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*The Yale Review of*

# International Studies

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## FIRST PLACE

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Dear Reader:

This year, we were humbled again by student interest in the Dean Gooderham Acheson Prize for Outstanding Essays in International Studies. The more than one hundred submissions we received represent a body of scholarship of exceptional diversity and depth; inevitably, we find ourselves wishing that we had the space to highlight more than just those essays to which we're able to award prizes. We sincerely hope that all those students who submitted their work will consider contributing pieces to future issues.

Professors Charles Hill, Jolyon Howorth, Jean Krasno, and Michelle Malvesti, and Associate Director of International Security Studies Amanda Behm were all generous enough to dedicate their time to the consideration of submissions. On the basis of their judgments, we're proud to present the winners of the Acheson Prize for 2014.

We'd like to express our gratitude to all those who submitted work; to our faculty judges, for their time and thoughtful consideration; to International Security Studies and the Yale International Relations Association, without whom this issue wouldn't have been possible; and to our talented designers for the beautiful print publication before you.

We greatly enjoyed reading all the pieces featured, and we hope you will as well. For more on what YRIS has in store for future semesters, you can like us on Facebook and subscribe to our weekly newsletter at [yris.yira.org](http://yris.yira.org).

We hope you'll consider getting involved.

Sincerely,

The Editors



# Women of War: The Female Fighters of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam

Erin Alexander

- 1 Neloufer De Mel, *Women & the Nation's Narrative: Gender and Nationalism in Twentieth Century Sri Lanka* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2001), 206.
- 2 Joke Schrijvers, "Fighters, Victims and Survivors: Constructions of Ethnicity, Gender and Refugeeeness Among Tamils in Sri Lanka," *Journal of Refugee Studies* 12.3 (1999): 308.

Since the start of the Sri Lankan Civil War in 1983, Tamil women have occupied a key role in the conflict. In the struggle for the anticipated state of Tamil Eelam, the socio-cultural role of women has undergone, and continues to undergo, a radical transformation.<sup>1</sup> As a result of this "gendered reconstruction of womanhood," women are no longer constrained to the household during times of war, but instead, frequently venture out into the battlefields, side-by-side with their male combatant counterparts.<sup>2</sup> We can see, looking back at the 26 year-long battle between the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) and the Sri Lankan state, that women do indeed play a vital role in times of violent conflict. The question remains, however, whether the female LTTE combatants have been manipulated into victims of war by the male-dominated insurgency, or whether they have become agents of their own empowerment through their participation in the conflict.

This paper explores the gendered dimensions of ethnic conflict, with a focus on the role that women have played in the LTTE. I analyze the gendered reconstruction of Tamil women in war and determine whether their participation in violence has altered their own perception of themselves and to a lesser extent society's view of female combatants. I will achieve this analysis by drawing from numerous sources that offer first-hand knowledge of, and interviews with, female LTTE fighters. In order to better understand the roots of the conflict between the Tamil and Sinhalese peoples of Sri Lanka, I will first provide a brief history of the Sri Lankan Civil War, leading up to the rise of the LTTE. In the second section, I will outline the LTTE's role in the war, and how they transformed socio-cultural norms in Sri Lanka by mobilizing Tamil women for the fight. The following macro-section will focus on the subsequent effect that mobilization of female combatants had on society and, more importantly, on the women involved in the conflict; I will examine how female sentiments were manifested in either a positive, self-empowering light, or in a negative, victimized manner. Next, I will concisely connect the Sri Lankan case of female fighters with one similar South Asian case study of women soldiers — namely, the Maoist insurgency in Nepal. In the conclusion of the paper I will look at ex-LTTE female fighters in today's Tamil society. While the recruitment of female combatants by the LTTE has been perceived by many to be an act of victimization by the male leaders of the conflict, I believe that this new role

for women serves as an opportunity for the female soldiers to empower themselves by defying societal, socio-cultural norms.

## History and the Rise of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam

- 3 Marshall Singer, "The Tamil-Sinhalese Ethnic Conflict in Sri Lanka: A Case Study in Efforts to Negotiate a Settlement, 1983–1988," *The Institute for the Study of Diplomacy* (1989): 2.
- 4 Donald L. Horowitz, "Making Moderation Pay: The Comparative Politics of Ethnic Conflict Management," in *Conflict and Peacemaking in Multiethnic Societies*, ed. Joseph V. Montville (Lexington: Lexington Books, 1990), 461.
- 5 Singer, "The Tamil-Sinhalese Ethnic Conflict in Sri Lanka," 3.
- 6 *Ibid.*, 8.
- 7 Frances Harrison, "Black Tigers Appear in Public," *BBC News*, November 26, 2002, accessed April 4, 2013, <[news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south\\_asia/2516263.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south_asia/2516263.stm)>.

As a consequence of European imperialist whims and internal ethnic fragmentation, Sri Lanka has faced a relentless string of conflicts over reclamation of its land. Since the sixteenth century, Sri Lanka has been a European object of admiration and possession. In 1505, the Portuguese colonized the island and divided it into seven warring factions. Nearly a century later, the Dutch arrived and began ruling the Sinhalese and Tamil kingdoms, falling short of capturing the prized Kandyan kingdom. Upon the British arrival in 1815, Kandy was finally seized and the island was eventually politically "unified." However, a truly unified nation never really materialized.<sup>3</sup>

Britain's preferential treatment of a minority ethnic group over the larger ethnic population only exacerbated the disunity among the Tamil and Sinhalese populations. The Tamils, who made up 11 percent of the Sri Lankan population, had disproportionate access to English education and civil services. Despite the post-colonial attempts to address and rectify the ethnic disparities, the psychological legacy of the colonial oppression was that Tamils continued to view themselves as rightful occupants of their homeland.

