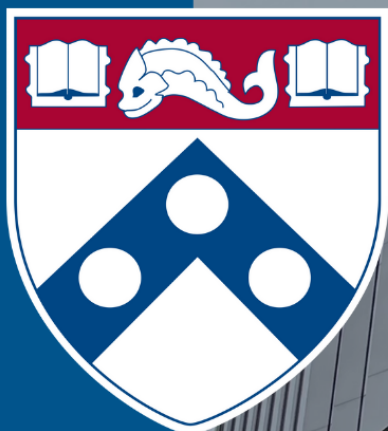


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SOUND POLITICKS



UNDERGRADUATE JOURNAL OF
POLITICAL SCIENCE

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



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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. The journal accepts submissions year-round from undergraduates of any major. Applications for positions on the editorial board are also available. All submissions and inquiries should be addressed to UPenn.SoundPoliticks@gmail.com.

Letter From The Editors

Thank you so much for taking the time to read the 2021-2022 issue of Sound Politicks. We are so proud of the work that went towards the creation of this journal. From our fantastic writers, editors, and graphics and social media team, everyone put so much effort into what has become the journal you are reading right now. This journal is a celebration of the amazing work of the undergraduate political science community at the University of Pennsylvania.

It is important to note that this is the first issue of Sound Politicks since before the global COVID-19 pandemic. Students in the University of Pennsylvania and across the world have struggled deeply during the pandemic, and we want to commend everyone for just getting through it. It is hard enough to be a student, but few will ever be able to understand the struggle that it was to be a student during the height of the pandemic. We are grateful that we were able to put together this issue to showcase that students did in spite of the tremendously difficult landscape.

The theme for this issue is “The World Right Now.” This theme came from looking at the articles and understanding that they are all about issues that students are deeply invested in and concerned about. Everything that is included in this issue is important to students right now and shows their unique perspective on the world. We are in a period of time where so much is unknown and uncertain, and every piece in this journal is triumphant by taking a deeper look into a specific issue and making sure everyone who reads it comes out with a profound understanding of that issue.

The first article in this issue is “Can students move the needle on fossil fuel divestment? Evidence from in-depth interviews” by Brendan Lui. The second article is “‘Gunboat Rhetoric’ in the South China Sea: Emphasizing Ideological Clashes to Support Great Power Competition” by Lyndsey Reeve. The third article is “The Qatar Blockade and the Quest for a Self-Sufficient and Sustainable Future” by Matthew Rabinowitz. The final article is “The Sino-North Korean Border: spuriously impermeable?” by Sean (Soohyoung) Kim. Every single one of the articles is thoroughly researched and provides an incredibly compelling argument, which deserves thought and consideration.

The 2021-2022 issue of Sound Politick is capped off with an interview with Professor Michael Jones-Correa. Professor Jones-Correa studies immigration and immigrant communities, two topics which fit directly into the theme of “The World Right Now.” The articles and interview together hopefully give you a well-rounded view of many current issues going on around the world.

Thank you again for reading Sound Politicks, and we hope that you enjoy the amazing work of University of Pennsylvania students!

Sincerely,

Vanessa Dib and Claire Ochroch
Co-Editors-in-Chiefs

Can students move the needle on fossil fuel divestment? Evidence from in-depth interviews

Brendan Lui

Introduction

In the United States, a prominent component of the broader youth climate movement has been student-led fossil fuel divestment campaigns (henceforth: FFD campaigns) on college campuses. These campaigns seek to morally delegitimize non-renewable energy reliance by pressuring universities to divest their endowments from the fossil fuel industry. FFD campaigns have seen success in the fight for university divestment. Higher-education institutions with multi-billion-dollar endowments across the United States have publicly announced they will phase-out, and eventually end, all direct investments in the fossil fuel industry, the University of California system, Harvard University, University of Michigan, and Columbia University among them (Divestment Database, n.d.). The literature on FFD campaigns focuses in part on the impacts of FFD on the industry's finances, climate policy, public climate change discourse, and carbon emissions reductions (Bergman, 2018; Healy & Debski, 2017; Tollefson, 2015). Other works in the literature attempt to uncover factors that may help explain why some FFD campaigns succeed at pushing their universities to divest, while others fail (Grady-Benson & Sarathy, 2016; Healy & Debski, 2017). This paper attempts to build upon the latter part of the relevant literature to determine whether pressures from FFD campaigns are causing universities to divest their endowments from the fossil fuel industry. What this literature lacks, and what this paper attempts to contribute, is an opening of the “black box of causality” to unpack what causal mechanism(s) are at work within the wider causal process of university fossil fuel divestment (Trampusch & Palier, 2016). I examine two cases of fossil fuel divestment: the University of Pennsylvania (Penn), which in 2020 announced they had, and would continue to, completely divest the university's endowment from the coal and tar sands industry, and Harvard University, which in 2021 announced it would phase out all endowment investments in the fossil fuel industry. Both universities have currently active FFD campaigns, Fossil Free Penn (FFP) at Penn and Fossil Fuel Divest Harvard (FFDH) at Harvard University.

I hypothesize that when universities have robust FFD campaigns, and when these campaigns employ publicized escalation tactics, as a result, universities will divest their endowments from the fossil fuel industry, either in full or in part. Several points of clarification are in order. The independent variable in question is the robustness of FFD campaigns. By robust, I mean campaigns that have 1) a consistent, core membership, 2) a formalized group structure, and 3) are widely known among the student body on their respective college campuses. The causal mechanism at work in the hypothesized causal process is the use of “publicized escalation tactics” by FFD campaigns. I argue that actions intended to be more “extreme” or “radical” relative to previous actions, and with an explicit aim of drawing public attention and/or scrutiny to the issue at hand, are what causally link robust FFD campaigns to the outcome of divestment.¹ An important caveat is that this paper does not attempt to make a generalizable claim about

¹ An important preliminary step in the argument at hand is whether escalation tactics heavily factor into contemporary debates on student-led fossil fuel divestment activism. In other words, are publicized escalation tactics even relevant to student fossil fuel divestment campaigns at all? I spoke with Claire Epstein, a former Divest Ed fellow in the summer of 2020. The fellowship brought together student divestment organizers from across the United States and Canada to discuss a range of topics, including defining divestment and re-investment, how to prevent activist burnout, and critically analyzing divestment activism through a racial-justice framework (Claire Epstein, 2021, interview). During her fellowship, Claire took part in a large group discussion among the fellows about their own experiences of divestment activism on their respective college campuses. During that discussion, Claire noted that “every campus organization [had tried] to contact their administration, or they did get in contact with someone who runs [endowment] investments, but [there was a feeling that the administrations] shrugged their shoulders ... People did not have success with internal methods of trying to get divestment to happen” (Claire Epstein, 2021, interview). Based on my interview with Claire, it seemed that the fellows widely shared the belief that publicized escalation tactics were a natural progression from failures to affect change by working alongside university administrations, rather than pressuring them from the outside. For example, Claire referred to the highly publicized escalation action by Harvard and Yale students that disrupted the 2019 Harvard-Yale football game as the “holy grail of campus activism” (Claire Epstein, 2021, interview). From my interview with Claire, I concluded that publicized escalation tactics are indeed relevant and factor heavily into the strategies of FFD campaigns. Following this interview, however, I had yet to determine whether FFD campaigns engaging publicized escalation tactics cause universities to divest their endowments from the fossil fuel industry.

how effective the “universe” of FFD campaigns is at moving the needle on university divestments. I limit any claims made in this paper to the cases in question – the effects of FFP and FFDH’s activism on their respective universities’ decisions to divest their endowments partially and fully from the fossil fuel industry.

Data and Methods

To determine whether there exists strong evidence in support of the proposed hypothesis, and to plausibly establish causal inference among the relevant cases, I rely on data from five in-depth interviews conducted during the fall of 2021 with current and former students at Penn and Harvard. I use these data in two ways. Firstly, I rely on these in-depth interview data to code the relevant cases, FFP and FFDH, on the relevant independent variable, the robustness of FFD campaigns. Secondly, the overt content of these interviews serves as causal process observations to test whether the hypothesized causal mechanism, publicized escalation tactics, is indeed at work within the larger hypothesized causal process. I conducted “semistructured” interviews with each of the interview participants. I went in with a set of pre-written questions divided into topical sections but left myself open to the possibility that more helpful or insightful questions and topics may naturally arise during the interviews.² I used two sampling methods – convenience sampling and snowball sampling – to construct my sample of interviewees.³

² For a discussion on “semistructured” interviews, see Leech, B., 2003.

³ I relied on convenience sampling to establish contact with Claire Epstein, a student at Penn and a former fellow with Divest Ed, a “national training and strategy hub for student fossil fuel divestment campaigns” (Divest Ed, n.d.), for preliminary data gathering to learn about the current state and direction of student divestment activism in the U.S. I also used convenience sampling to contact Maeve Masterson, a student at Penn and leader of FFP. From this interview with Maeve, I then relied on snowball sampling to construct a larger convenience sample of interviewees. Maeve put me in contact with Caleb Schwartz, a former student former leader of FFDH at Harvard University. She also put me in contact with Ilana Cohen, a current student at Harvard University involved with FFDH who was unavailable for an interview, but who put me in contact with a current Harvard student who is an active member of FFDH, Kate Griem. Maeve also recommended I reach out to someone who sat on the University Council Steering Committee (UCSC) at Penn. Based on this recommendation, I “cold-contacted” Michael Krone, former president of Penn’s Undergraduate Assembly, who sat on the UCSC when the Committee rejected FFP’s coal and tar sands divestment proposal in 2018. Clearly, I did not rely on random sampling procedures to construct my sample of interviewees. In general, non-random sampling for interview data collection is not inherently problematic so long as the non-random sampling strategy is aligned with the analytical goals of the research project at hand (Lynch, 2013). As stated in the introduction of the paper, I do not attempt to make generalizable claims about the larger population of university divestment outcomes and whether the “universe” of student-led divestment campaigns is causally related to university divestment decisions. Therefore, the use of non-random sampling to construct a sample of interviewees does not problematize the claims made in this paper.

Evidence of Divestment From the University of Pennsylvania and Harvard University

Generally, to discover whether a given hypothesized causal mechanism is at work within a larger hypothesized causal process, the researcher should gather “mechanism causal process observations” to leverage the argument in favor of the hypothesized causal process (Mahoney, 2010). A testable, observable implication of the hypothesized causal process in question is as follows: when robust FFD campaigns engage in publicized escalation tactics, one would expect to observe a subsequent change in university endowment investment decisions vis-à-vis the fossil fuel industry (that is, universities will choose to divest their endowments from the fossil fuel industry, either in full or in part). I rely on in-depth interview data to generate causal process observations that lend support in favor of the hypothesized causal process and demonstrate that the hypothesized causal mechanism is in fact at work.

Fossil Free Penn: the Case of Partial Divestment

I interviewed Maeve Masterson, a student leader of FFP and current senior at Penn, to gather background information on the campaign as well as specific information about FFP’s past activist work. According to Maeve, FFP has a formal group structure with a leadership team of “campaign coordinators.” Campaign coordinators meet weekly during separate “strategy sessions” to plan actions and envision long-term goals of the campaign. In addition, FFP has a consistent, core membership that meets weekly during “general body meetings.” During these meetings, coordinators may lead “teach-ins” about divestment as a form of climate activism or may update general body members about upcoming actions, protests, or demonstrations. Furthermore, Maeve noted that FFP is perceived by the wider student body at Penn as a “rowdy and aggressive and radical” organization. According to Maeve, FFP and their activist work became better known across Penn’s community following their widely publicized disruption that shut down a Penn Board of Trustees meeting in November of 2019 (Maeve Masterson, interview, 2021). I argue that based on the interview data just discussed, I can plausibly code FFP as a robust student-led fossil fuel divestment campaign.

Turning to the mechanism causal process observations of interest, Maeve sketched out in detail a timeline of FFP’s actions as they pushed (and continue to push) Penn to divest its endowment from the fossil fuel industry. In 2016, FFP sent a student-authored proposal on fossil fuel divestment to the University Council Steering Committee (UCSC), a body made up of

faculty, university administrators, and students that accepts and reviews proposals that informs university leaders of relevant issues concerning any aspect of the university (Michael Krone, 2021, interview). After reviewing FFP's 2016 proposal, the UCSC formed an ad hoc committee to further assess FFP's proposal. However, the committee ultimately rejected FFP's demands to complete divest Penn's endowment from the fossil fuel industry. Maeve noted that in response to the ad hoc committee's rejection, FFP decided to escalate their actions, staging a sit in at Penn's College Hall in 2017. Fourteen students received disciplinary notices from the university following the 2017 sit in, but Penn did not change their investment decisions regarding the fossil fuel industry following this escalation (Maeve Masterson, 2021, interview). Two years after FFP sent their initial divestment proposal to the UCSC for review, in 2018, FFP sent a more targeted proposal to the UCSC demanding the university divest its endowment from the coal and tar sands industry. This proposal was rejected by the UCSC in November 2018 without recommendation for subsequent review by an ad hoc committee, unlike FFP's initial 2016 full divestment proposal (Maeve Masterson, 2021, interview).⁴ After the UCSC rejected FFP's 2018 divestment proposal, the campaign decided to escalate their actions once again. Throughout the 2018-19 academic year, Fossil Free Penn held weekly "sit ins" every Friday at Penn's College Hall to demand a "town hall" meeting with Amy Gutmann, president of Penn. FFP wanted to convene a town hall meeting to force Gutmann to justify why Penn refused to fully divest from the fossil fuel industry. These "sit ins" culminated in a November 2019 action when FFP organized nearly one hundred students to disrupt the Penn Board of Trustees meeting (Maeve Masterson, 2021, interview). An article published in the *Daily Pennsylvanian*, Penn's student-run news publication, reported that students chanted and sang in unison throughout the meeting, ultimately forcing the Trustees to terminate their meeting after only twenty minutes (Ripley, 2019). Importantly, Maeve pointed out how FFP planned the Board of

4 I spoke to Michael Krone, former president of Penn's Undergraduate Assembly (UA) during the 2018-19 academic year, to learn more about UCSC's decision to reject FFP's 2018 divestment proposal. As Penn's UA president, Michael sat on the UCSC when the committee rejected FFP's 2018 coal and tar sands divestment proposal. Although Michael voted in favor of divesting Penn's endowment from the coal and tar sands industry, he recalled that the consensus reached among the simple majority of the UCSC's members was that FFP's proposal was not "fleshed out enough" to merit adoption (Michael Krone, interview, 2021).

