Syrian refugees has not improved and, in some cases, it has even slightly deteriorated. 61% of household are deemed “severely vulnerable” with most of their resources being spent on food, rent, health and education.³³ The UNHCR utilizes resettlement as a protection tool. As of August 2016, 3251 individuals were submitted for resettlement to third countries, 2027 of those individuals being Syrian.

This depletion of resources and the scramble to resettle elsewhere is symptomatic of the same incompetent and stringent legal system that marginalized and disabled Iraqi refugees from having social or economic mobility and forcing them to grapple with severe anxiety about financial matters. Without granting permanent residency and providing social and financial assistance, Egypt is blatantly telling its refugee populations that they are not welcome and that permanent integration is an unattainable dream. This anti-integrationist stance, lack of formal legal framework and absence of administrative mechanisms means that Egypt offers virtually no social, political or economic protection for refugees.

32 UNHCR, *The 3RP: Egypt Monthly Update 2016*

33 UNHCR, *UNHCR Egypt Operational Update, June to August*

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THE ROLE OF ETHNIC GRIEVANCES IN THE SYRIAN CIVIL WAR

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ABSTRACT

This paper seeks to build on the civil war literature to examine the role that ethnic grievances played in the onset of the Syrian Civil War in Homs and Aleppo. Examining neighborhoods in both cities and the extent to which residents in those neighborhoods engaged in the protests suggests that ethnic grievances played a considerable role in the development and nature of the conflict. This paper's evidence shows a counter-intuitive amount of Christian involvement in the early stages of the civil war challenging conventional assumptions about the conflict.

INTRODUCTION

As the Syrian Civil War completes its sixth year, the Syrian government continues to make considerable military advances all over the country. Eastern Aleppo, one of the great bastions of the opposition, fell in late 2016. The government has stated that it is hoping to target Idlib, the current center of the Syrian opposition, next.¹ Recent discourse has centered upon Russia's role in decisively giving the Syrian government the advantage in the civil war after its September 2015 intervention. Little, if any, systematic discussion has focused on the ethnic composition and divisions within Syria and their role during the civil war. Syria has been ruled by an elite that

has overrepresented Alawites and other minorities relative to the broader population since 1971 when Hafez Al Assad rose to power. This trend has continued under Bashar Al Assad, who has been keen to nominate Druze, Christian and Alawites to important cabinet positions.

The Ba'ath Party has navigated a paradoxical dichotomy; its professed secularist, socialist and republican ideals have meant that, on a rhetorical level, the Syrian government has for decades denied Syria's ethnic differences while, in practice, the party has recognized the role of such divisions and has used such cleavages to achieve many of its political ends. While under the mandate system records of ethnicity were rigorously kept, the Ba'ath party has sought to reverse this policy. The Ba'ath Party has refused to poll ethnicity in surveys and, as a result, the last rigorous government effort to collect such data occurred in 1943.² On the other hand, Ba'ath administrations have continued to address ethnicity through informal government policies. These have ranged from the privileging of the Alawite stronghold of Latakia province in coastal Syria³ to the deliberate creation of minority neighborhoods within Damascus. Clearly, despite the Ba'ath Party's assertions, ethnicity has persisted in having decisive implications for contem-

¹ NASHASHIBI, SHERIF "Welcome to Idlib, the Next Aleppo" The Middle East Eye. 22 December 2016. Web.

² Hourani, Albert Habib. "Minorities in the Arab World" Oxford University Press. 1947.

³ Lesch, David W. "Syria" Yale University Press. 2012.

porary Syrian politics.

Such dynamics and their role in perpetuating the Syrian civil war are of particular interest to political scientists. In recent years, a debate on the role of ethnic grievances in civil wars has raged on platforms as varied as the New York Times to peer reviewed academic journals. One school of thought on this issue, led by David Laitin, Paul Collier and James Fearon, has approached the role of ethnic grievances during civil wars with skepticism, arguing that such cleavages are ubiquitous to all societies. Political scientists of this disposition have instead highlighted such factors as geography and state capacity to explain the emergence of civil wars. Another prominent school of thought, led by Lars-Erik Cederman, has sought to advocate for the importance of ethnic grievances in civil wars.

This paper seeks to use an analysis of the Syrian Civil War to put Cederman's hypothesis to the test. Despite the Assad regime's best efforts, it is patently clear how cities in Syria's neighborhoods have been ethnically divided. A list of minority neighborhoods in Homs and Aleppo has been collected for this paper through a variety of journalistic sources, social media and academic analyses. This paper uses ArcGIS software to plot these minority neighborhoods against the onset of the revolution and civil war. Damascus was not chosen for the study due to the capital's much more artificial ethnic divide that has arisen in recent years. While the suburbs of Damascus have remained predominantly Sunni, a number of new neighborhoods have been constructed within city limits as minority individuals, largely Alawites, have been incentivized to move to Syria's capital. Such policies and their effects on the war will be briefly discussed but will not be a primary focus of the paper.

First, Cederman's hypothesis suggests that we should view the Syrian Civil War, primarily, as an uprising of Syria's Sunni Arab majority against a governing 'coalition of minorities' led by Alawites, Shias, Druze, Christians, Circassians, Kurds and others. Second, this theory would further suggest that Kurds would be most willing to abandon this 'coalition of minorities' given the repression they

have suffered at the hands of the Syrian Government. Third, Cederman's theory would hold that Syria's minority neighborhoods should be the least keen on participating in protests against the Assad government.

Determining the veracity of Cederman's claims is especially important given their implications. The extent to which ethnic grievances have molded the Syrian civil war should inform the ways in which the peace process is addressed.

This paper will commence with a brief literature review on the recent political science research that has been conducted on the role of grievances in civil war. It will construct, as charitably as possible, the reasoning made by Cederman and others, on the one hand, and those inspired by Fearon, Laitin and Collier on the other. Next, the paper will conduct a brief historical review discussing particular points in recent Syrian history where ethnic grievances seemed to be instrumental to the outcome of particular events. While there are obvious empirical limitations to such a review, such a discussion is useful to theorizing the context from which the Syrian Civil War emerged. Third, the paper will take an in-depth look at conflict onset in Homs and Aleppo and the extent to which minority neighborhoods in both cities played a part. Finally, the paper will feature a concluding discussion on the limitations and implications of the results.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Lars Erik Cederman, Kristian Skrede Gleditsch and Halvard Buhaug's 2013 book *Inequality, Grievances and Civil War*⁴ aspires to rebut much of the grievance skepticism featured prominently in the recent political science literature on civil wars. The authors claim that grievance-skeptical accounts have made "inappropriate theoretical assumptions and problematic operationalizations" in their approach to the study of civil war. Cederman et al. hope to negate such accounts through a study of civil

⁴ Cederman, Lars Erik, Gletisch, Kristian Skrede and Buhaug, Halvard "Inequality, Grievances and Civil War" Cambridge University Press. 2013.

war that focuses on ‘horizontal equalities’ looking at ethnic groups as aggregated actors. Furthermore, the work is largely empirical making use of GIS technology and demographic databases to build its case.

One of the most cited grievance skeptical accounts, made by Paul Collier and Anke Hoeffler,⁵ provides an excellent example of the type of argument Cederman et al. are trying to disprove. Using an extensive data set, Collier and Hoeffler find a number of causes besides ethnic grievance that they claim more compellingly account for the emergence of civil wars. While Cederman et al.’s somewhat uncharitable summary of the article suggests that Collier and Hoeffler dismiss ethnicity altogether (“civil wars are caused by ‘greed’ rather than grievance”⁶) the paper concedes that ethnicity may play a role in conflict onset but only a subsidiary one. Instead, authors in the tradition of Collier and Hoeffler have suggested that factors such as weak state capacity and geography can more consistently account for the emergence of insurgencies.