Upon independence, the Tamil people started to push for greater autonomy, and eventually the idea of the establishment of a Tamil Eelam became more and more appealing to them. The newly established Sinhalese government quickly began disenfranchising the Tamil people, establishing a mode of political representation based on the majority ethnic political parties.<sup>4</sup> Sinhalese candidates began running on a platform of "Sinhalese-only," promising to "restore Buddhism to its proper place in society."<sup>5</sup> These political tactics appealed to the masses, and the Sinhalese were effectively able to convince the Tamils that they were the true minority in the hands of the Sinhala majority. It quickly became apparent that bureaucratic methods of secession, such as the system of District Development Councils, would not prove effective for the Tamils. Resentment built up, and in 1975 a young, radical Tamil named Veupillai Prabhakaran shot the moderate Tamil mayor of Jaffna. This one action ultimately set the tone for what was to follow: the Tamils' relentless and bloody fight for autonomy — bypassing all means of diplomacy or negotiation settlements.<sup>6</sup>

Prabhakaran's assassination of the mayor of Jaffna was only the beginning of his ultimate scheme to gain a separatist Tamil state. Just one year later, in 1976, Prabhakaran pioneered the use of suicide bombers, guised in black uniforms with their heads masked and known to many as the "Black Tigers."<sup>7</sup> On July 24, 1983, the Tigers killed thirteen soldiers in a land-mine ambush,



Present-Day Sri Lanka



- 8 Jon Lee Anderson, "Death of the Tiger: Sri Lanka's brutal victory over its Tamil insurgents," *The New Yorker*, January 17, 2011, 45.
- 9 Singer, "The Tamil-Sinhalese Ethnic Conflict in Sri Lanka," 4.

and the Sinhalese, in turn, made the Tamil population at large pay for the mistake. A murderous rampage ensued across the southern part of the island as the Sinhalese killed, tortured, and raped thousands of Tamil people.<sup>8</sup>

The killings were perhaps the worst ever anti-Tamil riots to date and evidence points to the government's involvement with and aid in these events. When the government finally addressed the media regarding the mass killings, they blamed the fighting on the "cumulative indignation of the Sinhalese people."<sup>9</sup> The added gross lack of concern and consequential lack of remedying action convinced even the moderate Tamil people that, perhaps, the LTTE were right to be fighting for a separate homeland-independent from the unresponsive and corrupt Sri Lankan government. It is in this state of civil war that women had the choice to become actively involved in the conflict, or risk becoming passive subjects of the war's violence.

## Female Mobilization

- 10 Tamara Herath, *Women in Terrorism: Case of the LTTE*. (Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications, 2012), 46.
- 11 Vidyamali Samarasinghe, "Soldiers, Housewives and Peace Makers: Ethnic Conflict and Gender in Sri Lanka." *Gender Peace and Security Research Hub* 14.2 (1996): 217.
- 12 Yamuna Sangarasivam, "Militarizing the Female Body: Women's Participation in the Tamil Nationalist Struggle," in *Violence and the Body: Race, Gender and the State*, ed. Arturo J Aldama (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2003), 71.
- 13 Dagmar Hellmann-Rajanayagam, "Female Warriors, Martyrs and Suicide Attackers: Women in the LTTE," *International Review of Modern Sociology* (2008): 8.
- 14 Joke Schrijvers, "Fighters, Victims and Survivors," 316.

From the outset of the formation of the LTTE, women have largely contributed to the military struggle against the Sri Lankan state and have become involved in the "very instrument of militancy used to attain the political cause of liberation."<sup>10</sup> Social dynamics rooted in the state's repression of the Tamils attracted a significant number of Tamil women to the LTTE movement. The very tenets of the Women's Front, the female division inside the LTTE, were constructed around gender equality and transforming the gender status quo. The aims of the Women's Front were to "(i) Secure the right of self-determination of 'Tamililam' and establish an independent democratic state of Tamililam; (ii) Abolish oppressive caste discrimination and division and feudal customs such as the dowry system; (iii) Eliminate all discrimination, secure social, political, and economic equality."<sup>11</sup> The LTTE's proposal of these doctrines spoke to Tamil women and their desire for a more equalized society, in which they could achieve everything that their male counterparts could attain.

Similarly, the LTTE's propaganda appealed to those women who wished to simultaneously better their Tamil nation and empower themselves. Posters depicting dynamic, militarized female bodies proclaimed, "Woman you light the flames of liberations! We are calling upon you. Pick up the torch of liberation and struggle for with each heartbeat, our nation is taking form—Tamil Eelam!"<sup>12</sup> The LTTE propagated equal rights for women from the very start of their campaign, and declared that it was the only way to ensure female emancipation, while simultaneously working towards an autonomous homeland.<sup>13</sup> The LTTE propaganda of "Tamil Liberation," for example, enabled the construction of female militants who could fight for their nation and for themselves.<sup>14</sup> Thus, the LTTE's various recruit-

ment tactics all sought to mobilize the female population in hopes of reaching their ultimate goal of autonomy.