Trustees meeting disruption to intentionally draw publicity. FFP's coordinators sent out press releases to local news outlets to draw news media attention to the action. In addition, coordinators got in touch with the *Daily Pennsylvanian* and the *Philadelphia Inquirer*, a prominent local newspaper, so journalists would be in attendance to report on the action (Maeve Masterson, 2021, interview).

The November 2019 action to disrupt Penn's Board of Trustees meeting was a publicized escalation tactic. Indeed, three months later, Penn announced they would divest from the coal and tar sands industry. An email sent to Penn's undergraduate student body, signed by Penn President Amy Gutmann as well as the university's Provost and Executive Vice President, reads:

Penn does not hold, and would not expect to hold going forward, any direct investments in companies focused on the production of thermal coal or bituminous (tar) sands, a reflection of the significant carbon intensity—and the corresponding risks—of such businesses (Amy Gutmann et al., personal communication, January 29, 2020).

This timeline of events provides a mechanism causal process observation that suggests Penn divested from the coal and tar sands industry because of FFP's use of publicized escalation tactics. However, without testing all other plausible, rival explanations of Penn's decision to divest, I cannot claim that FFP's publicized escalation tactics led to Penn's divestment.

Fossil Fuel Divest Harvard: The Case of Full Divestment

To date, Penn has yet to announce a full divestment of its endowment from the fossil fuel industry. Divesting from the coal and tar sands industry remains Penn's furthest commitment to fossil fuel industry divestment. Harvard University, however, is a notable case of full divestment from the fossil fuel industry given their notoriety and the size of their endowment, valued at 53.2 billion USD as of October 25, 2021 (Goldman, 2021). In this section, I will determine 1) whether FFDH can be coded as a robust student-led fossil fuel divestment campaign, and 2) whether plausible evidence exists demonstrating that FFDH's use of publicized escalation tactics caused Harvard to divest from the fossil fuel industry. I gathered the data discussed in this section from two in-depth interviews with a recent Harvard graduate, Caleb Schwartz, and a current Harvard undergraduate, Kate Griem.

FFDH started their divestment campaign targeting Harvard's endowment investments in the fossil fuel industry in 2012. Five years later,

in 2017, Harvard announced the university would pause investments in the coal, oil, and gas industries. Schwartz, who now leads FFDH's alumni campaign, recalled that after Harvard paused (but not divest) its endowment investments in coal, oil, and gas in 2017, FFDH members were widely "burnt out" and the energy of the campaign itself "fizzled out." Around late 2018 – early 2019, FFDH saw new life and consistent student engagement returned to the campaign (Caleb Schwartz, 2021, interview). Although there was evidently a pause in student engagement with FFDH, in the two years leading up to Harvard's full divestment from the fossil fuel industry, there was (and remains) a consistent core membership within FFDH. Schwartz also noted that following FFDH's revival in 2018-19, the campaign engaged in on-campus actions with the intention of educating the broader student body and campus community about FFDH's cause for fossil fuel divestment. Schwartz pointed to the 150 student volunteers who agreed to risk arrest when FFDH organized a disruption of the 2019 Harvard-Yale football game, discussed at greater lengths below, as evidence that FFDH and the movement for divestment at Harvard was widely known on campus beyond the campaign's core members. My interview with Kate Griem shed light on FFDH's organizational structure. According to Griem, FFDH has a formalized group structure. The campaign's members are divided into "working groups" that focus on different issues related to fossil fuel divestment and, recently, a just reinvestment of Harvard's endowment that was previously invested in the fossil fuel industry. Furthermore, the campaign is structured "horizontally" without a clear hierarchy of power or authority among its members (Kate Griem, 2021, interview). Based on these interview data, I argue that FFDH can be coded as a robust student-led fossil fuel divestment campaign.

Turning now to discuss FFDH's activist work, in 2018-19 when FFDH reignited their campaign, students organized a "heat week" which involved "educating the campus community" and spreading the message about fossil fuel divestment. The heat week included panels with professors, community advocates, and prominent alumni discussing issues related to divestment and climate change and culminated in a student rally in Harvard Yard to raise awareness about Harvard's financial ties to the fossil fuel industry (Caleb Schwartz, 2021, interview). FFDH followed up on this heat week with an action that was intended to 1) draw

public attention and scrutiny and 2) be an escalation relative to previous actions. In collaboration with the Yale Endowment Justice Coalition, FFDH organized around 150 students to disrupt the Harvard-Yale football game by storming the field during halftime in November 2019. An additional estimated 350 students stormed the field without prior planning (Caleb Schwartz, 2021, interview). The New York Times (O'Daly, 2019), NPR (Gringlas, 2019), The Guardian (Holden, 2019), and NBC News (Bruke, 2019) all published reports on the Harvard-Yale football game disruption, bringing student-led fossil fuel divestment activism in general, as well as Harvard and Yale's financial ties to the fossil fuel industry specifically, into the national news spotlight. Despite FFDH's highly publicized escalation, Harvard made no immediate moves to completely divest its endowment from fossil fuels. Furthermore, following the Harvard-Yale football game disruption, Harvard administrators became very reluctant to meet with FFDH. As a result, FFDH further escalated their tactics, this time exerting pressure from beyond the confines of Harvard's campus (Kate Griem, 2021, interview). In March 2021, FFDH filed a legal complaint with the Massachusetts Attorney General's office (Caleb Schwartz, 2021, interview). FFDH alleged that the university's investments in the fossil fuel industry violated Massachusetts law because Harvard has legally binding fiduciary duties regarding its investment decisions as a non-profit educational institution. The complaint reads:

Under the Massachusetts Uniform Prudential Management of Institutional Funds Act, the Harvard Corporation has a fiduciary duty to invest with consideration for the University's "charitable purposes" ... As stewards of the Harvard endowment, the Corporation is required to act in good faith and with loyalty, taking care that its investments further the purposes of the university . . . By investing an estimated \$838 million in fossil fuel stocks, the Corporation has violated these duties to Harvard and the public (Climate Defense Project, 2021).

Based on my interview with Caleb, it is unclear whether FFDH members intended for the legal complaint to lead to a formal investigation by the Attorney General's office, or whether it was intended as a public-facing statement protesting Harvard's investments. Regardless, it amounted to a further publicized escalation tactic on the part of FFDH.

On September 9, 2021, six months after FFDH filed their legal complaint with the attorney general's office and nearly two years after FFDH disrupted the Harvard-Yale football game, Harvard president Lawrence Bacow

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announced that Harvard would end all direct investments of its endowment in the fossil fuel industry. In a statement addressed to the Harvard community, Bacow wrote:

For some time now, Harvard Management Company (HMC) has been reducing its exposure to fossil fuels. As we reported last February, HMC has no direct investments in companies that explore for or develop further reserves of fossil fuels. Moreover, HMC does not intend to make such investments in the future. Given the need to decarbonize the economy and our responsibility as fiduciaries to make long-term investment decisions that support our teaching and research mission, we do not believe such investments are prudent (Lawrence Bacow, 2021, emphasis added).

In his letter, Bacow did not cite the decade of activist work by FFDH as a reason motivating Harvard's divestment decision. However, Kate noted that FFDH members were convinced that their activism was central to Harvard's divestment decision based on the language Bacow used in his statement. By noting that Harvard's fiduciary responsibility to make investments that "support the university's teaching and research mission" rendered fossil fuel investments imprudent, Bacow closely echoed FFDH's very argument for divestment they presented in their legal complaint to the Massachusetts attorney general's office (quoted above).

I argue that the timeline of events just described amounts to a mechanism causal process observation, confirming the expected observable implications of the hypothesized causal process of university fossil fuel divestment. Early in this section, I demonstrated that FFDH could be plausibly coded as a robust student-led fossil fuel divestment campaign. Furthermore, Harvard's decision to fully divest from the fossil fuel industry followed two instances of FFDH employing publicized escalation tactics – the 2019 Harvard-Yale football game disruption and the 2021 submission of a legal complaint to the Massachusetts attorney general against Harvard. Once again, the preceding evidence suggests that FFDH's publicized escalation tactics may have factored into Harvard's decision to fully divest from the fossil fuel industry. But I cannot determine, based on this evidence alone, that publicized escalation tactics are the most plausible explanation of university divestment from fossil fuels. To do so, I would need to fully account for and test all rival hypothesis that may explain why some universities choose to divest, and others do not.

Future Research Directions

As stated in the introduction above, I do not attempt to draw any generalizable conclusions about the causal process of university fossil fuel divestment beyond the cases investigated in the paper – Penn and Harvard. Future research should investigate the efficacy of FFD campaigns across a more representative range of university divestment outcomes in the U.S., allowing researchers to make inferences about the larger population of divestment campaigns and U.S. universities. Penn and Harvard do not represent the full range of variation on the outcome of interest, divestment. For example, the University of Texas System (which as of 2018 had an endowment valued at \$33 billion) is a case of "no divestment," as the university system has yet to divest any part of its endowment from fossil fuels (The Daily Texan, 2020). Naturally, one might ask, and perhaps attempt to answer, the question of whether the hypothesized causal process of university fossil fuel divestment also helps explain why the University of Texas System is a case of no divestment. Furthermore, as I noted at the end of both discussions of the interview data from Penn and Harvard, I cannot determine with any confidence whether using publicized escalation tactics amounts to the most plausible explanation of university fossil fuel divestment. A complete, systematic test of all rival hypothesis would be necessary to conclude whether publicized escalation tactics do in fact amount to a main explanatory variable of divestment. While doing so is beyond the scope of this paper, the research presented here provides a preliminary look at one possible explanation of university fossil fuel divestment. And future research should aim to test the main hypothesis of this paper, as well as the most plausible rival explanations, against cases that represent the full range of variation on the outcome of fossil fuel divestment.

I conclude by discussing how I could strengthen the arguments presented in this paper in three ways. Firstly, it remains unclear why Harvard and Penn's outcomes differed despite both universities having 1) robust FFD campaigns that 2) engaged in publicized escalation tactics. Maeve pointed out that FFD had failed to organize and act on any plans for further publicized escalation tactics following their November 2019 action due to restrictions on in-person gatherings amidst the COVID-19 pandemic. (Maeve Masterson, 2021, interview). Should FFD engage in further escalation tactics that build off the 2019 action, and should Penn subsequently announce a full divestment from fossil fuels, then stronger evidence would be available to support the present argument. However, this is a purely hypothetical though

t exercise. It does not strengthen nor weaken the existing empirical evidence that supports the hypothesized causal process of university fossil fuel divestment. Secondly, this paper would benefit from a stronger conceptualization of the independent variable, robust FFD campaigns. I relied on qualitative interview data from a limited number of interviews to provide data-indicator level evidence for the secondary-level dimensions of the concept of robustness. There are potential ways in which future research could “quantify” the data-indicators for these secondary-level dimensions. For example, future researchers could elicit surveys to university student bodies to determine whether “critical masses” of students, however defined by the researcher(s), are well attuned to the actions and goals of FFD campaigns on their respective campuses. Such evidence could strengthen the justification of coding cases on the dimension of robust campaigns that posits they must be widely known among their respective student bodies. Thirdly, future research should conduct interviews with a less biased sample of interviewees. In this paper, I solely relied on interviews with current or former college students, all of whom supported university fossil fuel divestment. While potentially difficult, if not nearly impossible, to gain access to interviews with university administrators, trustees, or investment managers who were “in the room” when universities decided to divest from fossil fuels, such interviews would provide invaluable insights into whether student activist pressure significantly affected these decision-making processes. Nevertheless, FFD campaigns have pushed the concept of divestment, the issue of universities’ complicity in the climate crisis, and the existential threat of climate change generally into the national conversation on climate (in)action. This in and of itself is worthy of remark.

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Appendix

This appendix contains a list of the interview questions I asked my interviewees that were important to answering the main research question. They are divided into two parts, questions asked to gather evidence to code cases on the independent variable and questions asked to generate causal process observations.

QUESTIONS TO CODE CASES ON THE INDEPENDENT VARIABLE

How did you first get involved with Fossil Free Penn/Divest Harvard?

What are the general “mechanics” of how Divest Harvard operates?

What is the perception of Fossil Free Penn/Divest Harvard among the general student body?

Could you please elaborate on what the coordinators [of Fossil Free Penn] do and how they're different from the general body members?

QUESTIONS FOR CAUSAL PROCESS OBSERVATIONS

FOSSIL FREE PENN

Could you please describe some of the main strategies or actions that Fossil Free Penn used to push for change within the university?

Did Fossil Free Penn ever consider actions/tactics similar to Divest Harvard's disruption of the Harvard-Yale football game? What was their stance on public-facing actions?

Did you all see [the action to disrupt Penn's Board of Trustees meeting] as more of a headline grabbing action?

Have there been deliberations [within Fossil Free Penn] about doing another escalation action, similar to the Board of Trustees action?

DIVEST HARVARD

You mentioned that [Divest Harvard's] campaign was just restarting [in late 2018-early 2019]. Can you elaborate on that?

Can you describe these “heat weeks”? What was the planning process like and the actionable items you were trying to accomplish? Were arrestable actions ever part of these heat weeks?

What was the timeline like follow the 2018/2019 heat week leading up to the Harvard-Yale football game action?

What was the motivation behind the Harvard-Yale action? Did you all see it as a kind of escalation?

Could you describe to me in your own words, and there’s no right or wrong answer, what you see as Divest Harvard’s theory of change?

You mentioned the [sit in] action you’ve recently done. Could you describe a little bit more about that action?