Another prominent article that argues a similarly grievance skeptical position, by James Fearon and David Laitin,⁷ posits that insurgency is the newly preeminent form of combat after the cold war and that such movements can only emerge in certain contexts where a few key factors other than ethnicity are present. Again, both concede that ethnic grievances might play a secondary role in civil wars; on the other hand, they maintain that environmental conditions much more directly empower guerilla fighters.⁸

David Laitin takes these arguments further in his 2007 book *Nation, States and Violence*,⁹ claiming that, by assuming that ethnic grievances are in-

strumental to the onset of civil wars, we are giving too much credit to opportunistic guerillas who use the idealistic rhetoric of nationalism to justify insurgencies. Laitin points out the ubiquity of ethnic grievances in most societies to show the fallacy in his counterpart’s arguments.

Furthermore, Laitin presents us with an account of nationalism that suggests its role in most societies is, contrary to conventional wisdom, a highly positive, not pernicious, enabler of civic coordination between citizens in a body politic.

Fearon, Laitin, Collier and others have been building a grievance skeptical account of civil war for over a decade. Cederman et al. hope to discount and rebut their now rather nuanced argument. The Syrian civil war will certainly, going forward, be an important case study to examine all of these claims.

A RECENT HISTORY OF ETHNIC DIFFERENCES IN SYRIA

The French mandate, for the first time in Syrian history, allowed an Alawite elite to rise to power in a country that is roughly seventy percent Sunni according to the U.S. Department of State. Viewing serving in the military as complicity towards the French occupation, many Sunni Muslims eschewed joining Syria’s defense institutions over the course of the Mandate system.¹⁰ Moreover, the French administration astutely observed the utility in integrating Syria’s minorities within the military. For Syria’s Alawites, Druze, Shias, Circassians, Armenians and others, joining the military during this period marked an important opportunity to seize political power in a way that had rarely been offered to them in the past. The Syrian army at the time even contained particular units comprised solely of the members of various minority groups.¹¹

Syria’s independence in 1946 ushered in a new era of ethnic conflict as various military regimes sought to reconcile ethnic demands with new polit-

⁵ Collier, Paul & Hoeffler, Anke “Greed and Grievance in Civil War” Oxford Economic Papers. Oxford University Press.

⁶ Cederman et. Al. 15.

⁷ Fearon, James & Laitin, David “Ethnicity, Insurgency and Civil War” American Political Science Review. Vol 97. February 2003

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Laitin, David “Nation, States and Violence” Oxford University Press. January 1, 2007.

¹⁰ Lesch, David W. “Syria” Yale University Press. 2012.

¹¹ Fildis, Ayse Tekdal. “Roots of Alawite/Sunni Rivalry in Syria” Middle East Policy Council. Vol. 19, No. 2. Summer 2012.

ical administrations and ideologies. Shortly after independence, in 1947, Michel Aflaq and Salah alNDin Bitar founded the Arab Ba'ath Party. Partially allured by the charisma of Zaki Arsuzi, an Alawite Ba'athist leader many young Alawites joined the party early on in its development.¹² Moreover, the Ba'ath's base was primarily rural, dissuading many urban Sunnis from joining.¹³ Two years after the dissolution of the United Arab Republic, the brief union between Egypt and Syria between 1958 and 1961, the Ba'ath Party took power. The military coup that facilitated the Ba'ath's takeover was led by a military council whose five members featured three Alawites.¹⁴ By 1966 an intra-military coup brought Hafiz Al-Assad to a prominent position of power as the minister of defense. Naturally, Assad began hiring trusted men to prominent posts within the military command, most of whom were Alawites. Members of the ethnic minority have played an important role in Syrian politics ever since.¹⁵ Sectarian tensions extended all the way down the military chain of command, as multiple units came to be constituted by exclusively one ethnic group. For the first time, the Ba'ath Party was forced to reconcile a rhetorical denial of Syria's ethnic differences with a pragmatic means to address such divides. To be sure, Syria's Sunni commanders were offered a number of key posts. Such a step arguably represented an attempt to appease Syria's majority.¹⁶

Moreover, at a few critical points in Syria's recent history, the government accused particular factions of attempting to incite 'sectarian divisions'. Fol-

lowing an unsuccessful coup attempt by a prominent Druze officer for instance, Druze individuals were purged from leadership positions within the army. Al Assad and others around him seemed to be playing a realpolitik with ethnic differences and patronage strictly in mind.¹⁷

Ethnic differences seemed to continue to dictate the course of various historical events after Hafez Al Assad's rise to the presidency in 1971. Following Syria's 1976 intervention in Lebanon's civil war, for instance, a number of radical groups began targeting 'infidel' Alawi elites. A long conflict between Syrian Islamists and the government ensued as a result. In 1979, 32 trainees at the Aleppo Artillery School were killed. The unit was largely an Alawite one and it is likely that the perpetrators of the attack were targeting minority sects. While the government was quick to blame the Muslim Brotherhood, many speculated that the event was the result of Sunni Alawite competition within the military. Shortly after the bombing, the Syrian government began a large-scale crackdown on Syria's Muslim Brotherhood. For its part, the Muslim Brotherhood has continued to deny any involvement in the bombings to this day.¹⁸

The battle between the Syrian government and radical Sunni Muslims came to a climax during the bombing of Tadmor Prison (1980) and the Hama Uprising (1982). The former was provoked by a nearly successful attempt to assassinate Hafez Al-Assad. The morning following the attempt, Syrian government forces stormed the Tadmor prison, near the ancient city of Palymra, and killed hundreds of people. Tadmor housed predominantly Islamist prisoners.¹⁹ Two years later, a Sunni Arab uprising emerged in the city of Hama. An event that initially began as a confrontation between the Muslim Brotherhood and the government became a broadly supported

12 Devlin, John F. "The Baath Party: Rise and Metamorphosis" *The American Historical Review*. Vol. 96, No. 5. December 1991.

13 Van Dam, Nikolaos "Struggle for Power in Syria: Politics and Society Under Asad and the Ba'ath Party" I.B. Tauris. May 15, 1996

14 Devlin, John F. "The Baath Party: Rise and Metamorphosis" *The American Historical Review*. Vol. 96, No. 5. December 1991.

15 Van Dam, Nikolaos "Struggle for Power in Syria: Politics and Society Under Asad and the Ba'ath Party" I.B. Tauris. May 15, 1996.

16 Ibid.

17 "SyriaIDruze" World Directory of Minorities and Indigenous Peoples. Web.

18 "The Massacre of the Military Artillery School at Aleppo – Special Report" The Syrian Human Rights Committee. Web.

19 Hilleary, Cecily "Syria's Tadmor Prison Massacre: Reliving the Horrors of 32 Years Past"

armed Sunni uprising within the city. Many within the Syrian government framed the events in Hama as existential and claimed that their outcome would dictate the subsequent course of Syrian history; giving in to those in Hama was framed as surrendering to radicalism.²⁰ As the government cracked down, some estimate that 20,000 were killed, making the suppression of the Hama uprising one of the bloodiest massacres committed by an Arab government in the twentieth century.²¹

Ethnic differences counted again when Bashar Al Assad succeeded his father as president of Syria. To a great extent, Bashar was accepted by the Alawite elite because he was one of them; moreover, he was both an Alawite and a conciliatory figure who represented the continuation of his father's legacy.²² To be sure, despite the overrepresentation of several minorities in key posts within the Syrian government, many Sunnis have still retained considerable power. Sunni businessmen have benefitted from Assad's rule. Moreover, many Sunni elites have continued to support the Assad government even after the onset of the civil war.²³ What an account of history such as this one can illuminate is how Syrian elites attempted to mobilize various ethnic grievances at particular moments. It appears that such appeals had significant influence on the course of Syrian history. Such an account is, however, to an extent necessarily elite-centric. Whether ethnic divides mattered beyond Syrian elites is one of the prime issues this paper will investigate through an in-depth examination of Homs and Aleppo.