## Women in Tamil Society and the LTTE

- 15 Rita Manchanda, "Sri Lanka: Culture Conflict for LTTE Women," Women's Feature Service, 2003, Accessed November 30, 2013, <[www.highbeam.com/doc/1P3-809644641.html](http://www.highbeam.com/doc/1P3-809644641.html)>.
- 16 Hellmann-Rajanayagam, "Female Warriors, Martyrs, and Suicide Attackers," 2.
- 17 Yamuna Sangarasivam, "Militarizing the female body: women's participation in the Tamil nationalist struggle," in *Violence and the Body: Race, Gender and the State*, ed. Arturo J Aldama (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2003), 65.
- 18 M. Gronfors, "Gender, Masculinity and Violence in Sri Lanka," *Essays on Social Development & Welfare in Sri Lanka*, ed. Donald Chandraratna (Colombo: National Institute of Social Development, 2002), 24.
- 19 Manchanda, "Sri Lanka: Culture Conflict for LTTE Women."
- 20 Gronfors, "Gender, Masculinity and Violence in Sri Lanka," 21.

In the previous section I argued that women joined the LTTE in hopes of generating gender equality and empowering themselves through the fight for liberation. Militarization has subsequently shaped the identity of these "female fighters" through their own eyes as well as in the eyes of society. The LTTE's recruitment of women subsequently saw the reconstruction of the Tamil woman from the "traditional ideal of the auspicious, fecund wife to the androgynous Armed Virgin."<sup>15</sup> Prior to the LTTE's recruitment of female soldiers, women were often confined to the domestic sphere; they were "generally respected, but simultaneously ambivalent, and [given a] somewhat restricted status."<sup>16</sup> The traditional Tamil woman is circumscribed by the "social expectations and cultural conventions of *addaccam* (modesty and silence) and *odduccam* (poise and restraint)." Her mobility is monitored and controlled in public spaces and she is constantly under the scrutiny of the male population.<sup>17</sup> In fact, when Tamil men were interviewed regarding gender norm in Sri Lanka, they all acknowledged a woman's "lack of freedom and power."<sup>18</sup> This notion of a constructed gender identity has become incredibly entrenched in Tamil society and "general socialization processes." It appears as though the war has been the only means of transforming these fundamental traditions.

Numerous first-hand accounts from female LTTE soldiers emphasize the socio-cultural transformation that has stemmed from the war. Tamilini, a former LTTE front-ranking soldier, recounts, "Tamil women are traditionally shy and timid, lacking self-confidence. But all that changed after [LTTE] women were inducted into the battlefield."<sup>19</sup> The previously omnipresent notion that femininity is directly connected with passivity, indecision, softness, and emotionality, while masculinity is tied to aggression, independence, rationality, and activity, is no longer accepted by the majority of Tamil society.<sup>20</sup> The civil war has changed these norms for many Tamils, and women have started to embrace their new identity. For many of the soldiers, their experiences of femininity have forever been transformed in their own eyes and in the eyes of their community.

In the following section, I will proceed to explain how these female fighters' experiences have transformed their perception of themselves. I will classify these transformative experiences in two overarching categories: empowerment and victimization. It is at this point in my paper that I must also acknowledge the spectrum of victimization and empowerment that inherently exists for female combatants. While it is difficult to characterize an individual as being *either* a victim *or* an active agent of

their own empowerment, I will speak to the *degree* of victimization and empowerment as perceived by the combatants themselves.

*What is the Norm and How are Women Defying It?*

*Women as Agents of Self-Empowerment*

- 21 Hearth, *Women in Terrorism*, 163.  
22 Sangarasivam, "Militarizing the Female Body," 60.  
23 Ibid.  
24 Hellmann-Rajanayagam, "Female Warriors, Martyrs, and Suicide Attackers," 10.  
25 Samarasinghe, "Soldiers, Housewives and Peace Makers," 214.

From the movement's inception in 1983, the LTTE has drawn tens of thousands of women into its ranks, transforming the concept of the ideal Tamil Woman into one who is militarized, independent, and empowered. Drawing parallels between the ideas of militarization and empowerment, I believe that Tamil women who empower themselves through "gaining control or authority over some aspects of their lives in society" do so by means of militarization.<sup>21</sup> The LTTE's creation of the word *Ah-lu-mai* (empowerment) speaks to this very connection between empowerment and female combatants.

For some female fighters, violence was a means of survival, a means of "communicating resistance and the integrity of a struggle for self-determination to the Sri Lankan army."<sup>22</sup> When Sangarasivam asked Kala, a 23-year-old women cadre, why she joined the LTTE movement, she said:

When we see our sisters, and mothers raped by the [Sri Lankan] army, when we see our brothers taken away, beaten, and killed, when we watch our homes burn up in flames in the aftermath of aerial bombardments, what are we to do? Where do we go to hide, to live? I decided that I was not going to let that happen to me. I was not going to be raped and killed in the hands of the [Sri Lankan] army. I saw the courage of other girls who were joining the movement and decided that this was really the only way to survive.<sup>23</sup>

Many women like Kala joined to preempt rape by Sinhalese or Indian soldiers at the start of the war, in the 1980's. Others joined because they had been raped, or personally victimized by the Sri Lankan army.<sup>24</sup> After just a few years, it became clear that women could indeed succeed for emancipation by mobilizing themselves behind the liberation organization. "They gained confidence, courage, determination, and in turn, are transformed from vulnerable targets into true revolutionaries."<sup>25</sup> These women's livelihoods and very survival would have been in jeopardy without the self-confidence and skills that the LTTE provided them with.