I know the Harvard-Yale [football] game action was a huge moment for divestment groups across the country. In your opinion, do you see Divest Harvard as continuing to draw on those escalation tactics to continue to push for change?

Do you feel that the general mood in the group is that public facing/attention grabbing actions are still one of the tactics you’re leaning on to push for change?

Were you involved in the process at all, or could you provide any background information about Divest Harvard’s grievance filed with the Massachusetts attorney general?

"Gunboat Rhetoric" in the South China Sea: Emphasizing Ideological Clashes to Support Great Power Competition

Lyndsey Reeve

Introduction

Control over the South China Sea (SCS), the Indo-Pacific's commercial mecca, has been hotly contested for decades, both for its economic and geopolitical importance. While the U.S. supports freedom of navigation in accordance with international law, China stands by its historically precedented authority over the region. In the past twenty years, American foreign policy has shifted from cautious defense to outright critique of Beijing's unlawful claims to the region in violation of the liberal world order. Ultimately, this contestation—and the military escalation it encourages—is fueled by “gunboat rhetoric,” or brash escalatory language, that frames this battle for global influence as ideological incompatibility. Instead of relying on bellicose rhetoric, American policymakers must defend the rule of law by building stronger regional partnerships and fostering economic growth for developing nations without authoritarian control. Chinese and American Interests in the South China Sea

China has turned its attention to the SCS because monopolizing the region is attractive both economically and geopolitically. According to the Center for Strategic and International Studies, nearly eighty percent of China's 2016 oil imports passed through the territory. Based on reports from the UN Conference on Trade and Development, the zone also transported roughly a third of worldwide shipping and accounted for an estimated \$3.37 trillion in trade in 2016.¹ Thus, the SCS is a vitally important lifeline, particularly for actors that depend on foreign imports for survival (Japan, for example). The SCS—which includes disputed lands like the Spratly Islands, Scarborough Reef, and James Shoal, among others—also offers rich fishing and likely contains substantial undiscovered oil and gas. Abundant natural resources compound the issue of the region's ,

contestations with nations² constantly jockeying for more control over the territory. The area is also a prime geopolitical asset, offering a so-called “Great Wall of Sand” that serves as a defensive barrier against foreign powers (featuring military facilities like ammunition bunkers, hangars, and missile silos) and a supply network around China's nautical assets. This insulating geography offers an enviable natural defense. Control of the SCS also reinforces Beijing's broader Belt and Road Initiative, allowing for easier exportation of Chinese infrastructure to less developed countries to bolster its emerging Eurasian hegemony.

For the U.S., SCS freedom of navigation is crucial to maintaining favorable trade and protecting relationships with foreign allies. Moreover, the region is also a major front in a larger competition with China for a greater international sphere of influence. The sea-lanes in the region are “the busiest, most important, maritime waterways in the world,” serving as a “vital military artery as the U.S. Seventh Fleet transits regularly between the Pacific and Indian Oceans.”

Total People's Republic of China (PRC) control of the SCS would be a loss in relative power, but would also have immediate economic consequences, restricting U.S. international trade that flows through the narrow Strait of Malacca. Additionally, violations of regional actors' sovereignty would spell trouble for America, since the U.S. has defense treaties with the Philippines, Thailand, Japan, South Korea, and Australia.⁵ Thus, the U.S. would be compelled to

2 “Military Confrontation in the South China Sea.” Council on Foreign Relations. Council on Foreign Relations, May 21, 2020. <https://www.cfr.org/report/military-confrontation-south-china-sea>.

3 Neill, Alexander. “South China Sea: What's China's Plan for Its 'Great Wall of Sand'?” BBC News. BBC, July 14, 2020. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-53344449>.

4 Ott, Marvin. “The South China Sea in Strategic Terms.” Wilson Center. The Wilson Center, May 14, 2019.

<https://www.wilsoncenter.org/blog-post/the-south-china-sea-strategic-terms>.

5 Ott, Marvin. “The South China Sea in Strategic Terms.” Wilson Center. The Wilson Center, May 14, 2019. <https://www.wilsoncenter.org/blog-post/the-south-china-sea-strategic-terms>.

1 “How Much Trade Transits the South China Sea?” China Power Project. Center for Strategic and International Studies, August 26, 2020. <https://chinapower.csis.org/much-trade-transits-south-china-sea/>.

get involved in any major conflict in the region to uphold its commitment to the liberal world order (and its credibility on the world stage as an ally to rely on). During the Obama administration, this was cause for a “shift” in attention towards the Pacific with military exercises to demonstrate America’s willingness to protect her allies in the region.⁶ A SCS conflict could be incredibly costly, both financially and in terms of combatant lives. Moreover, rising tensions in the SCS could upset the U.S.-led liberal world order and give China an advantage in great power competition.

Although China asserts historical claims to the territory, according to international law, Beijing has no authority over the region. Historically, the Chinese empire was a regional hegemon with a tributary system. China bolstered its influence by allowing nearby nations to self-govern so long as they submitted to the Chinese emperor and gave gifts as tribute to the empire. The tributary system was stifling for weaker actors, and lacked freedom of navigation. China’s basis for control over the bulk of the SCS is a 1949 map (later modified in 1962 after China ceded the Gulf of Tonkin) that created a “nine-dash line,” granting China substantial territories including the Paracel Islands and Spratly Island.⁷ Because of this historical precedent, PRC leaders claim sovereign authority over the region and consider any violation meddling foreign interference that is an international conspiracy designed to constrain China’s growth. Based on the 1982 UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), a convention designed to handle maritime disputes, countries only have sovereign claim to waters within twelve miles of their territories.⁸ This is far less than the 200 mile “exclusive economic zone,” or EEZ, China maintains unlawfully. Moreover, according to a 2016 suit levied by the Philippines against the PRC, China’s rights to the region “were extinguished to the extent they were incompatible with the exclusive economic zones provided for in the convention.”⁹ Beijing uses intentionally

6 Ott, Marvin. “The South China Sea in Strategic Terms.” Wilson Center. The Wilson Center, May 14, 2019. <https://www.wilsoncenter.org/blog-post/the-south-china-sea-strategic-terms>.

7 Taoqeer, Hamzah. “South China Sea Dispute: In Light of International Law of the Seas.” *Modern Diplomacy*. Modern Diplomacy, August 18, 2020. <https://modern diplomacy.eu/2020/08/19/south-china-sea-dispute-in-light-of-international-law-of-the-seas/>.

8 Costlow, Matthew R. “Gunboat Diplomacy in the South China Sea.” USAFA. USAFA, 2012. <https://www.usafa.edu/app/uploads/Costlow-South-China-Sea-22-Jan-2013.pdf>.

9 “THE SOUTH CHINA SEA ARBITRATION (THE REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES V. THE PEOPLE’S REPUBLIC OF CHINA).” Press Release, July 12, 2016. <https://docs.pca-cpa.org/2016/07/PH-CN-20160712-Press-Release-No-11-English.pdf>.

ambiguous language that expands Chinese control over the disputed territories, describing “indisputable sovereignty” over “adjacent” and “relevant waters,” neither of which are defined in international law. These phrases, albeit vague, lend domestic credence to China’s control and circumvent the issues more specific claims would have in international court.¹⁰

America’s Policy Shift: From Cautious Defense to Open Critique

In the past twenty-five years, American policy has shifted dramatically from concern regarding trade implications of the contested region to outright condemnation of the PRC for exploiting nearby states in its quest for regional dominance. As recently as 1995, America’s official focus in the SCS was simply preserving stability and peace. While the U.S. was eager to promote regional diplomacy, it “[took] no position on the legal merits of the competing claims to sovereignty over the various islands, reefs, atolls, and cays in the South China Sea,” only voicing concern over potential restrictions to maritime trade.¹¹ This is a much more measured, conservative stance than that of modern American policymakers, who have taken a more assertive approach by openly addressing PRC’s glaring violations of international law in the area.

In a July 2020 press statement, U.S. Secretary of State Pompeo reaffirmed America’s commitment to free seas, explicitly denouncing Beijing’s SCS claims as unlawful for the first time. Moreover, Pompeo blatantly condemned the PRC for its “might makes right” ethos, “predatory world view,” and “campaign of bullying” designed to corral relatively weak coastal states in Southeast Asia.¹² While this language is perhaps not sufficiently threatening to constitute a military threat of deterrence, Pompeo’s framing of the PRC as a “bully”—a regional hegemon willing to squash neighboring countries in the pursuit of economic power—is undeniably combative. Moreover, it outlines America’s clear moral opposition to the PRC’s claims based on universal Lockean principles of state sovereignty.

Ultimately, this new American attitude

10 Lohschelder, Sarah. “Chinese Domestic Law in the South China Sea.” *Chinese Domestic Law in the South China Sea* | Center for Strategic and International Studies. Center for Strategic and International Studies. Accessed March 22, 2021.

11 McDevitt, Michael. “The South China Sea: Assessing U.S. Policy and Options for the Future.” CNA. CNA, November 2014. https://www.cna.org/cna_files/pdf/iop-2014-u-009109.pdf.

12 Pompeo, Mike. “U.S. Position on Maritime Claims in the South China Sea - United States Department of State.” U.S. Department of State. U.S. Department of State, December 1, 2020. <https://www.state.gov/u-s-position-on-maritime-claims-in-the-south-china-sea/>.

towards the PRC's territorial ambitions in the region is framed as a fervent ideological grievance. Although the Obama administration backed UNCLOS in the past by endorsing the Philippines' right to take China to international arbitration, "it couched its responses in careful legalese."¹³ Pompeo did not tread so lightly. By villainizing Chinese opposition, he created an "us" vs. "them" binary, a hallmark of escalation to rally public opinion in support of American intervention to defend liberty. Furthermore, in stark contrast to what has been a largely non-internationalist administration, Pompeo's call to action included advocating for multinational solidarity to preserve international law and uphold liberal principles globally. Although America retained a protectionist mood amidst the COVID-19 pandemic, these rallying cries signal a foreign policy shift. This ideological battle—marked by rhetoric critiquing the PRC's poor morality as a harasser and bully—could be the impetus needed to reintegrate the U.S. into international institutions, defending the existing balance of power against rising China.

This new American stance on the PRC's illegal territorial ambitions is a rare continuity between the immensely divergent Trump and Biden administrations. President Biden has focused on partnerships to counter China's military posturing in the region, particularly promising to bolster the U.S. alliance with Japan. Secretary of State Blinken has also openly rejected China's claims to the region, saying they surpass maritime zones allowed under international law.¹⁴ While President Xi and President Biden recognize the value of strong bilateral ties in their respective development,¹⁵ Biden confronted China for continuing "to coerce and intimidate Southeast Asian coastal states, threatening freedom of navigation in this critical global throughway."¹⁶ This chronology demonstrates a transition in American policy from general trade concerns to open disdain for the PRC's supervision of the rule of law and domination of

smaller polities.

The Role of Gunboat Diplomacy in Reciprocal Escalation

To understand this stark transition in American policy, it is critical to acknowledge the recent tide of Chinese and American militarization in the region. According to the Financial Times, in 2012, a military conflict between China and Vietnam emerged in the Paracel Islands, and 21 Vietnamese fishermen were arrested for illegally fishing in Beijing-controlled waters of the SCS. Then, in 2014, satellite images revealed China building the Mischief Reef into an island which it could use for military installations.¹⁷ These instances, among others, demonstrate China's commitment to a stronghold in the region, asserted by a strong maritime presence that allows Beijing to use the territories to their advantage.

These reciprocal maritime efforts are a modern manifestation of historic gunboat diplomacy. In 2014, the U.S. and Philippines struck out against Chinese dominance with a joint maritime exercise in the region. This was one in a series of American exercises to reinforce the freedom of the seas. In one such exercise, which took place in 2015, China was met by a U.S.-guided missile destroyer on a Freedom of Navigation operation within twelve miles of the China-controlled Spratly Islands.¹⁸ This style of naval demonstration persists today. In December 2020, after U.S. Navy warships arrived in the SCS, the Chinese military had live combat drills.¹⁹ The U.S. entered the SCS twice in 2021, sending the USS Ronald Reagan aircraft carrier strike group to enforce the freedom of navigation.²⁰ China has also announced new military drills, violating the EEZ near the Vietnamese coast.²¹ In Force and Statecraft, George, Craig, and Laurens describe how America's own "gunboat diplomacy" was popularized during the nineteenth century to describe the importance of navies as tools for

13 "How Significant Is the New U.S. South China Sea Policy?" How Significant Is the New U.S. South China Sea Policy? | Center for Strategic and International Studies. CSIS, December 3, 2020. <https://www.csis.org/analysis/how-significant-new-us-south-china-sea-policy>.

14 McCurry, Justin. "US Takes Aim at China Territorial Claims as Biden Vows to Back Japan." *The Guardian*. Guardian News and Media, January 28, 2021. <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2021/jan/28/us-takes-aim-at-china-territorial-claims-as-biden-vows-to-back-japan>.
15 Remarks by President Biden and President XI of the People's Republic of China Before Virtual Meeting." *The White House*. The United States Government, November 16, 2021.

16 Lee, Matthew. "Biden Backs Trump Rejection of China's South China Sea Claim." *AP NEWS*. Associated Press, July 12, 2021. <https://apnews.com/article/business-government-and-politics-china-south-china-sea-5ea0eeb76a57d529dc982caeb802c456>.

17 Lockett, Hudson. "Timeline: South China Sea Dispute." *Timeline: South China Sea Dispute*. Financial Times, July 12, 2016.

<https://www.ft.com/content/aa32a224-480e-11e6-8d68-72e9211e86ab>.
18 Lin, Kun-Chin, and Andrés Villar Gertner. "Gunboat Diplomacy in the South China Sea." *The Diplomat*. for The Diplomat, November 18, 2015. <https://thediplomat.com/2015/11/gunboat-diplomacy-in-the-south-china-sea/>.