URBAN PLANNING AND ETHNICITY IN DAMASCUS

20 Seale, Patrick "Asad: The Struggle for the Middle East" University of California Press. January 1990.

21 Rodrigues, Jason "1982: Syria's President Hafez al-Assad crushes rebellion in Hama"

22 Van Dam, Nikolaos "Struggle for Power in Syria: Politics and Society Under Asad and the Ba'ath Party" I.B. Tauris. May 15, 1996.

23 "Under Sectarian Surface, Sunni backing props up Assad regime" Syria: Direct. June 20, 2013. Web.

Unlike Aleppo, Homs and several other Syrian urban centers, the Ba'ath Party has very deliberately sought to change the course of Damascus' Urban Development. The Syrian government has constructed a variety of neighborhoods and encouraged various ethnic minorities to inhabit these neighborhoods. These range from the very low-income, including the densely populated Alawite neighborhood Mezzeh, to the wealthy 'officers' ghetto' housing Assad's military elites. Such urban segregation on sectarian lines was exacerbated by the civil war as many fled to the safety of predominantly minority communities.²⁴

Minority neighborhoods quickly became defended by both the Syrian police but also by local paramilitary forces (shabiha) who were primarily recruited from minority communities.²⁵ These paramilitary forces were further supplemented by local protection committees which too were comprised of local, largely minority, residents.²⁶ In non-Alawite minority communities within the city a consensus began to emerge that Assad's government would be preferable to that of any Sunni majoritarian government; given the potential costs of regime change rising up in protest simply did not seem worth it.²⁷ Sentiments of apathetic support for the Syrian government in the face of civil war have only grown in the face of kidnappings and assassinations that have occurred in Damascus over the course of the civil war.

For the Alawite community, such feelings were heightened following the killing of Bassam Hussein, a prominent Alawite film director, outside of his home in a mixed neighborhood of the city.²⁸ Members of the opposition have alleged that the regime

24 Worth, Robert F. "The Price of Loyalty in Syria". The New York Times. June 19, 2013. Web.

25 "Insight: Minority militias stir fears of sectarian war in Syria" Reuters Online. September 7, 2012.

26 Peel, Michael "Damascus Vigilantes vow to defend turf" The Financial Times. October 22, 2012. Web.

27 Erlich, Reese "Syria's minority Christians under threat from extremist Muslim rebels." PRI. December 25, 2013. Web.

28 Hashem, Ali "Syria's Alawites Under Siege" AlN-Monitor. Web.

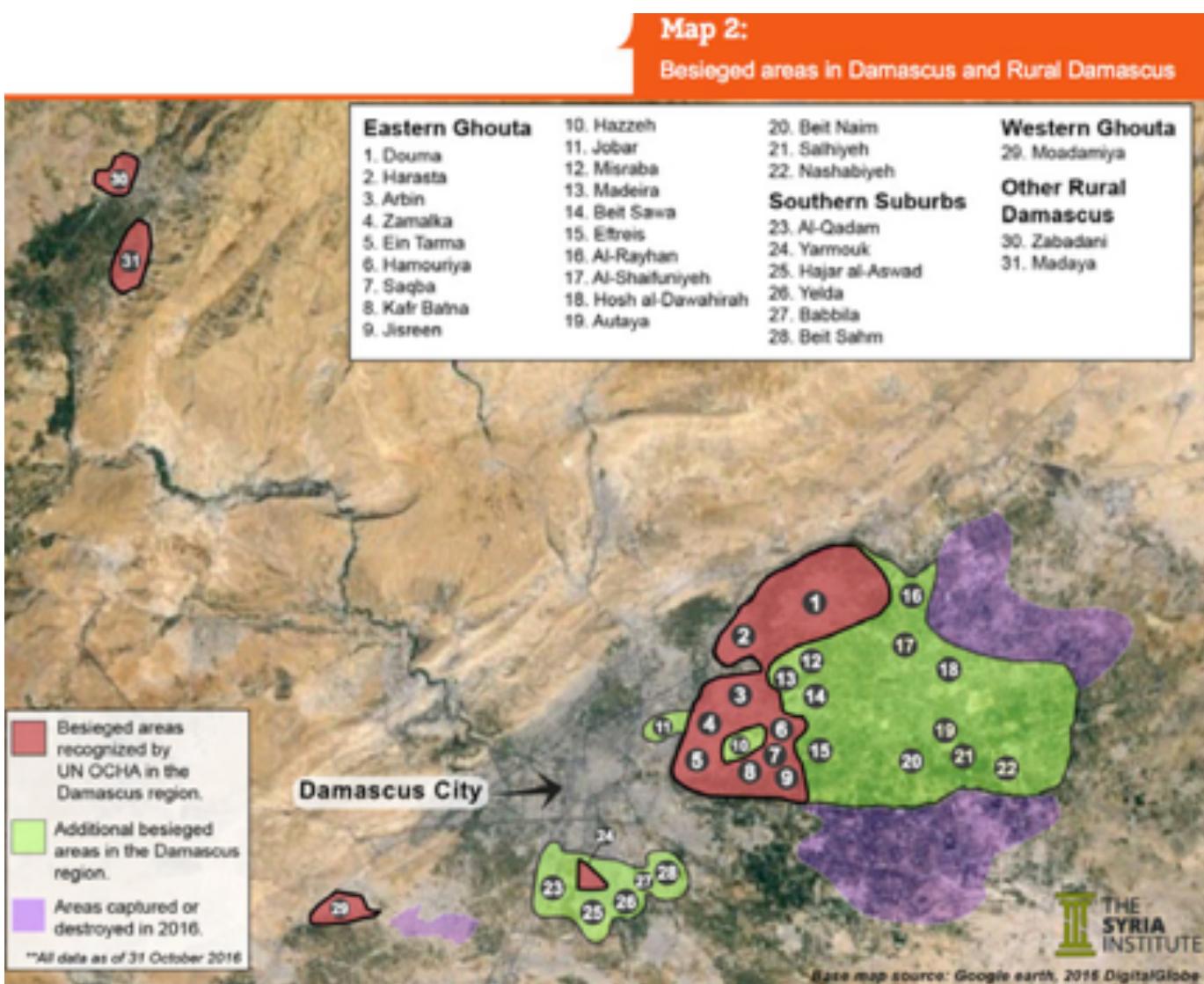


Figure 1: A map of the besieged suburbs of Damascus.. (Source: The Syria Institute)

has had a role in such events. They accuse Assad's government of attempting to unsettle Syria's minorities into quiescence.

Given Damascus's multiplicity of minority neighborhoods the Syrian government has been able to successfully defend the city since the early stages of the conflict. Consequently, while most organized resistance to the Assad government has been quelled the majority of still--restive neighborhoods in the Damascus region are in the expansive suburbs of Eastern Ghouta. The Syrian government has attempted to isolate these neighborhoods through siege, in the process entrapping over 300,000 peo-

ple.²⁹ Conditions in Eastern Ghouta remain dire; many of the trapped lack the most basic foodstuffs and medical supplies.