Other women have joined the movement in hopes of enacting societal change and eliminating the traditional gendered division in society. Rajini Thiranagama, a deceased Tamil feminist and human rights activist, wrote:

Women have come out strong during the war...they have stood out as individuals or as small groups exposing atroci-

- 26 Manchanda, “Women, war and Peace in South Asia: Beyond Victimhood to Agency,” 102.
- 27 Gowrinathan, “Why Do Women Rebel? Understanding State Repression and Female Participation in Sri Lanka,” 1.
- 28 De Mel, *Women & the Nation’s Narrative*, 206.
- 29 Margaret Trawick, *Reasons for Violence: A Preliminary Ethnographic Account of the LTTE*. *South Asia: Journal of South Asian Studies* 20.51 (1997): 170.
- 30 *Ibid.*, 171.
- 31 *Ibid.*, 169.

ties and violations of dignity... Women who in the midst of war pleaded and argued with the militants for their families and the whole nations... women’s history does have a triumph. There is powerlessness, disappointment, and disillusion, but also hope.<sup>26</sup>

Groups such as the Women’s Military Wing and Birds of Paradise accounted for 30 percent of the militants in the LTTE, and aimed to break free of conservative gender roles and resist state oppression. Just as Thiranagama had anticipated, periods of conflict such as the Sri Lankan Civil War “open up spaces of agency for women to cross private/public barriers and to assume new roles thereby shifting cultural norms to allow for the mobilization of female fighters.”<sup>27</sup> Thus, the war provided women — who previously would not have had the opportunity to escape the private sphere — with the chance to not only change their own lives, but also to alter societal gender norms. The following vivid account of the LTTE female cadres most effectively describes how the LTTE’s mobilization of female soldiers led to the empowerment of countless women. Thiranagama observes,

One cannot but be inspired when one sees the women of the LTTE in the night with their AKs slung over the shoulder... One cannot but admire the dedication and toughness of their training... One could see the nationalist fervor and the romantic vision of women in arms defending the nation (De Mel, 206).<sup>28</sup>

These women have become agents of their own destinies through the militarization of their bodies and transformation of their identities.

Finally, there are those women who join the movement in the name of an autonomous state of Tamil Eelam and the liberation of the Tamil people. Personal liberation is attained as a consequence of their active participation in the conflict. In Margaret Trawick’s interview with Sita, a “Tamil Tigress,” the anthropologist learns that for Sita — and many other female LTTE combatants — “it is enough to fight for liberation (*vidutalai*) and happiness of the people for the people.”<sup>29</sup> As a result of Sita’s “absolute” attainment of personal liberation, she says that her mind and heart have also changed. She declares, “I have become even more ready to die. I see the suffering of the people and I have no fear about fighting and dying for them.”<sup>30</sup> Women like Sita yearn for the life of a fighter, and the subsequent honor that arises from fighting for your people and your homeland (*eelam*). In addition to the privileged degree of physical power and mobility that she gains from training with the LTTE, she is “liberated from the helpless rage expressed in the laments of so many traditional Tamil women.”<sup>31</sup> Sita has

proven to the LTTE that she loves Tamil Eelam and is willing to die for her homeland; it is through this self-sacrifice that Sita, along with many others, achieved her own self-empowerment.

*Who Are These Female LTTE Combatants?  
Women as Victims*

- 32 De Mel, *Women & the Nation's Narrative*, 224.
- 33 Lori Grinker, *After War: Veterans From A World In Conflict*. (Millbrook: de. Mo, 2004), 22.
- 34 Margaret Trawick, "Girls in the LTTE." *Enemy Lines: Childhood, Warfare, and Play in Batticaloa*. (London: University of California Press, 2007), 168.
- 35 *Ibid.*, 169.
- 36 Hellmann-Rajanayagam, "Female Warriors, Martyrs, and Suicide Attackers," 10.

The emergence of female combatants in the LTTE, however, has also resulted in great debates over the victimization of the women soldiers. Conservative Tamils who argue against the role of women militants often believe that females who have been manipulated into joining the fight are subsequently defying the socio-cultural norms of Sri Lanka. Some human rights activists perceive their involvement as a "support service, an instrument in the leadership's armour."<sup>32</sup> Although many of these opponents provide compelling reasons to sympathize with the female fighters as victims of the LTTE, I believe that the women's role as combatants against the oppressive state provides them with the means to actively empower themselves. During the early stages of the war, it was quite common for the LTTE to target schools and villages in hopes of luring women into joining their cause. One account from a young female soldier at the Methsevana Government Rehabilitation Center for Girls in Nugegoda depicts the LTTE's manipulative recruitment methods and how she became entrapped in a life of fighting. She says:

When I was sixteen the LTTE came to school and showed us war movies. Before that, they showed us karate videos. That's why I wanted to join for the karate. At first I liked it the training, the uniform, the weapons. I didn't learn karate but I learned how to shoot, and I enjoyed firing a weapon... After a while, I realized how much I missed my family, and I felt such loneliness, I cried every night. But we couldn't go home... It was a one-way door; you could go in, but you couldn't go out.<sup>33</sup>