19 Feng, John. "Chinese Forces Flex Muscles in South China Sea during U.S. Navy Transit." *Newsweek*. Newsweek, December 9, 2020. <https://www.newsweek.com/china>

20 "US Sends Warships through South China Sea in Latest Transit." *South China Morning Post*, September 27, 2021. <https://www.scmp.com/news/china/diplomacy/article/3150304/us-sends-warships-through-south-china-sea-latest-transit>.

21 Chau, Mai Ngoc, and Philip Glamann. "Vietnam Says China's Sea Drills Violate Its Economic Zone." *Bloomberg.com*. Bloomberg. Accessed March 16, 2022. <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2022-03-08/vietnam-says-china-s-military-drills-violate-its-economic-zone>.

coercive diplomacy, since they could be easily moved and adjusted for the appropriate amount of coercion. Seapower could, according to one officer, “best unite force with persuasion.”²² In the SCS, both the U.S. and China use seapower to signal their unwillingness to back down over their defense of free seas and control of the region, respectively.

Incompatible “Gunboat Rhetoric” in Chinese and American Foreign Policy

Backed by superior maritime capabilities (gunboat diplomacy), U.S. policymakers can speak with credibility in their capability to deter Chinese aggression through threats of severe force. Rather than opt for a diplomatic facade, like that present during the Obama administration, President Trump and President Xi chose confrontational public declarations. Instead of relegating their use of gunboats to the tangible realm—as physical force to promote domestic agendas—modern American and Chinese leaders put their gunboats on full display in inflammatory speech to sway public opinion. This can be dubbed “gunboat rhetoric,” a style of brash language that escalates military conflict. States ordinarily live under a constant security dilemma, or a cycle of reciprocal escalation due to their inability to predict their rival’s next move. “Gunboat rhetoric” intensifies the existing security dilemma, highlighting the importance of information warfare in addition to physical strength. Crafting a compelling narrative that justifies territorial ambitions is a high priority for Chinese and American administrations, who compete to write history as it happens. The prevalence of such sensationalized speech gives actors even more cause to believe that others in the international system have aggressive intentions.

Pompeo’s aforementioned incendiary critiques of Beijing are part of a larger pattern of this style of stirring rhetoric. For example, top American diplomat David Stilwell has encouraged the international community to address China’s malignant behavior, concluding “these are not the actions of a responsible global actor, but a lawless bully.”²³ This presents China as an irrational, power-hungry foe willing to swallow less developed countries. Likewise, during his

administration, President Trump was explicit about his cynical disposition toward China, arguing that “for decades, they have ripped off the United States like no one ever has before” by “[gutting] our industries, [stealing] our intellectual property, and [raiding] our factories.”

²⁴This vivid description similarly paints a picture of an extreme (almost cartoonish) villain the entire nation can rally against. In fact, some argue that Republicans and Democrats alike have employed anti-China rhetoric to increase U.S. military spending to advance great power competition in the SCS.²⁵ When Chinese officials hear these provocative accusations, they respond in kind with “gunboat rhetoric,” increasing the likelihood of future conflict within the prism of the security dilemma.

China’s anti-American rhetoric often portrays the U.S. as a self-righteous, interventionist nation unjustly meddling in Beijing’s regional affairs. Chinese policymakers have repeatedly condemned so-called “American adventurism,” saying this attitude violates normative rules of international relations, propagating instability and tension.²⁶ Instead of focusing on a willingness to resolve this spitting-war diplomatically, China responds in kind by framing America as a hypocritical, holier-than-thou police force. The Chinese government vehemently opposes this presumed violation of their national right to self-governance within the territories they assert belong to them. In fact, Beijing’s Foreign Minister has insisted that the Americans are the real bullies sparking international conflict, while the Asia-Pacific countries care about cooperation that promotes a “spirit of mutual benefit and win-win.”²⁷ Evidently, just like the U.S., Chinese officials fiercely condemn their foe and frame their country as the benevolent champion of international cooperation, triumphantly expanding despite Western colonial intervention.

Ideological Underpinnings of South China Sea Contestation

Ultimately, U.S. liberalist moral appeals fuel

²⁴ Trump, Donald J. “Remarks by President Trump on Actions Against China.” The White House. The United States Government, May 29, 2020. <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefings-statements/remarks-president-trump-actions-china/>.

²⁵ Lazare, Sarah. “How Bipartisan Anti-China Rhetoric Is Being Used to Increase U.S. Military Spending.” In *These Times*, October 21, 2020AD. <https://inthesetimes.com/article/china-ndaa-military-spending-pentagon-indo-pacific-smith-thornberry-biden-trump>.

²⁶ China Slams ‘US Adventurism’ in Middle-East.” *Deccan Herald*. DH News Service, January 6, 2020. <https://www.deccanherald.com/international/world-news-politics/china-slams-us-adventurism-in-middle-east-791864.html>.

²⁷ Al Jazeera. “China Accuses US of ‘Stirring up Confrontation’ in Asia-Pacific.” *China | Al Jazeera*. Al Jazeera, October 13, 2020. <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2020/10/13/chinas-top-diplomat-says-us-still-stuck-to-cold-war-mentality>.

²² Craig, Gordon Alexander, 1913-2005 and Alexander L. George, 1995. *Force and Statecraft: Diplomatic Problems of Our Time*. New York: Oxford University Press.

²³ Brunnstrom, David, and Patricia Zengerle. “Top U.S. Diplomat for East Asia Calls China ‘Lawless Bully.’” *U.S. News & World Report*. U.S. News & World Report, September 17, 2020AD. <https://www.usnews.com/news/world/articles/2020-09-17/top-us-diplomat-for-east-asia-calls-china-lawless-bully>.

escalation in the SCS. Through American exceptionalism, policymakers color the U.S. as a benevolent hegemon preserving the existing international balance of power by protecting favorable trade and state sovereignty as public goods. However, in line with a realist conception of power as a zero-sum game, the U.S. is really serving national interests, scrambling to limit China's rising influence as a competitor for global prominence. As argued by leading global strategy advisor Dr. Parag Khanna, Beijing's broader Belt and Road strategy is an "infrastructure arms race." Rather than conquering countries militarily, China is weaponizing infrastructure, tempting smaller nations with an extended Silk Road and buying rather than conquering them.²⁸ To retain international hegemony, the U.S. chose to counteract complete Chinese authority over the SCS, a major stronghold that facilitates this kind of rapid Chinese infrastructure-based expansion (or new tributary system).

Especially in light of China's grievous human rights record affecting Uighur Muslims, Mongolians, and Tibetans (among others), U.S. policymakers have seized the opportunity to frame this new era of great power competition in an salvationist manner. To retain a hold on multinational markets, U.S. policymakers employ paternalistic language that suggests a sort of "belligerent humanitarianism," insisting that China must not disrupt the existing balance of power and promoting self-righteous international moral law while escalating militarily themselves.²⁹ By casting itself as the leader of a liberal democratic coalition counteracting authoritarian exploitation in developing countries, Americans can justify military escalation.

Similarly, Chinese moral appeals escalate conflict and justify Beijing's sovereignty in the SCS. Beijing presents itself as an alternative to a controlling, Western imperial world order. Unlike America's exceptionalist doctrine, Beijing champions mutual cooperation and freedom from foreign interventionism. Beijing also appeals to a historical conception of "old-world" China, a mighty tributary system that protected state sovereignty and provided infrastructure in exchange for less developed

nations' subservience. For emerging countries that have historically struggled under a U.S.-led world order, China offers a fresh alternative.

When former U.S. Secretary of State Tillerson took a harsh stance on Beijing and hinted that the U.S. might impose a naval blockade in the SCS, Chinese state media said that the Americans would have to "wage a large-scale war" to prevent China's access to islands in the region.³⁰ This foreboding threat, a clear example of the aggressive, "gunboat rhetoric" discussed, demonstrates Beijing's unwavering commitment to expanding its global sphere of influence, no matter the cost. In their *Rhetorical Critique of Contested Claims in the South China Sea*, Hartnett and Reckard refer to this ideological appeal as "traumatized nationalism." In a rags to riches story, Chinese officials frame Beijing in a "universalist" and even "salvationist" manner, advocating for a rise from weakness as a victim of the constraining Western world order to exceptionalism as a new hegemon.³¹ This conceptualization can be entrancing for less developed countries, who identify with exploitation at the hands of the West and are eager for an alternative to Western hegemony. Coupled with the infrastructure China can provide, this rhetoric is hard to resist for emerging economies.

Biden's Options

Biden's opportunities include assisting regional powers in drafting binding regional legislation to uphold the rule of law, but this is only possible with economic incentives. Because the decision in the Permanent Court of Arbitration suit by the Philippines lacks an enforcement mechanism, regional actors (called ASEAN, or the Association of Southeast Asian Nations) have attempted to draft a regional Code of Conduct (COC) with China. Resolving this dispute regionally—with ASEAN members including the Philippines, Vietnam, Indonesia, Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, Singapore, Thailand, Malaysia, and Brunei—may appeal to Beijing to avoid concerns of undue influence by foreign non-claimants (like the U.S.). However, little progress has been made. A regional economic powerhouse, China hopes to retain its sovereignty, and a binding COC could challenge that. Moreover, most ASEAN powers have

28 Khanna, Parag "Will All Roads Lead to China? - FPRI Events." Foreign Policy Research Institute, September 11, 2020. <https://www.fpri.org/event/2020/will-all-roads-lead-to-china/>.

29 Hartnett, Stephen J., and Bryan R Reckard. "Sovereign Tropes: A Rhetorical Critique of Contested Claims in the South China Sea." *Rhetoric and Public Affairs*. Michigan State University Press, 2017. <https://muse-jhu-edu.proxy.library.upenn.edu/article/671510>.

30 Johnson, Jesse. "Behind the Scenes, Tillerson Tones down Rhetoric on South China Sea." *The Japan Times*. The Japan Times, February 7, 2017. <https://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2017/02/07/asia-pacific/behind-scenes-tillerson-tones-rhetoric-south-china-sea/>.

31 Hartnett, Stephen J., and Bryan R. Reckard. "Sovereign Tropes: A Rhetorical Critique of Contested Claims in the South China Sea." East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 2017.

Disagreement on dispute settlement mechanisms and conflict management have emerged, and differences among ASEAN powers have hindered unity.³²

Biden has a unique opportunity to undermine China's claims without being physically threatened, unlike many ASEAN nations. If the U.S. wants to win this economic stand-off, Biden must support local economies, partnering with the vulnerable countries most susceptible to China's influence. Certainly, in the wake of domestic struggles during the COVID-19 pandemic, outreach is difficult. Biden's decision to provide up to \$102 million in new initiatives with ASEAN is a step in the right direction,³³ but China and Japan "provide by far the most infrastructure financing" for ASEAN, which needs "\$210 billion per year in infrastructure investment just to maintain positive economic growth."³⁴ Ultimately, ASEAN's overwhelming need will push regional polities to keep relations cordial even as they suffer China's swelling ambitions. Only alternative Silk Roads will make defending international law a possibility for smaller actors.

Conclusion

Because of its economic and geopolitical importance, control over the SCS has been a long-time conflict point for the U.S. and Beijing. While China stands by historical cartography to defend its claims to the region, the U.S. considers Beijing's claim unlawful and prioritizes open seas in the region to foster free trade as a public good. This contestation leads to gunboat diplomacy, or regular posturing of naval forces in the region. Gunboat diplomacy is triggered by incendiary "gunboat rhetoric," which exacerbates the security dilemma by creating a perpetual state of mutual hostility. "Gunboat rhetoric" is then employed by policymakers when discussing competing claims to the region to disparage their great power rival and present this contest for global influence as an ideological war.

32 Nguyen Minh Quang for The Diplomat. "Saving the China-ASEAN South China Sea Code of Conduct." – The Diplomat. for The Diplomat, June 28, 2019. <https://thediplomat.com/2019/06/saving-the-china-asean-south-china-sea-code-of-conduct/>.

33 "Fact Sheet: New Initiatives to Expand the U.S.-ASEAN Strategic Partnership." The White House. The United States Government, October 26, 2021. <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2021/10/26/fact-sheet-new-initiatives-to-expand-the-u-s-asean-strategic-partnership/>.

34 Dollar, David, and Jonathan Stromseth. "The US Must Urgently Rethink Its Economic Policies in Asia." Brookings. Brookings, March 9, 2022. <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/order-from-chaos/2021/02/17/us-must-urgently-rethink-its-economic-policies-in-asia/>.

Freedom of navigation exercises in the regions symbolize an enduring military commitment to defending open seas, but China's unlawful claims to the SCS are a symptom of an effort that spans economic, military, and human rights arenas. Thus, promoting democratization and defending the free world's rule of law will demand more than militarism. Instead, the U.S. should recommit to assisting countries on the verge of autonomy, supporting their independence, perhaps via privatization of industry and alternative "Silk Roads."

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The Qatar Blockade and the Quest for a Self-Sufficient and Sustainable Future

Matthew Rabinowitz

Introduction

On June 5, 2017, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Bahrain, and Egypt cut diplomatic ties with Qatar, closed its land borders, and prevented Qatari ships and planes from entering their ports and airspaces, thereby beginning a blockade that would last for almost four years and spark a short-lived food shortage in the small Arab country (Arab Center for Research & Policy Studies, 2021). As a rentier state endowed with revenues from selling hydrocarbon—specifically liquified natural gas—and not from domestic taxes, Qatar was able to muffle the blows of the 2017 Blockade (which will be referred to as the “Blockade” for the remainder of this paper) on its citizen and foreign worker population. It did so by drawing on financial reserves to provide residents with heavily-subsidized food, water, and electricity, along with other commodities. At the same time, it managed to respond to the Blockade by quickly forming new trade outlets and by becoming more agriculturally self-sufficient. These changes, however, led to a drastic increase in water usage which in turn revealed an underlying water and energy crisis that Qatar has since been trying to resolve through environmental and sustainability initiatives. This study examines the impact of the Blockade on Qatari government initiatives and advances two arguments. The first is that the Blockade, contrary to what the Saudi-led coalition intended, ultimately helped Qatar by prompting it to pursue initiatives in self-sufficiency. The second is that the specific initiatives that Qatar pursued revealed looming and urgent crises regarding water and energy usage that the country has been racing to solve.