Eastern Ghouta has included communities such as Douma and Arbin which have become infamous for the terrible starvation that has occurred within their city limits.³⁰ The Syrian government has made considerable advances in Eastern Ghouta in 2016 and

29 PAX & The Syria Institute "Fourth Quarterly Report on Besieged Areas in Syria: AugustI October 2016." Siege Watch.

30 Ibid.

has successfully encouraged many of its constituent towns and villages to negotiate surrenders.³¹

MINORITY NEIGHBORHOODS WITHIN HOMS AND ALEPPO

A Brief Note on Methodology

In order to study the role of ethnic grievances in Homs and Aleppo, I first compiled a list of minority neighborhoods in both cities. Such information was easy to extract from journalistic sources, reliable social media accounts, think tank reports and academic sources. I then began collecting information on various civil war related events occurring in those neighborhoods in an excel spreadsheet. Given the partisan leanings of many sources it was impossible to confirm the accuracy of every report, nonetheless I constructed the most rigorous database possible of events occurring in minority neighborhoods. I grouped these events under a number of categories: 'AOG', 'Government', 'Protest' and 'Clashes'. The first denoted events where Armed Opposition Groups (AOGs) clearly shelled or advanced within a neighborhood. The second denoted instances where Syrian government forces bombed or advanced within a neighborhood. The third denoted protests occurring in the neighborhood. The fourth denoted clashes in this instance almost always between Syrian Government forces and AOGs. The most neutral possible language was used in constructing these categories; moreover, only events strictly verifiable were included in the database. As a result, it is almost certain that the database is not exhaustive; it should be viewed as a mere guide providing an indicator on the role of ethnic grievances in the conflict.

To more accurately capture the role of ethnic grievances in conflict onset, slightly different 16 month intervals were chosen as the scope for the database in each city. For Homs, this was the period between March 1 2011 and July 31 2012. For Aleppo, a city which played a part in the civil war slightly later, this period was between August 1, 2012 and December 31, 2016.

Weighed against the minority neighborhoods were two 'control neighborhoods'- one in Homs and one in Aleppo. These were predominantly Sunni locales within close proximity to the center of each city and the minority neighborhoods. A similar database was constructed for the control neighborhoods. Comparing the number of civil war related occurrences in such 'controls' to those in the minority neighborhoods proved to be an interesting means to test Cederman's hypothesis.

All events in both minority neighborhoods and the controls were mapped using ArcGIS software. While the exact coordinates of every single event are impossible to find, points represented on the maps are placed as faithfully to their true location as possible. Such maps can provide a helpful visual comparison of the density of events in minority neighborhoods.

Aleppo

Aleppo's minority neighborhoods feature prominent Christian and Kurdish communities. Aleppo's Alawites, to a great extent, have become assimilated with the local population and settled all over the city both in minority neighborhoods and Sunni neighborhoods. The city's Christian neighborhoods Midan, Siryan, Azizieh and Sulimaniyeh are some of its oldest. The stories of Aleppo's two Kurdish neighborhoods have been massively divergent; while one, Sheikh Maqsood, has become an autonomous area governed by Kurdish paramilitary forces, Ashrifiyah has come under opposition control. Sheikh Maqsood's unique history will be covered, separately, later in the paper.

Ashrifiyah saw seven incidents during the time span covered. Of these events, four were protests against the Assad regime held by its largely Kurdish residents. AOGs advanced within the neighborhood and the Syrian government shelled parts of the area. Fittingly, Ashrifiyah hosted clashes between AOGs operating in the district and units of the Kurdish groups the PYD and the YPG. Unlike Sheikh Maqsood, Ashrifiyah lacked the geography needed to become an autonomous region instead becoming a part of rebel controlled Eastern Aleppo.

The story of Aleppo's Christian neighborhoods,

on the other hand, is quite varied.

While Siryan, Azizieh and Sulimaniyeh remained fairly calm throughout the initial stages of Aleppo's uprising, Midan became considerably restive even compared to the control neighborhood Tariq al Bab, a predominantly Sunni locale.

Between Siryan, Azizieh and Sulimaniyeh, just four events were recorded within a 16-month period. This number is skewed by the fact that the two events in Syria were caused by AOGs attempting to advance within the neighborhood. The lone event in Sulimanyeh was described by the AFP as 'unprecedented' and not to be repeated. The only event in Azizieh, an anti--Assad protest was apparently met with considerable hostility among the residents. Clearly none of these three neighborhoods played a keen part in the early stages of Aleppo's uprising. All of them remained Syrian government strongholds with much of the military action diverted elsewhere in the city despite the Christian neighborhoods strategic locations. Interpreted in isolation, events in Aleppo's Kurdish neighborhoods Siryan, Azizieh and Sulimaniyeh seem to provide quite strong evidence for Cederman's hypothesis; Midan, Aleppo's last Christian neighborhood, however, complicates this picture.

Midan, a relatively small neighborhood, played host to 12 separate events within a 16-month period. Surprisingly, the overwhelmingly Christian neighborhood approaches the control neighborhood Tariq Al Bab, which played host to 16 such events. Midan is also considerably smaller than Tariq Al Bab meaning that of all the neighborhoods studied, including the control, the district saw by far the highest density of civil war related events. These events ranged from AOG activity, including the destruction of a local church and the killing of an Armenian Christian resident, to anti--Assad protests. The neighborhood played host to seven different clashes as AOGs and the Syrian Government hotly contested the area.

The implications of Midan's restiveness for Cederman's hypothesis are hard to assess in isolation. On the one hand, they may demonstrate that ethnic grievances did not matter to a great extent; one of Aleppo's most prominent neighborhoods, after all,

seemed highly restive and not quiescent and quietly supportive of Assad's government. Another possibility is that the neighborhood is anomalous. Interestingly enough, a roughly similar pattern is observable in Homs' Christian neighborhoods which were largely quiet except for Bab Al Drieb, an ancient district which became highly unstable. One final possibility is that Midan's trajectory was highly skewed by the fact that it was contested by AOGs and the Syrian government. Such a reality could have meant that the neighborhoods unrest could have been, to a great extent, a product of outside actors rather than the actions and sentiments of its residents.

The Case of Sheikh Maqsood

Sheikh Maqsood was not coded like the other minority neighborhoods in Homs and Aleppo. This is because the neighborhood has had a very unique civil war history. Unlike other neighborhoods in Aleppo and Homs that have either chosen to align themselves with opposition groups or the Syrian government, the citizens of Sheikh Maqsood live in a relatively autonomous part of the city governed by Kurdish groups including the PYD and the YPG.³² Sheikh Maqsood is unique even among Kurdish neighborhoods in choosing to align with neither the opposition nor the Syrian Government. Ashrifiyye Aleppo's other predominantly Kurdish neighborhood, for instance, came under opposition control over the course of the civil war. Sheikh Maqsood's unique history owes much to its geography; perched above the city on a hill, the neighborhood has been privileged with impenetrable natural defenses. While the local YPG unit has engaged in limited confrontation with both the opposition and the government, it has largely remained aloof of the main conflict.³³

From Cederman's point of view, the existence of Sheikh Maqsood can be easily explained. Kurds were a member of the loose 'coalition of minorities'

³² "Friends or foes: A close look on relations between the YPG and the Regime" Bellingcat. September 12,2016. Web.

³³ Ibid.



Figure 2: A map of Aleppo highlighting some of its minority neighborhoods (Green). In Yellow is Sheik Maqsood. By far the densest cluster of events is visible in the Midan neighborhood. The control neighborhood, Tariq al Bab, is highlighted in blue.

that partnered under Assad's government. On the other hand, Kurds were the most oppressed member of the coalition. The Syrian government only granted Kurds Syrian citizenship shortly prior to the civil war.³⁴ Such steps were widely seen as being as insufficient and, given the Kurdish ability to mobilize quickly, they decided instead to arm themselves and fight a war for conquest and protection. While in Aleppo this taking up of arms has amounted to the defense of a meagre neighborhood in the North of Syria, this mobilization has resulted in a Kurdish attempt to capture territory. Kurds were not sufficiently valued in Assad's 'coalition of majorities'; understandably, many Kurds are suspicious of a majoritarian Sunni state especially a newly-formed state. Eschewing unreliable alliances and majoritarian states with a sectarian bias many Kurds, and several leftists

from all over the world,³⁵ have deemed fighting for the creation of Rojava to be a worthy goal. Sheikh Maqsood and Rojava compose clear evidence that ethnic grievances play an instrumental role in motivating and determining the outcome of civil wars.