As the young combatant's account exemplifies, the LTTE lures young soldiers into their ranks, and in turn secures their presence in the movement. A Tamil Catholic priest, Father Sebastian, explains how the LTTE "don't drag children out of their homes, they don't coerce them, but they do entice them. They [mostly] join voluntarily."<sup>34</sup> Newspaper and television accounts of the young girls of the LTTE depict groups of individuals who are "fanatically devoted to Prabhakaran" and who will "die for their homeland."<sup>35</sup> The young, impressionable girls do not see past the initial allure of fighting for their nation. The notion that they will be able to escape their constrained lives and enter into an exciting and "cool" adventure appeals to many Tamil women.<sup>36</sup> Others are drawn to the fighting because of the LTTE's more practical enticement of security against the

- 37 Manchanda, "Women, War, and Peace," 115.
- 38 *Ibid.*, 113.
- 39 Christine Sixta. "The Illusive Third Wave: Are Female Terrorists the New "New Women" in Developing Societies?" *Journal of Women, Politics & Policy* 29.2 (2008): 264.
- 40 De Mel, *Women & the Nation's Narrative*, 205.
- 41 Sixta, "The Illusive Third Wave," 268.
- 42 Manchanda, "Women, War, and Peace," 114.
- 43 Nimmi Gowrinathan, "How Women Rebel: Variation in Participation for Female Fighters in the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam." N.d. TS, 179.

Sri Lankan army.<sup>37</sup> Regardless of their reasons for joining, the majority of women do not realize that they are bound by their choice to enlist. In fact, if they do join, they cannot leave; it is a "one-way door," as those trapped behind it describe the situation. They have renounced their childhood through the very act of joining the LTTE. The LTTE is able to lure the young soldiers in, through any means necessary, in order to secure more fighters.

One might also argue that the LTTE victimizes its female soldiers, merely using them as a means to the ultimate end of attaining a homeland. Adamant opponents of the LTTE, such as Radhika Coomaraswamy, have gone so far as to describe the female soldiers as "cogs in the wheel" of male leadership of the LTTE.<sup>38</sup> Challengers of LTTE female mobilization see the women as victims of the Prabhakaran's patriarchal nationalist project as well as the Sri Lankan militaries oppression. Christine Sixta argues that female fighters are caught within the "triple bind of oppression," simultaneously battling Western oppression, societal [the state's] oppression, and internal oppression within their own insurgent groups.<sup>39</sup> Most notably, as a result of this "patriarchal containment" within their chosen militant groups, they enjoy only "agentive moments in an interregnum where normalcy is suspended and there is license to transform taboo and social convention."<sup>40</sup> These moments exemplify the LTTE's initial reasons for recruiting female soldiers. Female combatants such as the Black Tigers — a largely suicide bombing division of the LTTE — are used as exploitable resources.<sup>41</sup> The LTTE profits from the fact that many women such as the infamous Dhanu — the Black Tiger responsible for the death of Rajiv Gandhi — are willing to sacrifice themselves for the liberation of the Tamil people.<sup>42</sup>

Despite these arguments against the militarization of females in the LTTE, I believe it difficult to deny, all together, the first-hand accounts of self-empowerment and liberation by female soldiers. Although the LTTE did, at times, utilize deceitful methods of recruitment, those who enlisted did so out of a greater desire to either help their homeland or better themselves. Evidence shows that even in cases of forcible recruitment, levels of participation are better explained by the impact of the Sri Lankan state's repression on women's political ideals than by *how* they were recruited.<sup>43</sup> It is true that the LTTE recruited its soldiers in the hopes of strengthening its army and fighting for an autonomous homeland. However, it is also important to note that many of the women who voluntarily or coercively joined the army, were ultimately driven by not only the wish to emancipate themselves as women but also by their hopefulness and determination to secure greater power for the Tamil population as a whole.

It is particularly clear, if we look at first-hand accounts of female soldiers, that these women had envisioned a Tamil emancipation — in addition to their own liberation — when first



- 44 Manchanda, "Women, War, and Peace," 114.
- 45 De Mel, *Women & the Nation's Narrative*, 206.
- 46 Rita Manchanda, "Sri Lanka: Culture Conflict for LTTE Women," 2003.
- 47 Adele Ann Balasingham, "Women Fighters of Liberation Tigers," *LTTE International Secretariat*, January 1, 1993, accessed November 30, 2013, <tamilnation.co/books/Eelam/adeleann.htm>
- 48 Trawick, "Girls in the LTTE," 156.

joining the LTTE. For example, in her personal diary, Dhanu conveys her duty as a Tamil individual to liberate her people. She writes, "the most important liberation struggle was the struggle for Eelam and the liberation of the Tamil people."<sup>44</sup> Thus, the LTTE's fight against the state symbolizes more than just self-empowerment for those women engaging in combat: it is a chance to emancipate all Sri Lankan Tamils.

Those who argue that women such as Dhanu are merely a means to an end for the LTTE fail to acknowledge the personal benefits that the LTTE provides for its militants. Most importantly, females fighting in the public sphere are able to attain a sense of liberation that would have otherwise been impossible to achieve in the domestic sphere. For many women this liberation comes in the form of emancipation, and extended freedom and mobility in their everyday lives. The LTTE's construction of new gender roles for the women provides them with the opportunity to surpass their domestic duties, and actively contribute to the fight for a homeland. The "conservative feminised ideal is now a public figure engaged in masculine activities and repudiating patriarchal norms of womanhood."<sup>45</sup> These women yearn for the life of a fighter, in order to break through the deep-rooted hierarchical gendered structure of society. Tamilini, head of the women's political wing in the Sri Lankan post-conflict processes, proclaims, "Now there is acceptance of the LTTE women as equal within the movement."<sup>46</sup> It is clear that these women have also greatly benefitted from the LTTE's services. Training and fighting in the battlefield has provided women with the strength and self-empowerment to defend themselves and fight for their homeland.