This examination of Qatar’s increasing focus on sustainability draws upon statistical data of Qatar’s energy and water usage before, during, and after the Blockade. It examines data regarding the Blockade’s impact on Qatari consumption patterns and water and energy policies over the past decade, along with surveys of public opinion surrounding Qatari policies. It

also draws upon business and non-governmental organization (NGO) reports on Qatar’s sustainability initiatives as well as internal sustainability publications, particularly the Qatari National Vision 2030 sustainability plan. Finally, it examines pertinent news articles from throughout the Blockade.

Four sections follow. First, this study will provide an overview of Qatar’s economy and how the Blockade changed its economic policies in many ways for the better, particularly by forcing Qatar to be less reliant on external trade. The second section will provide an overview of Qatar’s water and energy sources and consider how Blockade-era policies have drastically increased Qatari water, and, by extension, energy usage, in ways that may not be sustainable. Next, this paper will look at Qatar’s struggle to introduce sustainability initiatives and how it has had to quickly expand them to accommodate its newly increased economic self-sufficiency, or autarky. Finally, this paper will conclude by examining the potential outcomes of Qatar’s current sustainability initiatives and avenues of sustainability that Qatar can take in the future.

The Blockade’s Impact on Qatar’s Economy and Self-Sufficiency

Qatar’s vast hydrocarbon resources have enabled it to become one of the wealthiest countries in the world. It has the fourth-largest natural gas reserve, an extremely fast-growing Human Development Index (HDI), and one of the largest gross domestic products (GDP) per capita in the world (Hussein and Lambert, 2020). Qatar has been able to ensure a high degree of political quiescence while depoliticizing its population by providing subsidies and welfare benefits with its hydrocarbon income and rent payments, allowing the state to exist as an emirate rather than a democracy. Qatar would need to reform its economic policies only in a budget or geopolitical crisis, which is exactly what happened in 2017 (Hussein and Lambert, 2020).

A variety of regional disagreements and geopolitical issues, regarding support for

terrorist groups and the United States, prompted Qatar's neighbors to declare the Blockade. Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Bahrain, and Egypt had previously eased tensions with Qatar that had sprung from disagreements over Egypt's 2013 coup d'état (the ousting of Egyptian president Mohammed Morsi by General Abdel Fattah al-Sisi) out of fear that U.S. President Barack Obama would be conciliatory to Iran. These nations quickly reversed their positions in 2017 by claiming that Qatar supported Iran and Islamic extremists such as the Muslim Brotherhood (Seznec and Mosis, 2019). Analysts also theorize that Saudi Arabia and its allies implemented the Blockade partly to punish Qatar for funding Al Jazeera, a news station known for criticizing Arab governments and supporting Qatar (Arab Center for Research & Policy Studies, 2021). After U.S. President Donald J. Trump's defeat in the 2020 Presidential Election, however, Saudi Arabia reconsidered its policies and moved to lift the Blockade, based on both fear of pushback from U.S. President Joseph R. Biden Jr. and realization that the Blockade had proven ineffective (Arab Center for Research & Policy Studies, 2021). In January 2021, Saudi Arabia convinced its fellow countries at the 41st Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) Summit to cease the Blockade, and Qatar, in turn, dropped legal charges that it had pressed against them in international courts (Arab Center for Research & Policy Studies, 2021).

While the Blockade ultimately resulted in political and economic damage for the blockaders, the immediate damage Qatar suffered forced it to modify its own trade networks and agricultural policies to continue providing its citizens with adequate food and commodities. Prior to the Blockade, Qatar had imported over 90 percent of its food, despite the Qatar National Food Security Program's establishment after the 2008 Financial Crisis. The program had been created to lease land in Kenya to grow food for Qatar, but after facing pushback for controlling foreign land, it instead purchased stakes in agricultural companies. When the Blockade went into effect, Qatar was subject to rates 10 times higher for agricultural products (Luomi, 2014) as much of its food had been imported via land routes through Saudi Arabia and the UAE. To combat this drastic surge in prices, Qatar worked to improve relations with Iran, Oman, Turkey, and the United States, and established overseas trade routes with the latter two by opening a new

international port. Qatar's trade surplus actually increased by 50 percent from 2016 to 2017 due to the reduced import options from the Blockade and the decision to begin exporting more natural gas to China (Seznec and Mosis, 2019). Qatar also greatly increased its domestic food production. By 2019, it became 100 percent self-sufficient in dairy and chicken and over 70 percent self-sufficient in dates, poultry, vegetables, seafood, and eggs (Hussein and Lambert, 2020). Additionally, its National Food Security Programme advanced plans to create 1,600 more farms by 2025 and increase food production from 10 percent of consumption to 40 percent (Luomi, 2014).

With these modifications, Qatar's economic suffering was short-lived. By the first fiscal quarter of 2018, its economy had grown 2 percent year-over-year, while in the second quarter its economy had grown another 2.5 percent. Consumer confidence in the first quarter also rose to the highest level in almost two years, demonstrative of the extent to which Qatar was able to both appease its citizens and easily blunt the effects of the Blockade (World Bank Group, 2018). Amidst these gains, however, Qatar realized another obstacle in its path, namely, a dearth of access to water.

Qatar's Water and Energy Consumption Pre- and Post-Blockade

Qatar is in a desert, yet it has one of the highest water consumptions per capita in the entire world. This inconsistency is a result of irresponsible water usage that it abets by desalinating large amounts of seawater (Hussein and Lambert, 2020). In 2014, Qatar had a population of 2.1 million, and its water replenishment rate per capita was lower than 29 cubic meters per year. For comparison, the international "water poverty line" (defined as the amount of water necessary to meet an individual's standard water demand) is 1,000 cubic meters per year, and the international average is 6,000 (Darwish, 2016). Despite this low rate of replenishment, water usage in Qatar has increased; from 2004 to 2013, annual desalination went from 178 cubic megameters to 465, and that number has only continued to climb (Darwish, 2016). From 2008 to 2019, daily water demand more than doubled, going from 0.9 million cubic meters a day to 1.9 million (Okonkwo et al, 2021). In terms of overall consumption, Qatar consumed at a rate of 500 liters per day per capita in 2015, while other countries such as the United Kingdom, France,

and Australia consumed 150, 164, and 290 liters per day, respectively, according to the Qatar General Electricity and Water Corporation, Kahramaa (Oxford Business Group, 2021).

Due to Qatar's dry climate, over 50 percent of its fresh water comes from desalination plants, all of which consume large amounts of energy. Since 2010, only 3.2 percent of Qatar's desalinated water has been produced by seawater reverse osmosis systems, which require 4 to 6-kilowatt hours of electricity per cubic meter of water. For comparison, multi-stage flash and multi effect-thermal vapor compression systems, which are the two most common systems, use almost 20-kilowatt hours per cubic meter (Darwish, 2016). Multi-stage flash systems alone provide 75 percent of Qatar's desalinated water capacity (Kamal, Al-Ghamdi, and Koc, 2021). Desalination is so energy-intensive that it used 22.7 percent of Qatar's total electricity production in 2011 (Darwish, 2016). The 2017 Blockade only increased Qatar's consumption practices, as its new agricultural developments have required significantly more water than the country has used before. In 2014, agriculture used 74 percent of Qatar's limited freshwater resources, and it contributed only 1 percent to the country's GDP (Luomi, 2014). However, Qatar imported thousands of cows, chickens, and other animals from the European Union and the United States during the Blockade to increase its self-sufficiency. Salinity has since risen drastically in Qatar's soil because fodder production draws more from aquifers than can be replenished, and uses up over half of Qatar's extracted groundwater. Similarly, farms in Qatar must be indoors, air-conditioned, and have constant misting to keep animals cool, resulting in an even greater need for desalinated water and electricity (Wellesley, 2019). The result of this increase in consumption has pushed Qatar into a water and energy crisis that has not yet been felt by its citizens.

Implementing Sustainability with an Uninvolved Populace

Overall, Qatar suffers from a lack of public awareness surrounding sustainability and the current crisis because Qatari citizens and residents do not have to pay for their water and energy, and there is little public discourse regarding environmentalism. A 2018 qualitative survey of 410 Qatari consumers found that 71.75 percent of Qataris do not monitor their energy and gas consumption, 50.37 percent do not use energy-efficient light bulbs, 34.74 percent do not

have insulated homes, and 26.5 percent do not even know about their home insulation. Additionally, only 60 percent admitted to turning lights off when exiting a room, and most did not say it was to promote energy savings (Al-Marri, Al-Habaibeh, and Watkins, 2018). Ninety percent of Qatar's population is comprised of foreign workers, many of whom are blue-collar workers, living in dormitories or joint living spaces and thus not paying utility bills. Similarly, white-collar foreign workers generally live with family members in rented homes or in hotels within the emirate because they cannot own land, making them also exempt from bill payments (Hussein and Lambert, 2020). In fact, a fall 2015 study by Qatar University found that only 8 percent of Qatari citizens and 51 percent of Qatari foreigners received utility bills, and only 22.9 percent of foreigners actually paid those bills themselves (Hussein and Lambert, 2020). Additionally, over 92 percent of water used by farmers is provided to them for free (Wellesley, 2019). Despite this lack of awareness, the majority of households in Qatar do value renewable energy to some extent; 50.5 percent of Qataris would adopt renewable energy due to a sense of environmental responsibility, and 22.8 percent would adopt them to reduce consumption (Al-Marri, Al-Habaibeh, and Watkins, 2018).

Although older Qatari government initiatives continue to increase public awareness surrounding sustainability, the emirate has had to directly combat its water and energy crisis by rapidly implementing sustainable sources of energy and environmental policies. Qatar's National Vision 2030, a development plan launched in 2008, codified the country's goal of increasing environmental protection through public awareness, environmental institutions, and a responsive legal system (Qatar General Secretariat For Development Planning, 2008). Qatar replaced its outdated Supreme Council for the Environment and Natural Reserves with a new Ministry of Environment in the same year to better implement its National Vision, and its staff quickly grew to 2,700 personnel by 2010, proving Qatar's commitment to the environment (Luomi, 2014). However, this ministry has been relatively reactive rather than proactive, with its largest initiative prior to the Blockade being a project called "Tarsheed." Launched in 2012, Tarsheed is a conservation plan meant to educate the public about efficiency, waste, and other forms of sustainability (Luomi, 2014). For

example, it seeks to reduce per capita water consumption by 35 percent and power consumption by 20 percent, and it ran public awareness television ads emphasizing the illegality of using potable water unnecessarily. In the post-Blockade era, the Ministry has set significantly more effective targets, including two to four gigawatts of photovoltaic (solar) energy production, 100 percent electric public transportation, and 10 percent electric private transportation by 2030 (US-Qatar Business Council, 2021). Qatar has recently developed plans to help support large-scale solar projects by investing in the 700-megawatt Siraj Solar Energy project (which will be completed at the end of 2021) and fostering a power-purchasing agreement in January 2020 for Total and Marubeni to create an 800-megawatt plant with advanced robotics, sun-tracking systems, and panels by April 2022 (US-Qatar Business Council, 2021). Kahramaa is currently in the process of providing homes with smart meters that allow for the energy grid and water pipelines to adapt to individual usage, and it deployed over 17,000 of them between 2016 and 2018 (Hussein and Lambert, 2020). Qatar will also solve the immediate threat of fully depleting its water reserves by expanding its 48 hours of reservoir capacity to seven days with its Strategic Mega Reservoirs Project (Oxford Business Group, 2021). Individual municipalities are taking action as well. For example, certain ones will ban groundwater usage in fodder production by 2025 and require recycled sewage water to be used instead (Wellesley, 2019).

Conclusion

The Blockade of 2017, which lasted less than four years, had two major and unforeseen consequences which are likely to shape the future of Qatar for years to come. It prompted the country to quickly become more self-sufficient, and it exposed Qatar's resource limitations, particularly in water and energy. Qatar has been trying to address these limitations, but they continue to prove difficult for the arid nation to solve.

Around the world, countries are reducing their dependence on hydrocarbons and increasing their sustainable practices. Japan, one of Qatar's main liquified natural gas customers, is replacing its gas with much greener hydrogen fuel for electricity production with the support of its populace, and other nations are following suit (Bohra and Shah, 2019). Qatar itself is expanding its renewable energy capacities to

accommodate for its increased post-Blockade consumption practices, but it is also expanding its sustainability initiatives to position itself for the future. Experts believe that Qatar could easily produce 50 percent of its electricity with solar energy by 2030 rather than just 20 percent, especially considering that Qatar has the potential to produce solar energy equivalent to 1.5 million barrels of oil annually for every square kilometer of its territory (Oxford Business Group, 2017). Unlike Japan, however, Qatari citizens have few incentives to be environmentally conscious, which is why limiting subsidies, mandating efficiency measures, and launching educational initiatives is so vital. With more public support and awareness surrounding sustainability, the emirate will be able to introduce even more initiatives that will bring it into the era of environmentalism. As the world shifts further and further away from hydrocarbons and tensions continue to climb in the Gulf, Qatar's self-sufficiency, newfound trade relations, and increased sustainability will help it continue to prosper.

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The Sino-North Korean Border: Spuriously impermeable?

Sean (Soohyoung) Kim

In 2018, the Republic of Korea (South Korea) and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (North Korea) declared that they will "bring forward the future of co-prosperity and reunification led by Koreans" and usher "comprehensive and epochal improvement and development in inter-Korean relations."¹ However, North Korea fired 28 missiles between the signing of the Panmunjom Declaration and 2020. Of the 28 missiles, North Korea fired 20 missiles in 2019, the third highest number of missiles fired by North Korea after 2016 and 2017, the year when the United Nations sanctions on North Korean exports began.² North Korea also detonated the Inter-Korean Liaison Office in 2020, a move that impeded the cooperation that the Panmunjom Declaration originally sought to accomplish.³ Subsequent events, such as North Korean residents directly crossing the Demilitarized Zone and a defector in South Korea evading South Korean military surveillance to return to North Korea, exposed security weaknesses of both Koreas and negatively impacted South-North relations as well.⁴

1 Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Korea, "Panmunjom Declaration for Peace, Prosperity and Unification of the Korean Peninsula (2018.4.27)," Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Korea, September 11, 2018, https://www.mofa.go.kr/eng/brd/m_5478/view.do?seq=319130&srchFr=&srchTo=&srchWord=&srchTp=∓multi_itm_seq=0&itm_seq_1=0&itm_seq_2=0&comp any_cd=&company_nm=&page=1&titleNm=

2 Center for Strategic and International Studies, "Missiles of North Korea," Missile Threat, November 30, 2020, <https://missilethreat.csis.org/country/dprk/>.