Homs

Homs, unlike Aleppo, has a variety of neighborhoods that are predominantly Alawite. Such districts, namely Zahra, Al-Sabil and Al-Hamidiyah, remained largely calm throughout the initial phases of the civil war. The other two minority neighborhoods studied in Homs were the largely Christian district Bab Al-Drieb and the mixed Alawite and Christian Armenian Quarter. While most of these neighborhoods remained calm Bab Al-Drieb joined the rest of the city in rising up against the Syrian Government to a surprising extent.

While the primarily Alawite neighborhoods of

34 "Stateless Kurds in Syria Granted Citizenship" CNN. April 8, 2011. Web.

35 Knefel, John "A Hello to Arms: A New Generation of Steely Gazed Anarcho-Communists Head Off to Syria." The Village Voice. June 7, 2016. Web.

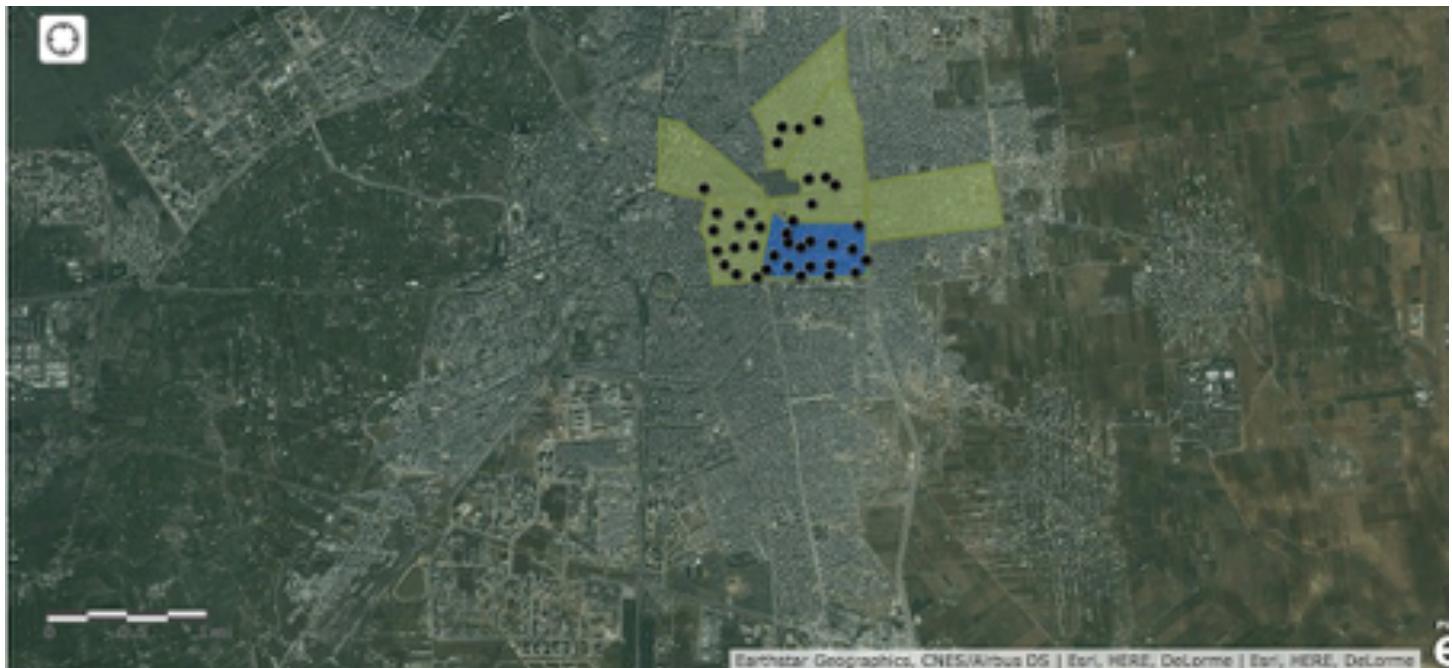


Figure 3: Minority neighborhoods in Homs (Green) and the control, Bab Todmor (Blue).

the city remained fairly calm throughout the early phases of the Syrian Civil War there was, to some extent, agitation against Assad's government within their borders. Al-Hamidiyah and Al Sabeel were both rocked by the blasts of improvised explosive devices. Al Sabeel played host to anti-government protests as did Zahra. Ironically, in the both the largely Alawite crowd used Sectarian chants, yelling "Bashar became a Sunni" in protest. It seems as though in Homs, even when Alawites joined anti-government protests they behaved opportunistically forwarding their own sectarian agenda.

The contrast between Homs' two Christian neighborhoods could hardly be starker. While the city's Armenian Quarter did not experience a single instance of unrest, making it the calmest neighborhood studied, Bab Al Drieb played host to 11 events. While the neighborhood was relatively quiet in comparison to Bab Tadmor, a largely Sunni area, it approached Midan's levels of unrest. Interestingly, only one of these events was a protest with the remaining ten all being attempts by the Syrian government to quell any unrest in the area through bombardment, shelling and arrest. Clearly, the Assad government felt threatened by the possibility of the residents of

Bab al Drieb rising up.

EVALUATION AND CONCLUSION

The implications of these findings both challenge and support Cederman's hypothesis. On the one hand, Cederman et al. correctly anticipate the actions of Alawites in Homs. On the rare occasions that Homs' Alawites joined anti-government protests they seemed to be doing so opportunistically using demonstrations to pressure the Assad government to pay greater attention to the Alawite community. Otherwise, Aleppo's Alawite neighborhoods remained largely calm. Homs' Alawite communities joined those in central Damascus and in Assad's home province Latakia in largely refusing to oppose Assad. It seems as though the Ba'ath Party's decades long privileging of Alawites succeeded in creating fairly loyal subjects.

Cederman's hypothesis also lines up well with the outcomes in the Kurdish neighborhoods within Aleppo. Kurds proved to be neither overly enthusiastic for the uprising nor particularly loyal members of Assad's minority coalition. Ashrifiyye joined the revolution with many Kurds participating in anti-Assad

demonstrations. On the other hand, the most prominent Kurdish neighborhood in the city, Sheikh Maqsood, remained aloof from the bloody conflict happening in the city below. The area's guardians focused on the defense of the neighborhood rather than the uprising and sometimes made incursions to adjacent neighborhoods, engaging in limited scuffles with both AOGs and the Syrian army.

Five out of the seven Christian neighborhoods also match Cederman's hypothesis. While some of these experienced limited protests they, for the most part, remained Syrian government strongholds. The fact that both Midan and Bab Al-Drieb did not, however, presents a major challenge to Cederman's findings. A study of Syria's neighborhoods shows that ethnic grievances do matter, in fact, are critical, in the case of Syria's Alawites and Kurds. Such a conclusion is understandable given both group's very particular histories of oppression. The counterintuitive inconsistency of Syria's Christian neighborhoods, however, raises important questions. While the beleaguered and fearful Syrian Christian has become a trope in popular discourse commented on by media outlets and American presidential candidates alike, Bab Al-Drieb and Midan demonstrate that some Christians were very keen to join the anti-Assad uprising.

The trajectory of Syria's Christian neighborhoods shows that, while ethnic grievances certainly play a role in conflict onset, we should not be overly deterministic in applying an analysis of ethnic difference to civil wars. Ethnicity is just one aspect of any individual's identity and Syrians of all creeds demonstrated that it is possible to transcend cultural ties over the course of the civil war.