Additionally, joining the LTTE provided women with the skills and means needed to protect themselves. As Balasingham writes, "Young women demanded their right to self-defense and their right to exercise their patriotic sentiments."<sup>47</sup> The LTTE leadership was committed to the emancipation and equality of women and welcomed such demands by expanding its military program for female combatants. Margaret Trawick's research on why girls joined the LTTE revealed the shared belief that they were safest in the midst of their LTTE brethren. One female combatant, Nalini, shared, "there is no fear in the jungle."<sup>48</sup> The LTTE protected her from the Sri Lankan army while in the jungle and provided them with the necessary means to defend themselves — namely, AK-47s and T56s. Without the LTTE, these women would be living in constant fear, and their lives would be further limited by the conflict. Instead, they have become active agents of their survival, strength, and empowerment.

## Broader Scope: Looking at Female Fighters Abroad

In the preceding pages, I have explained why and how the female fighters of the LTTE have become more empowered as



- 49 Shobha Gautam, Amrita Banskota, and Rita Manchanda, "Where There Are No Men: Women in the Maoist Insurgency in Nepal," *Perspectives on Modern South Asia*, Ed. Kamala Visweswaran. (West Sussex: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011), 341.
- 50 Rita Manchanda, "Maoist Insurgency in Nepal Radicalizing Gendered Narratives." *Cultural Dynamics* 16.2-3 (2004): 237.
- 51 *Ibid.*, 247.

a result of their militarized role in the conflict. Their role as fighters in the LTTE has provided them with the means of survival, strength, and self-empowerment, all while aiming for the end result of a liberated Tamil people and homeland. This argument might account for the Tamil women's stories that were presented in my paper, but can it be applied to a more regional scale? Have other gender transformations emerged as a result of female militancy in Nepal's Maoist Insurgency? This is the question that I will address and answer in the affirmative in the following paragraphs.

Looking at other South Asian cases, for example, we see several instances of violent conflict in which women comprise a significant percentage of those fighting. Each of these cases is complex and unique in its own right. Therefore, by looking at the Nepalese female fighters, this paper does not aim to analyze the degree to which the Nepalese women were empowered or victimized through their participation in their respective conflicts. Rather, I wish to draw a connection and highlight the similarities between the female combatants of the LTTE and the Nepalese fighters.

The Maoist Insurgency in Nepal is strikingly similar to the LTTE in Sri Lanka in regards to the way in which women used the rebel movement as a means to emancipate themselves. Both movements had a massive female presence — approximately one-third of those fighting in the LTTE and Maoists are women — joining the front ranks of the fight. In Nepal, there too has been a "women's transformative experience" from "relative invisibility to visible protagonist."<sup>49</sup> The Peoples War ideology, similar to LTTE's doctrines, has opened up a space for women to claim rights and restructure a "gendered programmatic agenda."<sup>50</sup> For many women who have fought in the ranks of the Maoists Movement, their participation was more than a challenge of patriarchal relations within the movements or even a social revolution within the state: it was an emancipatory act.<sup>51</sup> Just as the LTTE provided its female combatants with the tools needed to attain personal liberation, the Maoists have also provided their female fighters with the means to achieve such emancipation.

## Conclusion

- 52 International Crisis Group. *Sri Lanka: Women's Insecurity in the North and East*. Asia Briefing, No. 217. N.p., December 20, 2011, accessed November 20, 2013, <[www.crisisgroup.org/en/regions/asia/south-asia/sri-lanka/217-sri-lanka-womens-insecurity-in-the-north-and-east.aspx](http://www.crisisgroup.org/en/regions/asia/south-asia/sri-lanka/217-sri-lanka-womens-insecurity-in-the-north-and-east.aspx)>.

Although the Sri Lankan Civil War has left thousands of Tamil women in a position of helplessness and vulnerability at the hands of the state, there are many others who have grown stronger and more empowered as a result of the violence. Today, in post-war Sri Lanka, this newfound sense of inner-strength and empowerment has radically shifted the way women approach everyday life and societal issues. As militarization post 2009 reaches extreme levels, many Tamil women face a "desperate lack of security" and continue to "live in fear of violence" from the state (*International Crisis Group*, i).<sup>52</sup> Although many

- 53 Gowrinathan, "How do Women Rebel," 195.
- 54 International Crisis Group, "Sri Lanka," 38.
- 55 Nimmi Gowrinathan, "How Women Rebel: Variation in Participation for Female Fighters in the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam," N.d. TS, 17.

ex-female combatants face economic constraints, limited mobility, and imminent displacement by the state, their experience in the war has led to high levels of commitment to a violent resistance movement and a nationalist cause.<sup>53</sup> As I have shown in my paper, even in restrictive spaces and in the face of danger, these former female fighters do have agency in their actions and decisions. The current issue remains, however, that the militarized authority continues to dictate what avenues are available to them and whether or not they will ever feel secure again.