3 BBC News, "Puk'an Nambung kongdongyöllaksamuso p'okp'a [North Korea Detonates the Inter-Korean Liaison Office]," BBC News Korea, June 18, 2020, <https://www.bbc.com/korean/news-53089558>.

4 There were both illegal South-to-North and North-to-South crossing of the Demilitarized Zone in 2020 which were widely covered by the South Korean media. For coverage on a North Korean defector who evaded South Korean military surveillance and returned to North Korea, see Sunyoung Choi, "Puk'anshinmun 'k'orona hwakchinja hanmyöngdo öpta't't'albungmin wölbung hu ch'ön ön'güp [North Korean Newspapers Report No Coronavirus Cases in North Korea...First Mention Ever Since Defector's Return to North Korea]," Yonhap News, July 30, 2020, <https://www.yna.co.kr/view/AKR20200730038000504>. For coverage on a North Korean resident illegally crossing the DMZ fencing, see Hyunmin Yoo, "Kun, tongbujönsön ch'ölch'aeng nömün dwajumin shinbyönghwakpo 'chakchön chö'ch'adaero chinhaeng' [Army Claims Capture of North Korean Individual on the Eastern Front "Occurred in Accordance with the Operational Protocol]," Yonhap News, November 10, 2020, <https://www.yna.co.kr/view/AKR20201110082700504>.

While official exchanges between South Korea and North Korea mostly take place across the Demilitarized Zone, considerable unofficial exchange between North Korea and the rest of the world occurs across the Sino-North Korean border. This mostly-fluvial border of 1352 km spans from the Yellow Sea to the tri-point where North Korea, China, and Russia meet, located 18 km from the East Sea.⁵ The border has remained the same since March 20, 1964, when the People's Republic of China (China) and North Korea signed the Sino-North Korean Border Treaty in secrecy.⁶ While both North Korean and Chinese officials strictly regulate any civilian movements across the border, economic factors, and presence of ethnic Korean populations in Liaoning, Jilin, and Heilongjiang encourage illegal migration across the border and renders the border porous.⁷

This paper highlights that even though the Sino-North Korean border may officially be impermeable, the robust trade network that Chaoxianzu, ethnic Koreans with Chinese nationality, merchants have established and strong demand for foreign goods in North Korea signal that the border is often easily traversed. The paper conducts this de jure and de facto comparison by examining two components of cross-border interactions: trade and telecommunication after discussing the Sino-North Korean relations.

5 Central Intelligence Agency, "Korea, North," The World Factbook, accessed April 24, 2021, <https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/korea-north/>.

6 Ah Reum Park, "Chot'ch'ung Kukkyöngjoyang Punsöng Puk'ane Chunün Hamürül Chungshimüro [A Study for 'Sino-North Korean Border Treaty'," Puk'anhakyöng'gu 7, no. 1 (2011): 320. The Korean name of the treaty is 조중 변계 조약, whereas the Chinese title is 中朝边界条约.

7 Alyssa M. Park, Sovereignty Experiments: Korean Migrants and the Building of Borders in Northeast Asia, 1860-1945, Studies of the Weatherhead East Asian Institute, Columbia University (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 2019), 24; "Chaoxianzu [Ethnic Koreans]," Government of the People's Republic of China, March 10, 2020, http://www.gov.cn/guoqing/2015-07/23/content_2901626.htm. Liaoning, Jilin, and Heilongjiang Provinces are three Northeastern Chinese provinces that border North Korea. Today, the Chinese government reports that there is 1,830,929 Chaoxianzu in China, mostly concentrated in the three provinces. The paper opts to use the term Chaoxianzu to highlight the Chaoxianzu traders' legal status.

Political interaction between North Korea and China

Sino-North Korean relations began as China entered the Korean War in support of the North Korean regime in October 1950. China partly joined the war as it was a part of its *raison d'être* to fight against imperialism and partly because it expected that its participation would heighten its national prestige and render itself a major power in the post-WWII world.⁸ After the Korean War, the majority of the Sino-North Korean interaction took the form of foreign aid, which significantly contributed to North Korea's post-war economic recovery.⁹

Unfortunately for North Korea, its strong economic dependence on Second World countries brought unexpected diplomatic problems in the 1960s. North Korea, a country that enjoyed close diplomatic, economic, and geographic relations with both China and the Soviet Union, was caught in the middle of the Sino-Soviet split. Initially, to maintain its neutral position, North Korea signed "Friendship Treaties" with both China and the Soviet Union in 1961. During this time, North Korea's state-owned media served to counterbalance Kim Il-Sung's speeches to ensure neutrality as the Sino-Soviet relations worsened.¹⁰

Ultimately, the North Korean leadership decided to align itself with the Soviet Union as the American regional alliance network finalized with diplomatic normalization between South Korea and Japan in 1965. The North saw the militarily superior Soviet Union as a more useful ally than China as the North Korean elites viewed a second military conflict in the Korean Peninsula as unavoidable.¹¹ The Sino-North Korean relations deteriorated during the 1960s, culminating in North Korea's open criticism of Mao and his Cultural Revolution and China's

subsequent recall of its ambassador from ambassador from Pyongyang.¹² The relationship did not recover until the Pueblo Incident in January 1968, which became an opportunity for rapprochement between North Korea and China. In support of North Korea's capture of the American naval vessel, the Chinese media fervently advocated for the North Korean right to counter what it claimed to be an act of aggression of American imperialists.¹³

Subsequent decades signaled further deterioration of the Sino-North Korean relations. In the 1980s, China began its economic reform, commonly referred to as GaigeKaifang ("Reform and Opening-up"), transitioning away from central economic planning to socialist market economy. In ideological terms, China and North Korea started to deviate further as China underwent the economic reform. The deviation was not limited to the economic realm. Sino-North Korean relations became more tense as Beijing diplomatically recognized South Korea in 1992.¹⁴

While previous strain on the Sino-North Korean relations was sourced from external international rivalry, the biggest threat to the relationship today is North Korea's nuclear program and missile testing. When North Korea tested its nuclear arms in October 2016, China decided to support the United Nations sanctions against North Korea, putting the relationship under significant stress.¹⁵ Similarly, in 2017, Beijing supported more international sanctions on North Korea as well, which barred international trade of natural ores, one of the biggest North Korean exports.¹⁶ Even as both Xi and Kim exchange rosy written messages highlighting the two countries' alliance and cooperation, the two states share a history of uncomfortable bilateral relations.

Trading across the border

The core purpose of this paper is to investigate economic and telecommunication interactions between North Korea and China to highlight the porosity of the border. This section will

8 Gregg A Brazinsky, *Winning the Third World* (The University of North Carolina Press, 2017), <http://www.myilibrary.com?id=996431>, 47, 49.

9 Zhihua Shen and Yafeng Xia, "China and the Post-War Reconstruction of North Korea, 1953 - 1961," North Korea International Documentation Project (Washington, D.C.: Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, May 2012), https://www.wilsoncenter.org/sites/default/files/media/documents/misc/NKIDP_Working_Paper_4_China_and_the_Postwar_Reconstruction_of_North_Korea.pdf, 3.

10 Xiaohe Cheng, "The Evolution of Sino-North Korean Relations in the 1960s," *Asian Perspective* 34, no. 2 (2010): 183, <https://doi.org/10.1353/apr.2010.0027>. For example, the North Korean state-owned media served as a counterbalance by printing articles that highlighted North Korea's cordial relations with either China or the Soviet Union if Kim Il-Sung remarked one of the countries favorably in his speeches.

11 Cheng, "The Evolution of Sino-North Korean Relations in the 1960s," 179, 183, 186.

12 Cheng, "The Evolution of Sino-North Korean Relations in the 1960s," 191.

13 Cheng, "The Evolution of Sino-North Korean Relations in the 1960s," 194.

14 Person, James, "Chinese-North Korean Relations: Drawing the Right Historical Lessons," Wilson Center, October 19, 2017, <https://www.wilsoncenter.org/article/chinese-north-korean-relations-drawing-the-right-historical-lessons>.

15 Eleanor Albert, "Understanding the China-North Korea Relationship," Council on Foreign Relations, June 25, 2019, <https://www.cfr.org/backgrounder/china-north-korea-relationship>.

16 United Nations, "Security Council Tightens Sanctions on Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Unanimously Adopting Resolution 2397 (2017)," United Nations: Meetings Coverage and Press Releases, December 22, 2017, <https://www.un.org/press/en/2017/sc13141.doc.htm>.

showcase that official trade has plummeted due to both the United Nations sanctions and the novel coronavirus pandemic. The decrease will be contrasted with the informal trading regime that is mostly conducted between Chaoxianzu traders and their North Korean contacts.

The official economic interaction between China and North Korea began in a form of foreign aid immediately following the Korean War ceasefire in 1953. Even though North Korea enjoyed more industrial capacity than its agriculture-heavy southern neighbor before the Korean War, the war stripped North Korea of its manufacturing sector. It is possible that up to 40% of antebellum industrial output and 24% of antebellum agricultural output were wiped out due to the Korean War.¹⁷ Foreign aid was essential to North Korea's recovery and comprised one-third of the North Korean annual budget in 1954, the first post-Korean War annual budget.¹⁸

The friendly trade relations with communist countries continued at least until the late 1980s. In 1985, North Korea official statistics revealed that its total trade volume hovered slightly above 11 billion USD, of which 60% originated from trade with the communist bloc. However, as the Soviet bloc disintegrated, North Korea lost its major trading partners.¹⁹ Fortunately for North Korea, as China became one of the world's biggest economies, China came to fill the trade vacuum. In 2000, China-North Korea trade volume was at 490 million USD. The trade volume increased fourteen-fold in less than 15 years, peaking at 6.86 billion USD in 2014. The figure remained consistently high as it remained greater than five billion USD from 2011 to 2017.²⁰

The decrease in Sino-North Korean trade volume in 2017 coincides with the year when the United Nations imposed sanctions against North Korea due to its missile testing. The United Nations passed Resolutions 2371, 2375, and 2397 that severely limited North Korea's economic activities and gave "member States [the power] to seize, inspect, freeze and impound any vessel in their territorial waters" that

provided sanctioned goods to North Korea.²¹ The 2017 sanctions left a significant economic footprint as they could have caused as much as 75% decrease in North Korean exports to China.²² North Korea's response to the COVID-19 pandemic further aggravated its trade situation, as North Korea decided to close its borders. On top of the effects of sanctions, the trade volume between China and North Korea decreased another 80% between 2019 and 2020.²³ The Diplomat also predicted that even as China economically recovered after the initial economic shock of the novel coronavirus, it was unlikely that North Korea would be able to benefit from China's expanding economy as the border between the two countries remains officially closed.²⁴ In official terms, the formal and regulated trade between North Korea and China has come to a screeching stop due to both the international sanctions and the novel coronavirus pandemic.

On the other hand, unregulated and informal trade between the two countries reveals that the level of cross-border activities is higher than the official statistics suggest. While it is difficult to ascertain the exact trade volume that crosses the border, academics, policymakers, and politicians agree that there is a substantial informal trade network that connects Chaoxianzu merchants with their North Korean counterparts.²⁵ This unregulated trading takes many forms. Some

21 United Nations, "Security Council Tightens Sanctions on Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Unanimously Adopting Resolution 2397 (2017)."

22 Daniel Wertz, "China-North Korea Trade: Parsing the Data," 38 North, February 25, 2020,

<https://www.38north.org/2020/02/dwertz022520/>. However, other independent reports, such as that of C4ADS

(<https://www.c4ads.org/lux-and-loaded>) showcase how and why international sanctions against North Korea might not be as effective as they could be. See Lucas Kuo and Jason Arterburn, "Lux & Loaded: Exposing North Korea's Strategic Procurement Networks" (Washington, D.C.: C4ADS, 2019),

<https://static1.squarespace.com/static/566ef8b4d8af107232d5358a/t/5d307a43bf42140001877def/1563458128965/Lux+%26+Loaded.pdf>.

23 "North Korea's Trade with China Plunges 81% as Lockdown Bites," Nikkei Asia, January 19, 2021, <https://asia.nikkei.com/Economy/North-Korea-s-trade-with-China-plunges-81-as-lockdown-bites>.

24 Troy Stangarone, "Global Trade Is Recovering From the Pandemic. North Korea's Economy Isn't." The Diplomat, April 12, 2021, <https://thediplomat.com/2021/04/global-trade-is-recovering-from-the-pandemic-north-koreas-economy-isnt/>.

25 "Constitution of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea" (March 21, 2019), Wikisource,

[https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Socialist_Constitution_of_the_Democratic_People%27s_Republic_of_Korea_\(2016\)](https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Socialist_Constitution_of_the_Democratic_People%27s_Republic_of_Korea_(2016)); Albert, "Understanding the

China-North Korea Relationship." North Korean traders or workers constantly contacting Chaoxianzu traders is a recurring theme that arises in North Korea's Hidden Revolution, a book that provides an insight as to how the North Korean population is being exposed to technologies, including cell phones. See Jieun Baek, *North Korea's Hidden Revolution: How the Information Underground Is Transforming a Closed Society*, 2016. The lack of reliable data that could reveal the magnitude of unregulated and informal trade between China and North Korea is partly because North Korea does not acknowledge independent market activities and private ownership.