David Laitin and others might be keen to contradict a grievance centric account of the Syrian revolution by pointing to other factors such as Syria's geography and state capacity to account for the civil war. In fact, both Laitin and James Fearon have both given some of their opinions on Syria to the press.³⁶ Yet, prior to 2011, Syria's strong state and chilling-

ly effective repressive apparatus made it an unlikely candidate for an uprising, let alone a civil war, in the eyes of the journalistic press. Moreover, Syria's uprising, to a great extent, deviates from the trajectory of an insurgency. Syria's civil war has largely unfolded in cities, not in impenetrable mountains and valleys, though the Levantine nation lacks neither. On the other hand, an analysis of minority neighborhoods in Aleppo and Homs seems to show a coherence to how Syria's ethnic groups chose to align themselves in response the civil war.

Such a study inevitably has many limitations and there are many points for extended inquiry on the subject. The databases compiled for this study were clearly not exhaustive; instead, the data should be seen as an indicator of instability rather than an encyclopedic guide to the unrest in Aleppo's minority neighborhoods. Such a study could be made far more expansive than it already is; perhaps the rest of both Aleppo and Homs could be mapped out providing several control neighborhoods for comparison. Going forward, researchers could form contacts on the ground in both Aleppo and Homs and consult them for an even more accurate picture on the ethnic makeup of various Syrian neighborhoods.

Moreover, the number of cities included in such a study should be expanded for the obtainment of a more accurate result. Such an expansion could be careful to select areas of the country to gauge the actions of Syria's Druze community with respect to the civil war.

While some of the neighborhoods studied included minor Druze representation, for the most part, the alignments of the Druze during the civil war is left unaddressed by the study of Aleppo and Homs alone.

Finally, the story of Syria's civil war is yet to be fully written. The role and history of Syria's ethnic minorities going forward is yet to be determined and ought to be studied very carefully. Following the Syrian government's victory in Homs, several reports emerged that authorities were razing previously Sunni neighborhoods in the city and selling

36 Fisher, Max "Syria's Paradox: Why the War Only Ever Seems to Get Worse." The New York Times. August 26, 2016. Web.

plots of land to Syrian and Iranian Shiites.³⁷ Such incidents, if true, possibly constitute ethnic cleansing. The future of Syria's ethnic minorities going forward should be carefully observed; a faithful documentation of events going forward will be necessary if any semblance of justice is to be achieved after the war. Moreover, the fashion in which Syria's ethnic minorities responded to the civil war should be very carefully weighed in any peace talks that may occur. Such grievances will likely play a role regardless of the outcome, even if the Syrian government manages to emerge victorious. Clearly, ethnic grievances matter in Syria. How these divides are addressed going forward will determine the course of the nation's future.

37 Akkar, Ruth Sherlock "Bashar al-Assad's militias 'cleansing' Homs of Sunnis Muslims." *The Telegraph*. 22 July 2013. Web.

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AN INTERVIEW WITH DR. AVERY GOLDSTEIN



DAVID M. KNOTT PROFESSOR OF GLOBAL POLITICS AND INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

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KS: How has the study of Chinese politics evolved since the beginning of your career?

AG: It's changed a lot – mainly because when

I started teaching, China was not very important at all. I started teaching -- I got to Penn in 1985 -- and China was a poor and weak country. Unless you were interested in China, you had no reason to pay attention. But, in reality, it was just at the beginning of the process by which it was going to become relatively wealthy and powerful. [The Chinese government] had just begun their reforms and were opening up to the outside world. And economic reforms were going to take a country that had been stagnant economically for a couple of decades after the communists came to power and begin to introduce some market economics and, eventually, integrate China into the world economy in ways that benefited China.

In terms of China's international role, that also changed. The Cold War was almost over by the time I got [to Penn], but [during] the tail end of the Cold War, China was only important because it was kind of a card the U.S. could play against the Soviet Union – [though] that was becoming less important. Then the Cold War ends, and the reason why China becomes important is, at first, mainly because it plays a big role, or bigger role, in the international economy.

As China gets richer, it also begins to try to modernize its military. And as China modernized

its military, its neighbors became nervous. Some of [China's] neighbors are allies of the United States. So then Americans began thinking, "Could China pose challenges to the allies of the United States, and how might we respond?" So for international political economy reasons and for international security reasons, China just became more and more important over the decades. I just got lucky...I'm pretty sure when I was hired, the people at Penn who hired me thought, "OK, we have somebody to teach IR...OK he does China...great, we'd love to teach something about China." By the middle of the 1990s, I was the "China person" in the department.

JR: You mentioned China's increased military and increased presence in the region with allies. Something in the news lately is China's relationship with North Korea. Do you see any future long-standing relationship between China and North Korea, or do you see China pivoting towards South Korea?

AG: Even in the early 1990s, China recognized that North Korea was kind of a losing proposition. It was a poor country that really didn't give much in the way of any kind of benefits to China, other than the fact that it meant the Americans weren't right on the Chinese border. China established formal diplomatic relations with South Korea, and the China-South Korea economic relationship has been booming since the 1990s. But China is still saddled with a legacy treaty from the early Cold War with North Korea. That probably is a dead letter. I mean, the Chinese have more or less indicated to the North Koreans that, if they cause trouble, they shouldn't count on China bailing them out. China has, in fact, been leaning on the North Koreans to behave better and helped negotiate some agreements in the 1990s, helped organize the so-called six party talks in the Bush administration in 2003, where North Korea – at least for a couple years – negotiated about not developing and testing nuclear weapons. But then the talks broke down and, as we all know, North Korea did go nuclear.

But, since then, China's been on board with sanctioning North Korea. They voted for the sanc-

tions in the UN. They do enforce the sanctions, but two things have happened. One is that the sanctions so far (that the UN has passed) have been fairly limited and targeted on energy and military supplies; other than that, China continues to trade with North Korea. China is North Korea's biggest trading partner and provides (something like) 85% of the North Korean trade. So China remains economically important to North Korea.

There are some people who believe – and I think President Trump is one of them – that if China just cut North Korea off completely, North Korea would have to do whatever China says. Chinese leaders and Chinese analysts that I meet with say that [China] can cut them off, but China's more worried that that would simply result in instability or anger in North Korea towards China and could lead to the collapse of the regime, which would be problematic, since [North Korea] already has nuclear weapons and [because of] floods of refugees across the border. [An additional concern is] North Korea surviving and viewing China as another enemy of North Korea, which means the benefit of having North Korea on China's border is gone.

So China has hesitated. But I think China, over the last two or three months, has pretty clearly become even more frustrated with North Korea. And I think that was reflected in the exchanges between the Chinese leader and President Trump at Mar-a-Lago. I think that the U.S. is hopeful that China is going to pressure North Korea more, but it remains an open question. We kind of think that, if China's on board with pressuring North Korea, how can North Korea withstand everybody sanctioning them and cutting them off? And everybody assumes that will work to get North Korea to come around. I'm not convinced and I suspect that, maybe, the Chinese really aren't convinced.

It may be necessary for the Chinese to cut ties with the North Koreans, but it might not be sufficient to get North Korea to stop testing missiles and their nuclear warheads. What happens if China does what we say and it doesn't work? Nobody knows. They haven't done it yet. I think, at that point, either people will say, "well the Chinese are secretly not

really doing it" or people will say, "all that's left is two choices: military action against North Korea or living with North Korea as a nuclear weapons state." There's no good option on North Korea...

[China is] always referred to as North Korea's ally, but it's not much of an ally. That's not the problem. The problem is that neither the Chinese nor the Americans really know what's going to work to get the North Koreans to behave better.

KS: Your research assesses the risks that are posed by disagreements between the U.S. and China over shifting interests in Asia. In an article for Foreign Affairs in 2013, you wrote about the near-term danger that Beijing and Washington will find themselves in a crisis that could quickly escalate to military conflict. How would you re-appraise that claim in light of President Obama's second term and what we know so far about President Trump's strategy for China?