Considering how recent of a phenomenon this post-war militarization policy is, there is still a considerable amount of research needed to fully grasp the impact of state militarization. On the one hand, Tamil activists have used this militarization in instrumental ways to further delegitimize the Sri Lankan state. Political analysts, on the other hand, continue to monitor the state's activity in the northern and eastern Tamil provinces, in hopes of preventing the recurrence of violent conflict.<sup>54</sup> Until the state acknowledges the vulnerabilities of these ex-combatant Tamil women and takes action to address them, there will always be a "latent potential for a resurgence in violent forms of resistance — particularly amongst Tamil women."<sup>55</sup> The female fighters' experience fighting in the Civil War has provided them with the means to attain personal liberation and has continued to fuel their desire to liberate their own, Tamil people.

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# How Did the Chicken Cross the Pacific? Kentucky Fried Chicken's Appeal to China's Culinary Tradition in Creating Its Fast Food Empire

Jack Linshi

- 1 Warren K. Liu, *KFC in China: Secret Recipe for Success*, (Singapore: John Wiley & Sons, 2008), 5.
- 2 Veronica, Romualdez, "The History of KFC in China," *EHow*, Demand Media, Sept. 29 2009, accessed Feb. 22 2013.

The story of Kentucky Fried Chicken (KFC) in China begins on November 12, 1987 at around 9:30 AM in central Beijing. On the side of Qianmenxi Road, nestled on the southwest corner of Beijing's Tiananmen Square, there opened a restaurant that was new to all of China, which flashed a red sign — KFC 肯德基 — into the one of the city's busiest areas.<sup>1</sup> As satisfied patrons left, little bags of fried chicken in hand, they would be just few of the millions of Chinese who would eventually enter the restaurant's red doors, greet Colonel Sanders' scruffy smile, and ultimately provide KFC with a fortune as golden as its own crispy chicken wings. Only a decade and a half later, KFC, unstoppable as it was popular, opened its 500th store in China. In 2004, three years later, it opened its 1000th store; in 2012, KFC opened its 4000th store; and by 2013, each of its restaurants in China were accumulating over 1,000,000 USD in annual revenue.<sup>2</sup> Today, China is the only country in the world where the number of KFC outlets outnumbers those of McDonald's.

But the story of KFC's *path to success* begins several decades before it landed its first Chinese store in 1987. From the 1950s up until KFC's Chinese debut, revolution, famine and capitalism spread throughout the tumultuous nation, shaping ideas of food and Western civilization. And when the fast food chain's menu debuted, its popularization was a direct result of these recent ideas as well as its appeal to traditional Chinese cuisine. Whereas many studies attribute KFC's *business model* to its success, here, I will specifically argue that KFC's *culinary model* can be used to explain the phenomenon of KFC's extraordinary success in China.

In this paper, I will first outline several social, political, and economic events in the decades preceding KFC's opening in terms of their shifting of Chinese norms regarding food and Western culture. Next, I will argue that these shifts directly aligned with KFC's critically unique model, and this alignment resulted in a booming success. Finally, I will demonstrate that nowhere in Chinese culture does a cuisine like that of KFC appear, and that KFC's novelty, too, contributed to its massive popularization.

## Sociopolitical Events and the Shaping of Culinary Norms

Part of the explanation for KFC's outlandish success in China lies in the nuances of Chinese history from 1959 to 1987 — a

- 3 Xun Zhou, *The Great Famine in China, 1958–1962: A Documentary History*. (New Haven: Yale UP, 2012), 17.
- 4 *Ibid.*, 75.
- 5 *Ibid.*, 45.

rocky period when three major events shaped the Chinese approach to food and to the spread of Western culture. Mao's Great Leap Forward and Cultural Revolution resulted in the reduction of food culture, family significance, and foreign ideology. Deng Xiaoping's Reforms, a relief to Mao's suppression, then re-shifted Chinese norms their original states, heightened by the powerful momentum of catharsis. In other words, the effects of Deng's reforms were amplified by prior sociopolitical conditions, creating a set of norms that would actually directly align with the nature of Chinese KFC.

Though China's Great Leap Forward (大跃进) from 1958 to 1961 is known less for its actual policies than its catastrophic result, the campaign importantly ruined a sense of family-provided food, which affected present and future attitudes toward food. In order to alter the foundation of Chinese society from agrarianism to communism, Mao Zedong, Chairman of the Communist Party of China, instituted rapid collectivization and industrialization. Unlike Stalin's collectivization in the Soviet Union that had resulted in civil war between peasantry and state, Mao's process of communalizing agriculture pitted Chinese of all social strata against each other,<sup>3</sup> an especially problematic idea given the view of Chinese farming as a family practice. Historically, all members of the family, young and old alike, were expected to contribute to the labor supply, with the labor often so intensive that the phrase *yilimi, yidihan* (一粒米一滴汗), or "a drop of sweat for a grain of rice," came into being. But collectivization distanced the notion of family from farming, effectively un-incentivizing agriculture; combined with an overwhelming focus on industrialization and frequent drought and flooding, both the institution of agriculture and family collapsed. Throughout the subsequent famine, families who had not been allocated housing were frequently split apart in a desperate attempt to find shelter and food. In 1960, for example, a report from the Guangdong government noted that a 65-year-old poor peasant with four sons had to painfully witness his sons move to four different villages to find food and work; he committed suicide just a few months later. In mountainous areas where migration was less of an option, a 1962 report from Sichuan Province indicates that over 50,000 rural families were homeless, sleeping in "chairs underneath the eaves of the houses of other families... some have slept in caves."<sup>4</sup> Urban areas were affected as well, with 80 percent of women being forced into low-paid, full-time employment, and children and elderly left uncared for at home. Families that once cooked meals together were forced to eat in collective canteens, and due to overcapacity or restrictions, families frequently could not even eat in the same canteen.<sup>5</sup> The once meaningful Chinese family life was left virtually fractured.