17 Shen and Xia, "China and the Post-War Reconstruction of North Korea, 1953 - 1961," 2.

18 Shen and Xia, "China and the Post-War Reconstruction of North Korea, 1953 - 1961," 3.

19 North Korea Economy Team, "Puk'an'gyŏngjeŭi hyŏnhwanggwa chŏnmang [Current Status and Prospect of North Korea's Economy]," Bank of Korea Research Document (Bank of Korea, August 2000), <https://www.bok.or.kr/portal/bbs/P0002240/view.do?ntfId=19098&menuNo=200092>, 81 - 82.

20 Albert, "Understanding the China-North Korea Relationship."

take advantage of the shared maritime zones between North Korea and China to conduct illicit trade.²⁶ Some do not require dangerous person-to-person interaction, as a trader from the Chinese side may hurl their merchandise into the river, which is then recovered by a person from the North Korean side using a rope or a claw.²⁷ Some even cross the river themselves and work in China, evading local authorities, so that they can bring back home food or other necessities when they leave China.²⁸ Due to the nature of the illicit trade network, it is difficult to ascertain the true number of individuals participating in it. However, the official number of North Korean migrant workers may provide some context. The official number of North Korean workers in Liaoning, Jilin, and Heilongjiang was approximately 60,000 in 2019. Therefore, it would not be unthinkable to imagine a trade network that far outstrips that figure.²⁹

One of the reasons why there is a well-established network of informal trade between China and North Korea is because there is a strong demand for food and other daily necessities that cannot be fulfilled by the North Korean state.³⁰ The North Korean public distribution system failed after a nationwide famine in the 1990s and the dissolution of its socialist allies at the end of the Cold War. This subsequently led to the development of local-level markets, *jangmadang*, in North Korea, which are tolerated by government authorities. Satellite imagery analysis found at least 436 government-sanctioned markets in operation in North Korea in 2018, a figure that does not contain unofficial and unregulated markets.³¹

Furthermore, the international sanctions, which led to a significant decrease in Sino-North Korean trade levels, most likely did not destroy the informal trade network. Previous investigations of the Chaoxianzu trading network

signaled that previous international sanctions have led to an adjustment of trading partners, rather than destruction thereof.³² Similarly, there is evidence that Sino-North Korean trade tends to bypass international sanctions through recategorization of trade goods, which permits continuation of trade even during international sanctions.³³ While the official trade interaction between North Korea and China may have dwindled due to both the novel coronavirus pandemic and international sanctions, the informal trade network across the Sino-North Korean border remains intact and active, rendering the officially impermeable border porous in reality.

The duality of the Sino-North Korean border, officially impermeable yet porous in reality, is a theme that appears in telecommunication as well. Over the past two decades, North Korea has expanded its domestic cell phone market. This expansion initially relied on foreign investment. In 2002, Loxley Pacific, a Thai telecommunication company, established a commercial telecommunication service in Rason Special Economic Area and Pyongyang.³⁴ However, this venture was suspended in 2004, when a cell phone-activated explosive was used in a bombing suspected to have targeted Kim Jong-il. The most recent development after the service suspension was when Orascom Telecom Holding, an Egyptian telecommunication company reopened cellular phone services in North Korea in December 2018.³⁵ This daring venture opened a 3G cellular network service in North Korea under the brand name Koryo Link.³⁶ Five years after the service opened, Orascom

26 Bloomberg, "Smuggled North Korea Clams Show China's Struggle to Stop Kim," Bloomberg News, September 15, 2017, <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2017-09-14/smugglers-at-sea-hinder-china-s-efforts-to-sanction-kim-jong-un>.

27 Baek, North Korea's Hidden Revolution: How the Information Underground Is Transforming a Closed Society, 2016, 161.

28 Baek, North Korea's Hidden Revolution: How the Information Underground Is Transforming a Closed Society, 2016, 143.

29 Jae Duk Seo, "Rights Monitor Group Tracking 60,000 North Korean Workers in Northeastern China," Radio Free Asia, December 23, 2019, <https://www.rfa.org/english/news/korea/labor-exports-12232019161932.html>; David Brunnstrom, "China Fails to Repatriate North Korea Workers Despite U.N. Sanctions: U.S. Official," Reuters, January 23, 2020, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-northkorea-usa-china-sanctions-idUSKBN1ZL34H>.

30 Victor Cha and Lisa Collins, "The Markets: Private Economy and Capitalism in North Korea?," Beyond Parallel, August 26, 2018, <https://beyondparallel.csis.org/markets-private-economy-capitalism-north-korea/>.

31 Cha and Collins, "The Markets: Private Economy and Capitalism in North Korea?."

32 Sang-Hyun Chi et al., "Chöpk'yöngjiyöng pyönhwaüi kwan'gyerönjöng chöngch'ijirihak: puk'an-chunggung chöpk'yöngjiyöng tandungül chungshimüro [A Relational Approach to Political Geography of Border Dynamics: Case study of North Korea-China Border Region Dandong, China]," Journal of the Economic Geographical Society of Korea 20, no. 3 (September 2017): 294, <https://doi.org/10.23841/EGSK.2017.20.3.287>. Chi et al. speculate that this might be because of the substantial level of trust and personal history that the years of informal trade have created. es not acknowledge independent market activities and private ownership.

33 Jung-kyun Rhee et al., Taebuk chejae ro inhan Puk, Chung chöpk'yöng chiyök esöüi muyök körae kwanhaeng pyönhwa punsök [Analyzing the changes in trading practice in North Korea-China border region due to North Korea sanctions], Yön'gu charyo 16-12 (Sejong: Korea Institute for International Economic Policy, 2016), 90-91.

34 Yonho Kim, "Cell Phones in North Korea: Has North Korea Entered the Telecommunications Revolutions?," US-Korea Institute at SAIS & Voice of America Report (US-Korea Institute at SAIS, 2014), <https://38north.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/03/Kim-Yonho-Cell-Phones-in-North-Korea.pdf>, 11.

35 The cell service was suspended after a bomb detonated on a railway line where Kim Jong-il was supposed to pass half an hour later. A cell phone suspected as a detonator was found at the scene.

36 Soyoun Seo, "Puk'an Idongt'ongshinshijang Tonghyang - Idongjönhwashijangül Chungshimüro [North Korean Mobile Communication Market Trends - Focusing On the Mobile Phone Market]," Chöngbot'ongshinbangsongjöngch'aek, Dongyang, 25, no. 20 (November 1, 2013): 83.

reported approximately two million cell phone users, with about 50% of its users located outside of Pyongyang.³⁷ By late 2011, the Orascom service area reached covered 94% of the total national population in more than 100 cities.³⁸

Cell phone accessibility and usage saw another wave of increase in the mid-2010s. In 2015, North Korea designated Byol as another cell service provider to further increase national cell phone accessibility. This move was also to counteract the popularity of Koryo Link, a foreign-owned company. By late 2015, there were approximately 3.2 million cell phone users, which amounted to 12.8% of the national population.³⁹

However, while domestic cell phone usage increased, international phone calls remain forbidden to everyday North Koreans.⁴⁰ Any sanctioned international calls from North Korea are strictly regulated and are transferred through an operator. Few exceptions include hotels and offices of foreign companies, where foreigners frequent.⁴¹ Therefore, even as North Korea expands its cell phone network, by restricting and regulating international phone calls, North Korea is maintaining the permeability of its virtual border.

Similar to Sino-North Korean trade relations, the de jure impermeability does not mean de facto impermeability in international telecommunication. In areas adjacent to China, a phone can connect to the Chinese cellular network. While some use this telephone access to make contact with their Chinese business partners, some use it to remain in communication with families who have defected to South Korea.⁴² However, the North Korean government is acutely aware of the illegal

telecommunication activities that occur in the border regions. In its effort to counter the illicit phone calls, North Korea established Bureau 27, a counterintelligence agency that specialized in detecting and apprehending those making illegal phone calls. North Koreans who are caught making illegal international calls are sentenced to political camps or correctional facilities and face harsh punishment.⁴³ Even with increased punishment, however, many North Koreans still bypass government regulations and choose to call their business partners or family members.

Conclusion

“The Hermit Kingdom” and “an abnormal state” are some of the names that are attributed to North Korea. Isolation and separation are also words that are commonly associated with the regime. However, an image of North Korea as an ironclad and impenetrable fortress is misleading. While it is impossible to examine the full extent of Sino-North Korean interactions in this short paper, even brief comparisons between the formal and informal trade systems and the regulated and illegal international telecommunications not only reveal that there are ways to circumvent official restrictions, but also that there are North Koreans who are actively pursuing these illegal activities. In other words, while North Korea may officially strictly regulate its population’s interaction with the rest of the world, North Koreans engage in informal and often illegal international interactions nonetheless.

The unexpected porosity of the international border may have several implications. First, future research of North Korean defector communities in South Korea should not assume that it is a wholly South Korean community. Rather, since defectors can maintain communication with families that they have left behind, future research must take into consideration how push and pull factors that played a factor in the defections could continue to shape the decision-making process of many defectors.

Secondly, while Korean Reunification is often studied in state-to-state security context, acknowledging the continued non-espionage communication between individuals in South Korea and North Korea, future researchers could consider the social ramification of a Korean Reunification. This would not only enrich the academic understanding of the Korean

37 Soyoung Seo, “Puk’an Idongt’ongshinshijang Tonghyang - Idongjŏnhwashijangŭl Chungshimŭro [North Korean Mobile Communication Market Trends - Focusing On the Mobile Phone Market],” 84.

38 Yonho Kim, “Cell Phones in North Korea: Has North Korea Entered the Telecommunications Revolutions?,” US-Korea Institute at SAIS & Voice of America Report (US-Korea Institute at SAIS, 2014), <https://38north.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/03/Kim-Yonho-Cell-Phones-in-North-Korea.pdf>, 8.

39 Soyoung Seo, “Puk’an Idongt’ongshin Shijang Tonghyang - Idongjŏnhwa Min t’aebŭllin Hkrŭl Chungshimŭro [North Korean Mobile Communication Market Trends - Focusing on Mobile Phones and Tablet PCs],” Chŏngbot’ongshinbangsongjŏngch’aek, Dongyang, 28, no. 11 (June 16, 2016): 16–26, 20.

40 “North Korea: Connection Denied,” Amnesty International, accessed April 24, 2021, <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/campaigns/2016/03/north-korea-connection-denied/>.

41 Pongsik Kim, “Puk’an Yumusŏn t’ongshinsŏbisŭ Hyŏnhwang Min Shisajŏm [Current Status and Implications of Wired and Wireless Communication Services in North Korea]” (Korea Information Society Development Institute, June 1, 2017), <https://www.kisdi.re.kr/kisdi/common/premium?file=1%7C14154>, 16.]

42 Baek, North Korea’s Hidden Revolution: How the Information Underground Is Transforming a Closed Society, 2016, 149, 152 – 153.

43 “North Korea: Connection Denied,” Amnesty International.

Reunification, but may also permit the South Korean government to readjust its planned post-reunification policies, if needed.

Lastly, while the porosity of the Sino-North Korean border is academically significant, it also begs the question of what role does the Chinese public, and less so the Chinese government, play in inter-Korean interactions. Acknowledging the role the Chaoxianzu merchants and North Korean population in Northeast China plays in connecting North Korea to the outside world could help the international community minimize the potential for a refugee crisis that may spawn should the Reunification process be violent and would permit relevant stakeholders and key state actors in East Asia to better envision what the future may present should the two Koreas reunite.

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An Interview with Professor Michael Jones-Correa

Conducted by Vanessa Dib and Claire Ochroch

Michael Jones-Correa is the President's Distinguished Professor of Political Science and Director of the Center for the Study of Race, Ethnicity and Immigration (CSERI) at the University of Pennsylvania. He is the leading expert in topics of immigrant political incorporation and ethnic and racial relations in the United States. Jones-Correa is a co-PI of the 2006 Latino National Survey, a national state-stratified survey of Latinos in the United States; the 2012 and 2016 Latino Immigrant National Election Study, and the Philadelphia-Atlanta Project, a collaborative research project on contact, trust and civic participation among immigrant and native-born residents of Philadelphia and Atlanta.

*Professor Michael Jones-Correa is the co-author of *Holding Fast: Resilience and Civic Engagement among Latino Immigrants* (Russell Sage 2020). As well, he is the author of, among other works, *Latinos in the New Millennium* (Cambridge, 2012), *Latino Lives in America: Making It Home* (Temple, 2010), and *Between Two Nations: The Political Predicament of Latinos in New York City* (Cornell, 1998).*

In 2004-2005, he served on the Committee on the Redesign of US Naturalization Test for the National Academy of Sciences. From 2010-2013, he served on the American National Election Studies (ANES) Board of Overseers, and from 2016-2020 on the council of the Inter-University Consortium for Political and Social Research (ICPSR). He currently serves as Chair of the Board of Trustees of the Russell Sage Foundation.

Sound Politicks: How has COVID-19 altered global migration trends? What are the long term effects of these trends on movement of people, borders, and securitization of borders?

Michael Jones-Correa: COVID-19 has had an enormous impact on migration and partly because immediately after the World Health Organization [announced COVID-19 as a

pandemic], countries began shutting off their borders. Closing down borders and the various travel restrictions had really paralyzed movement that we have sort of taken for granted by tourists, by business travelers, and certainly by migrants. The United States is a really good example of this, where both the Trump administration, and then going on into the Biden administration, have used COVID-19 as an excuse really to shut off crossings across land borders, and particularly closing off options for asylum seekers.

SP: In your view, how will Russia's invasion into Ukraine affect immigration and refugees in Europe, but also just like across the world.

MJC: It will certainly affect asylum seekers into Europe. The Russian invasion into Donbas region of Eastern Ukraine in 2014 displaced about a million to a million and a half people within Ukraine. Most of those people stayed in Ukraine, but this invasion has already led people to leave Ukraine across borders and particularly going into Poland and other parts of Eastern Europe. If this continues and depending on how bad the kind of fighting and disruption is, that one million people that we saw [internally] displaced in 2014 could be many times greater. It is just hard to predict, but there will almost certainly be an impact on asylum seekers in Europe. So, we can sort of expect that in the coming weeks and going forward.