AG: The risk is still there. I think it is somewhat reduced, not because of what President Obama did in terms of clarifying American interests in the region, because I think President Obama clarified that the U.S. has interests [in the region] and that the Chinese view is challenging those interests (especially in the South China Sea). But the United States has insisted that its position of freedom of navigation in the South China Sea will continue to be what it has been, regardless of whether or not the Chinese object. The Chinese might be fortifying the region with some military equipment, [but] that's not going to stop the U.S. from continuing to ask the [U.S.] military to fly or sail wherever international law allows. So the underlying conflict of interest is still there, and I think that will continue under President Trump, and [so far] it has.

The difference is, since 2013, there have been a lot more attempts by the U.S. and China, especially [with regard to] militaries, to improve channels of communication. So, a risk of confrontation...still exists, but the risk that there would be unintended escalation because of a lack of communication between militaries – on the ground, on the water, or in the air – is somewhat reduced. That's good news.

The bad news is these conflicts of interest continue. And, in fact, we really don't know how strongly either side values those interests. In other words, the U.S. says we believe in these interests about freedom of navigation. But [what] if the Chinese believe in their interests and their claims to some of the islands in the South China Sea, or in their claim to Taiwan (if they feel Taiwan is doing things provocative to China's interests in ensuring that someday Taiwan will be reunited with China), and China takes action. If both sides feel their interests are involved, who's going to be more resolved in a confrontation? I think each side may be convincing itself that it cares enough that it can stand up to the other, but, until the test comes, you don't really know.

I think the Chinese probably believe [the issue] is closer to them than it is to [Americans], geographically speaking, and so naturally [China] cares more than [the U.S.]. [They probably believe] the U.S. thinks it cares a lot about this, but – when looking at losses of life, loss of military equipment, or the danger of escalation of fighting between two different nuclear weapon states – if somebody is going to blink, maybe it'll be the U.S. first. All it takes is for them to believe that to, potentially, escalate more than they otherwise would. Conversely, it just takes [the U.S.] believing that [China will] blink first for [the U.S.] to escalate more than it otherwise would.

JR: You mentioned China's relationship with Taiwan. The three proposed ways to resolve that tension have been the realist, the liberalist, and the constructivist approaches. Do you see any approach as most tenable for resolving the tension between China and Taiwan?

AG: I'm not big on these schools of thought. But I will say that normally constructivists are the ones who seem to be most optimistic that we can work out these problems somehow. I actually think, in the case of China-Taiwan relations, it's identities that are the biggest problem. So a realist would say, most likely, that China's going to be so powerful that ultimately Taiwan is just going to have to give in to whatever demands China makes – whether it's five or fifteen years from now, the power balance

will shift enough so that Taiwan has no choice. The liberal institutionalist would argue that, because of the growing economic relationship between Taiwan and the mainland (which is pretty extensive), over time, [PRC and Taiwan] will have to avoid conflict because it would be too costly economically to go to war. Economic interests will make [PRC and Taiwan] realize they're mutually dependent. Really, it's more Taiwan depending on the mainland than the other way around, but [the argument remains that] economic reasons will keep them from fighting.

But the problem is that it hasn't worked because the economic relationship hasn't changed the sense of identity in Taiwan, which has shifted over time as people living on the island think of themselves primarily as Taiwanese, rather than Chinese. And that is making the leadership in Beijing (on the mainland) very nervous, because there's no solution to that problem as long as Taiwan is de facto independent. You can increase the economic relationship, but that doesn't seem to alter how people think about their identity. No matter how powerful China becomes militarily, it's not going to alter the identity of people in Taiwan.

There's polling done in Taiwan all the time about whether [people living there] would consider themselves Chinese, Taiwanese, Taiwanese and Chinese, mainly Taiwanese and secondarily Chinese... all these possibilities. And the trend lines are pretty clear. But there's also polling done that asks, "Do you prefer Taiwan independence, the status quo, or reunification with the mainland?" And a pretty consistent number continue to prefer the status quo – neither independence nor reunification. This is almost certainly because they think of themselves (in terms of identity) as distinct from the mainland, understand the dangers of moving towards independence, or understand that it would be unappealing to be under the political leadership of Beijing.

Culturally, the people of Taiwan speak Chinese, and their written language uses Chinese characters. So, in a sense, the people living outside say, "but they're Chinese, can't you see that?" And what I tell my undergraduate class when I teach about Chinese politics, and particularly this issue, is that that's got

nothing to do with it. Political identities are different. My parents were from Canada. People in Canada speak English and they use the same alphabet we use. But if you ask a Canadian if they'd be OK being an American, rather than a Canadian, they're very proud to be Canadian. It's the same thing with the Taiwanese.

KS: What's your perspective on Donald Trump's labeling of China as a "currency manipulator"?

AG: He should have known [before he came into office] – because everybody who studies international economics, knows the Chinese economy, or does business on Wall Street could have told him – that the Chinese currency is not the reason for the trade imbalance. The Chinese currency, which the regime used to manipulate to keep low in value, has risen in value since 2005. In fact, probably, according to market conditions, it's overvalued right now. To the extent that the Chinese government is doing anything with respect to the exchange rate, the value of the Chinese currency, it is working hard to keep it from going down (rather than forcing it down). In fact, China spent a lot of its foreign exchange reserves to prevent the Chinese currency from depreciating. And there was a meeting of Trump and his economic advisors where, basically, they educated him on this issue. So he now understands.

KS: What are your thoughts on President Trump's vows – particularly during the presidential campaign, but also during his initial months in office – to fix our trade imbalance with China?

AG: The trade imbalance issue is more complicated. That's an issue where, for some products, it reflects the fact that the Chinese do impose both tariff and non-tariff barriers on American goods coming to China – especially the automobile and some agricultural products. And the Trump administration, like the Obama administration before, is determined to get the Chinese to increase access for American goods in China. But to be honest, it's not clear that that will resolve the trade imbalance problem, be-

cause some of what China produces is not going to be made in the United States. And Americans are going to want to buy [Chinese] goods simply because the ones that are exported from China are cheaper than the ones made by American producers. It's economics, not politics.

There are some things the Chinese are doing that contribute to the trade imbalance, but it's not entirely caused by what the Chinese government is doing. I think what President Trump is really moving towards is trying to ensure that there's reciprocity. In other words, if there are either tariffs, real trade barriers or non-tariff trade barriers to American companies doing business in China or investing in various Chinese sectors, the Chinese will know it's going to be reciprocated.

It sounds good in the abstract, but if you start to think about it, in reality, the Chinese restrict investment by foreigners in some sectors of their economy that we don't want to open up to Chinese investors. For example, telecommunications – the U.S. does not want certain Chinese companies investing in Sprint and Verizon and things like that because of their concerns about ties between Chinese corporations that do that and the Chinese military. So, for security reasons, we would say not that one. We actually have a body called CFIUS, the Committee on Foreign Investment in the United States, that reviews these investments by foreign investors – including the Chinese – and we're not going to stop doing that. And the Chinese can always say, "just like you do, we have to do that for things we consider to be a matter of national security."

It's going to be tough. But the principles that [President Trump] is offering now are becoming more typical of American trade and economic policy. In other words, not as out-of-the-ordinary as [his principles] were during the campaign, which reflects changes within the administration. It's not so much personnel being fired yet, but the people he's willing to listen to and trust. Steve Bannon is still there, but it's pretty clear he's lost influence relative to people like General Mattis, Secretary of State Tillerson, and Jared Kushner.

KS: You've described Xi Jinping's second 5-year term (2017-2022) as a crucial transition period during which changes in China's development model will be implemented. What challenges and opportunities do you foresee for China during this transition?

AG: I do believe that the next five years of so will be crucial. The slowdown of the Chinese economy could be a good thing or a bad thing. It's a bad thing if it's simply because of not dealing with the problems that are in place because [China] hasn't made some of the changes in shifting towards a market-based economy that, not only do outside analysts recognize, but the Chinese themselves recognize. A lot of the Chinese policy advisors at the top levels are people who trained in the West; they've worked in the World Bank or the IMF and are really smart people. They know what to do and know what the problems are.

The difficulty that Chinese leadership faced when announcing the development of a new wave of reforms in the period of the "new normal" and lower growth rates is political resistance – just like you would see in almost any economy when you're trying to change the growth model or change economic policy. There are going to be losers. People have to lose out to make the changes. So there's resistance from a lot of local officials who benefit from the current economic arrangements. And some of the older enterprises that, in the old way of manufacturing for export, were doing well don't want to give that up.

In the first five years under President Xi, from 2012 to 2017, he hasn't had much success in breaking down those barriers of resistance. He's spent a lot of time cracking down on officials who either are corrupt or are his enemies. There's been a real tightening of the authoritarianism in China over the past five years.

People who are optimistic say that that is going to enable him, after they select new leadership in the fall, and in the second five years he's in office, to really push through some of these economic reforms. It remains to be seen, but these five years will be crucial. If he is able to push through these reforms, then

China may very well move to a more sustainable growth model – not 10% a year growth but something in the range of 4-6% for a while. That's pretty impressive for an economy as big as China's.

KS: Do you think China's "new normal" of economic growth will be slower growth with a similar economic model or something different – perhaps a model that emphasizes the service sector more?

AG: The idea here is the new model would rely less on manufacturing and more on the service sector and consumption by Chinese households.

Everybody knows what they have to do. But to get there is not easy. Part of it is patterns of behavior, because the Chinese save a lot of money. Relative to Americans, they save more than they consume. But a lot of that is for a rational reason because educational expenses, health care expenses, real estate, etc. are big ticket items in China and people save up a lot of money just in case they get sick or they want to send their kid to college in the United States (or wherever the college might be). So they save more than we do.

But if you're saving a lot, you don't have as much money to spend to generate economic growth. It will probably be good for China and good for the United States if [China] succeeds in encouraging the service sector because the Chinese population is getting older. The distribution is moving up from being dominated by mostly younger people and working-age people to middle age and senior citizens. Healthcare, elder care, nursing homes, and assisted living – all that stuff's going to take off in China. And that's something that the U.S. has a lot of experience in.

To the extent that China is willing to open up the service sector, it's not just going to be in finance and banking, which is the focus now and what the U.S. wants to open up. American companies that have experience in these high-need areas (like healthcare and elder care) may be able to get in on the Chinese market. But they're not going to dominate it; the Chinese are going to keep most of it, and there's plenty of room for growth there that will generate economic activity.

KS: As you know, China's environmental pollution is a critical issue. As the standard of living improves, citizens are increasingly concerned about the effects of pollution on their quality of life. China has committed to hitting peak carbon by 2030. How difficult will it be for China to enact the domestic policy changes needed to achieve this target?

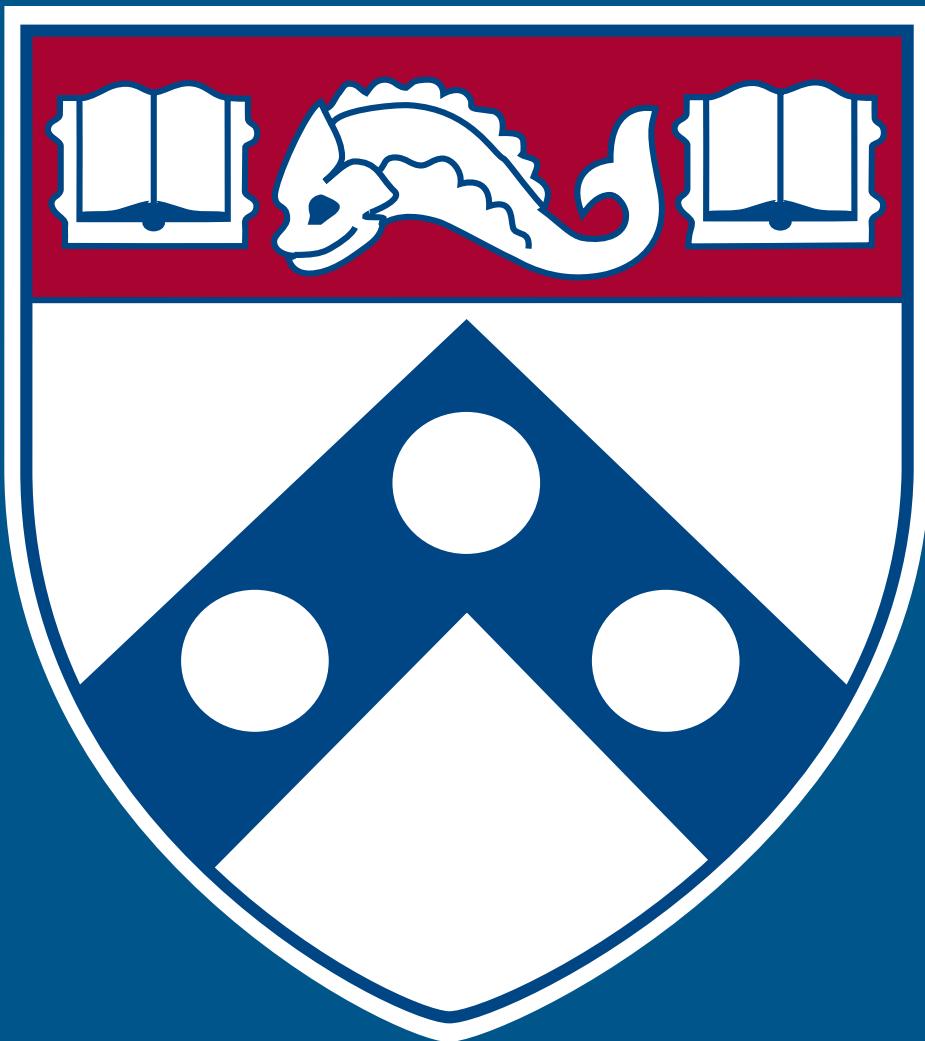
AG: Difficult, but it will be done. This is the advantage of authoritarianism. The Chinese government, for its own self-interest, understands just what you said. The crucial constituents that support the Chinese Communist Party (people living in the big cities) were happy that their incomes were growing and they could buy cars, apartments, condos, houses, and all kinds of consumer goods. That was great, but they're realizing now that there's more to your standard of living than your income.

Pollution is a daily problem and, unlike some other problems in China, it doesn't matter how much propaganda you put out or how much you try to hide things. You can't hide the air pollution. You can't hide the fact that the water's not drinkable. You can't hide the fact that you can't buy certain food at the supermarket because that food's no good.

All kinds of problems are related to pollution, and the Communist Party sees this as a life or death issue. So they have a very high motivation to act on this. When they want to act on something, they can be ruthless, as they will be and have been. They're going to get to [their targets for carbon] well before the deadline. Some people say that they knew they were going to get there and that's why they set the deadlines. They're pretty determined. If you look at the U.S. Embassy site that measures the PM2.5 ratings in Beijing, on average, the air quality has improved over the last two years. Even though you have these periodic really bad days, there are more good days than there used to be. It's clear that [the Chinese government] is very serious about this for self-interested reasons, not because they've become environmentalists.

China is now also worried about climate change, not just air pollution, and its consequences for low-lying parts of China. I think they are wor-

ried about what the United States is going to do. Because one of the big achievements of the Obama administration was getting China on board for the Paris climate change agreement. That convinced a lot of other countries, most importantly India, to go along with the agreement. And if the U.S. reneges on its commitments, then you have to worry that other countries would have less of an incentive to live up to what they signed on to. In the end, I think the Chinese would do it for themselves anyway. But if you're going to really deal with the problem of climate change, China's important, but it's not enough. Everybody's got to do their part...Apparently President Trump is now rethinking, among other things, his views on staying in the climate change treaty.



SOUND POLITICKS

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