SP: Do you think the treatment of asylum seekers from Ukraine will be different in comparison to asylum seekers from other crises?

MJC: Europe has faced various kinds of asylum crises in the last couple of decades. There was a wave of asylum seeking into Western Europe during the Balkans crisis in the 1990s. There was another quite large and continuing wave of asylum seekers from Southwest Asia, so we're talking about Syria, Iraq, Afghanistan,

Bangladesh, and that reached its peak around 2015. Then, it sort of continued at a pretty high rate ever since. So, I imagine that the Ukraine crisis could be parallel to reach those heights. There could be a million Ukrainian asylum seekers over the next year. I think that's very realistic, and so how will they be accommodated? I think in lots of ways, though there'll be a lot of sympathy in Western Europe for those asylum seekers [from Ukraine], and so I think they'll be actually treated fairly well.

Europe has been trying to sort of put off asylum seekers in lots of ways, after the 2014- 2015 wave of asylum seeking from Syria and other places, but I think that Europe will be more sympathetic to the Ukrainian asylum seekers.

SP: How do you think the recent increased polarization in the United States around the issue of immigration has and will change policies?

MJC: One thing about the US immigration debate is that if you go back let's say to the mid 1990s there wasn't actually that much of a difference between how Republicans and Democrats saw immigration. There was much less of a partisan divide, but beginning in the mid 1990s, that began sort of diverging. Republican voters began moving in a more restrictive direction and Democratic voters began moving in an accommodating direction that became more positive about immigration as a whole. Both of those things have been happening at the same time, and so you saw, for instance, in 2008, Republicans had a nominee, John McCain, who was actually pretty open to immigration and would have been open to some kind of comprehensive immigration reform. He voted for comprehensive immigration reform when he was a senator. That kind of candidate is almost inconceivable now, like the Republican Party is very, very unlikely to nominate that kind of candidate. I think, going forward, it's likely that any Republican nominee for the presidency will be a restrictionist nominee. I think that the party was already heading in that direction. Then, the Trump candidacy and presidency really cemented it. On the other hand, the Democratic Party and their nominees are much more likely to be more open to immigration. More open to some kind of comprehensive immigration reform toward pathways to citizenship to save at least someone undocumented residents in the U.S. But

think if you look at the Biden administration, they also would like immigration to disappear as an issue. They don't actually want immigration to be front and center as an issue. It's not an issue that Democrats are going to run on. It's more an issue that Democrats will be sympathetic to, but not want to see as sort of the center pillar of their platform.

SP: In your opinion, what are sustainable methods to resettle refugees especially since many are stuck “in a limbo” while living in refugee camps and waiting for their case to be adjudicated?

MJC: This question goes back to the kinds of questions about what do we think is going to happen with asylum seekers? The refugee mechanism that the UN has is basically meant to be a short term mechanism where people who are displaced are provided resources and some kind of safe haven, usually immediately approximate to wherever the conflict that's happening or the displacement has been happening. So most refugees, most asylum seekers are in the immediate vicinity of the conflict. So from Syria they are displaced to Turkey, they're in Lebanon, and/or to other parts of Africa, like East Africa in Uganda and Kenya.

So your question is like, what happens then like what happens when people are in these sort of safe havens that are close to the conflict, but are looking for more permanent safe haven let's say in Europe and the United States. Europe and the United States have not been particularly eager to welcome more refugees and the U.S. has always seen itself as a sort of place of refuge, but has really never been all that open to resettling refugees so on average we say over the last 30 years.

The U.S. may resettle maybe 70,000 people every year, which is really just a tiny, tiny fraction of the numbers of people who are seeking refuge and asylum. Europe has sort of, I guess, been marginally more open to settling refugees. Again, both regions have been resistant to the idea of settling large numbers. Europe does not want a repeat of this Syrian crisis in 2014 and 2015.

SP: How do you think migration will be affected by the global climate crisis and how do migration policies across the globe need to change to adapt to the global climate crisis?

MJC: The Refugee Convention, which many countries are signatories to, says that countries will allow for applications for asylum based on fear of persecution. The fear of persecution has a very specific category, so it's on the basis of race, religion, etc. These are very specific kinds of persecution. So, when it comes to climate, we're kind of more open to displacement for economic reasons or because of natural disasters or these long term trends like changes and climate. The Refugee Convention is not and it's not going to be up to the task. It was designed for a different set of issues, a different time, a different kind of displacement, and not the kind of structural displacement of the global climate crisis. In a world where we can sort of anticipate sea level rises and changes in rainfall changes that will lead to potentially quite massive displacement. Even a foot or two feet of sea level rise will displace quite a number of people who are living on the coast line, such as Bangladesh. So, the question is like what happens then? What will potential receiving countries, countries that will be the places where displaced people will want to move, what will their reaction be? I'm actually not optimistic about this. I think that there'll be a huge displacement, and on the whole countries that are wealthier will try not to risk being at the receiving end. My guess is instead that countries will try and reach arrangements where they sort of funnel displaced people either to other parts of Europe near their own countries or into like, again, immediately adjacent countries but not have them arrive in say Europe or North America.

SP: In order to address the issue of displacement, do you think there needs to be a reform at the international level, or is this an issue that is better addressed by what states and sovereign nations to determine best to proceed about?

MJC: Ideally, there should be an international conversation or a conversation at the international level about how to address these kinds of systemic displacements. Again the 1951 Refugee Convention was very focused on persecution. A well founded fear of persecution

hat was directed at individuals, because of the beliefs they held, the groups they belong to, etc. So the sense that we're going to allow you because you're the person that's being targeted because of who you are and there needs to be a conversation about how to convert what displacement looks like now and what our obligations as countries are now to these more structural kinds of displacements. I think some of those conversations are occurring, less so in the governmental level, but more by sort of non governmental actors trying to think through what migrants rights look like more generally and trying to lay out a framework for migrants rights.

Again, I am less optimistic that those countries will agree to this framework, and you know the 1951 Convention came out of the post World War Two period and the incredible disruptions and displacements of people after the Second World War I and II. There was a sort of agreement that something needed to be done at that moment and I find it hard to predict. It will take us a much larger crisis, I think, to get the international community to really sit down and pay attention to this and think about another framework.

SP: What do you think were the reasons behind the Latino swing towards Trump in the 2020 election, especially given his consistent anti-immigrant rhetoric?

MJC: I have two kinds of responses to this. One of them is that some of the concern about a Latino swing to the Republican Party is a bit overblown. That's one way of thinking about it. So usually the way that people make this comparison is to compare 2020 to 2016. Latinos were more likely to vote for the Republican candidate in this case Trump in 2020 and 2016. It isn't that surprising, but for 2016 there was a lot of concern among Latino voters about what Trump would do. Trump had come into that election with a lot of sort of anti-immigrant, anti-Latino rhetoric. After four years of his presidency, I think two things happened. One of them is that the economy actually did pretty well for Latinos. Trump was actually not as effective in practice at deporting people as his predecessor. The Obama administration had been incredibly effective deporting people in his first term. I think there are many Latino voters who were like it wasn't as bad as they expected.

The second part of the response is if you compare 2020 to 2016, there's a shift back to the Republican Party. If you think about the historic breakdown between the two parties, it is about two thirds voting for Democrats and one third for Republicans. In 2020, it kind of went back to that to that more or less two to one breakdown.

The longer and more complicated responses is that I think Democrats have tended to think of Latinos as Democratic voters, and they are kind of. But there's certain aspects where if you look at the public opinion, they can look like Republican voters, too. Latino voters tend to be more socially conservative, tend to be small business owners, they're more religious, and many of them are evangelicals. They value family, they're very patriotic. I mean these kinds of things you look at the Latino voters, they're actually kind of Republican or they could be Republican, particularly in places like South Texas or South Florida, which are where you saw really big swings from 2016 to 2020. I think there's some of that going on that they're the kind of social issues and the kind of social valence of Latino voters are inclined toward the Republican Party.

Latino voters are returning back to their kind of historic mean. On the other hand, Democrats can't take Latino voters for granted.

SP: Do you think that Democrats and Republicans sometimes make the mistake of saying that Latino voters are basically a monolith when in reality they're made up of so many different communities from many different countries?

MJC: In short, yes. I think that at the campaign level, they have gotten more savvy about these distinctions that you know there used to be. In presidential campaigns, there was like a Latino message. Both Republicans and Democrats, I think, are more targeted in their messaging, more aware of these national differences and regional differences. There are changes as well, among Latinos voters, I think, like South Florida, is an example of it. It used to be that the conversation about South Florida was all about Cuban voters. As you know, Cuban voters are more conservative, and particularly older Cuban voters have been sort of historically voting Republican. There was a period in the early 2000s when it looked like if you were talking about Cuban

voters, the children of those Cuban voters were tilting more Democratic. So, over time, South Florida sort of moved in a Democratic direction, which is still true today. However, South Florida is complicated and one, it has now Venezuelan voters, Nicaraguan voters, and Colombian voters. Each of these nationality groups has their own political trajectories and they're reacting to things differently, in some cases voting quite conservatively. South Florida is super complicated. I think that campaigns and parties, in particular the Democratic party in Florida, has been negligent in its campaigns and how it thinks about Latino voters.

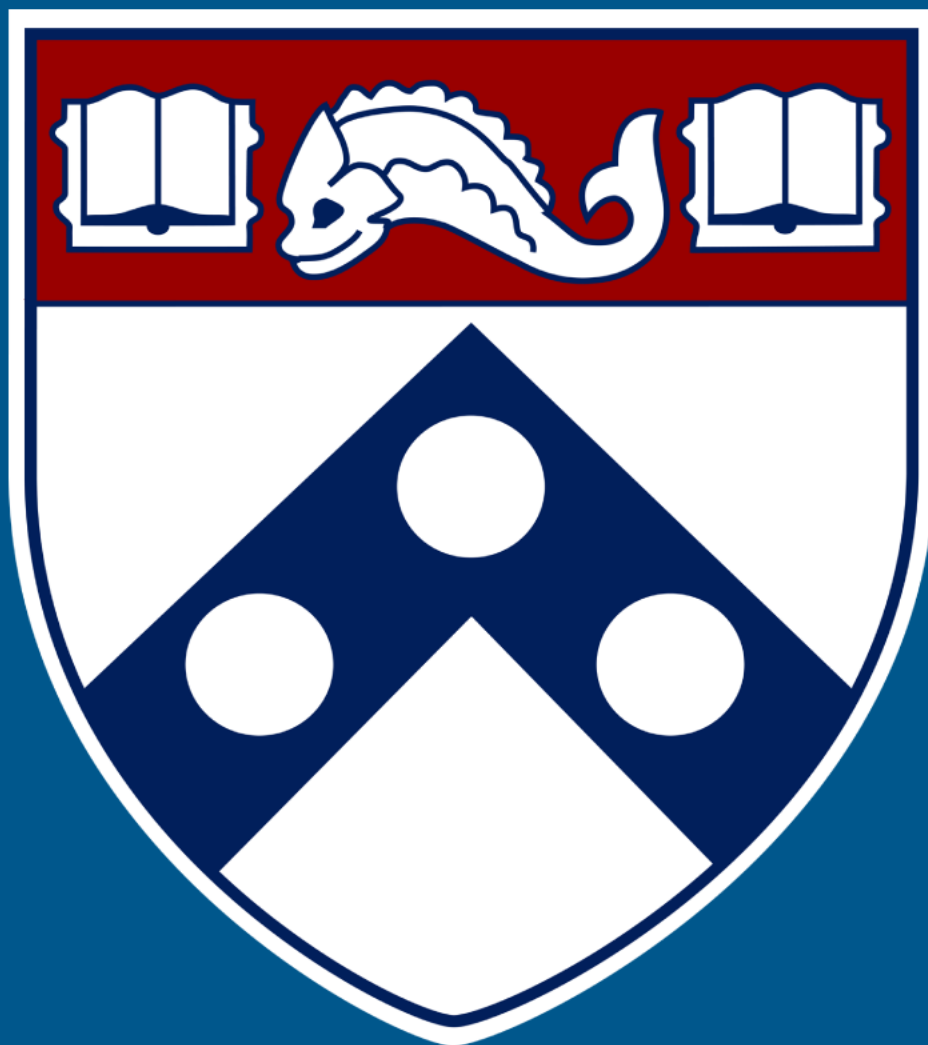
SP: How do you think the predicted rise of the Latinx population of the United States in coming years will impact domestic attitudes towards immigration? Could it lead to any changes in immigration policy?

MJC: As Latinos become a larger proportion of the population and a large proportion of voters, will that mean that immigration policy might become more open, for instance, because of Latinos? Here, this is again a complicated question. I think Latino voters could become a sort of a key voter constituency, kind of almost like a swing vote. I think in some cases, like California Latino voters are a huge proportion of the Latino electorate, but they're not actually going to change the direction of California politics all that much because that California is already quite progressive. So, the Latino vote will just sort of nudge it further in that direction. So it matters where Latinos are voting and which stakes are voting and whether their vote will make an impact on the direction of that state's politics and so I do think that in some states like Arizona, Georgia, possibly North Carolina, and possibly Texas, Latino voters could make a difference. We shouldn't expect any large scale changes, it's more going to be an honest State to State basis as it slowly grows.

Again, I think that the Democrats in particular underplay the importance of state politics, and I mean national politics is sort of the accumulation of state politics. So it's not just about winning the Presidency it's about winning these contests state by state. I don't think the Democrats can assume that all the Latinos in the states are going to be voting Democrat. Texas is a very good example of this. I think there's a substantial portion of quite conservative Latino voters in Texas.

SP: Lastly, any final thoughts?

MJC: Both the US side and the international side have terrific conversations. I wish I could be more optimistic and a victory about the international side, and the readiness of the international community to reconsider what an asylum framework would look like a refugee framework would look like. I think this is a really critical conversation that needs to happen, and we're not we're not there yet.



Sound Politicks

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