During this Great Famine, Chinese eating routines were drastically flipped into a game of survival and subsistence.

- 6 Daniel Zhang, "Agriculture in Zhejiang During the Great Famine," Telephone interview with author, Apr. 20 2013.
- 7 Zhou, *The Great Famine in China*, 80.
- 8 *Ibid.*, 82.
- 9 *Ibid.*, 44.
- 10 *Ibid.*, 151.
- 11 *Ibid.*, 152.
- 12 Pamela Lubell, *The Chinese Communist Party and the Cultural Revolution: The Case of the Sixty-one Renegades*, (Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave, 2002), 143–44.

Prior to Mao's collectivization, a typical meal for an agricultural family in Zhejiang province were modest servings of rice, a vegetable dish, and if feeling especially extravagant, pork or chicken, with dishes mostly steamed and garnished with limited spices.<sup>6</sup> By 1958, at the onset of the famine, meals for Chinese farmers in Shandong, for example, were much more limited, and no longer a product of their own labor. Villagers were allocated 0.25 kg per person of food rations, equivalent to a mere one to two cups of rice — and this was considered emergency relief.<sup>7</sup> Hunger became starvation, and according to a 1959 Shandong Municipal Investigation Team report, villagers frequently supplemented their diet with grass, tree bark, and weeds. In Shandong's capital, Jinan, lines of hungry individuals stretched in front of the town bureau, ready to trade their clothes for meals.<sup>8</sup> In Sichuan, the delusion of hunger was so strong that villagers and town residents turned to the ancient practice of "earth eating," or the consumption of soil-like substances.<sup>9</sup> Though once believed to be a step towards immortality, earth eating proved itself to be a dirty reminder of the starving Chinese peoples' mortality. The devastating hunger is evidenced in the Chinese language itself; several written documents by hungry Chinese citizens during this time suggest a popularization of Chinese phrases that express feeling as a function of the character *chi* (吃), or "to eat." For example, in a 1959 letter to the Shandong Provincial Party Committee, a starving woman blames the Chinese Communist Party for her *chikui* (吃虧), which means to endure hardship or literally "to eat deficit";<sup>10</sup> in another report, a member of the Sichuan Provincial Investigation Team describes how witnessing cannibalism made him *chijing* (吃驚), which means to be startled or literally "to eat shock."<sup>11</sup> Thus, both the starving Chinese people and the Chinese language suggested that a feeling or idea was required to be figuratively consumed in order to be understood — in other words, during this time, eating (or the lack thereof) was what drove and defined the Chinese lifestyle.

Though Mao fell in prestige as a result of the Great Leap Forward's failure, his Cultural Revolution (1966–1976) marked not only his re-ascent to power, but also a further suppression of food culture in Chinese society. The Cultural Revolution was founded on Mao's belief that the bourgeois were slowly claiming the Chinese government in an attempt to spread capitalism. As a result, Mao called for a violent class struggle to eliminate such revisionist ideology. Whereas in the Great Leap Forward Mao's central concern was to boost agriculture, here, not even the members of Ministry of Agriculture were spared from his harsh pro-communist movement. In 1966, for example, Minister Liao Luyan was discovered to have protested collectivization and communism; his interrogators reported that they "made a direct onslaught against [him]" and that he was "forced into explaining how he betrayed the [Communist] Party."<sup>12</sup> With



- 13 Mark Swislocki, *Culinary Nostalgia: Regional Food Culture and the Urban Experience in Shanghai*, (Stanford, CA: Stanford UP, 2009), 27.
- 14 *Ibid.*, 217.
- 15 Weili Ye, and Xiaodong Ma, *Growing Up in the People's Republic: Conversations between Two Daughters of China's Revolution*, (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005).
- 16 Ta, Chung Tsai Pu, 《大众菜谱》, (Jing Gong Ye Publishing Company, 1973), 1.

agricultural leaders — the backbone of the country's food supply — mercilessly charged with anti-communist behavior, restaurant owners, too, were pressured to cater to the common man in order to avoid persecution. In Shanghai, where high-end restaurant chefs were traditionally celebrated as embodiments of Chinese culinary artistry, these chefs were reduced to serving their food for an affordable, everyday fare;<sup>13</sup> by 1970, for example, the Yangzhou-style restaurant Meilongzhen that once primarily served wealthy businessmen found itself serving half-price food to a customer base largely comprised of lower-class delivery truck drivers. Several high-end, high-revenue restaurants that refused to lower their costs were shut down, as Mao viewed these eateries as a bureaucratized formation of elites — a strong opponent in his battle against capitalism.<sup>14</sup> Of course, Mao also strictly forbade the opening of new restaurants — an unwelcome emblem of the private ownership of production — during the Cultural Revolution. In Beijing, 14 years passed after 1966 before the city-goers witnessed the opening of a new restaurant.

Similarly, urban upper middle-class youth — another demographic associated with the decadent, capitalist food culture — became largely disconnected from their culinary culture. As Mao viewed the youth to be a vital tool for revolution, he forced nearly half a million *zhiquing* (知青), or the educated youth, to receive “re-education” from poor and lower-middle peasants as a method of de-institutionalizing privilege by birth. A brainwashing of sorts, the *shangshan xiexiang yundong* (上山下乡运动), literally “up the mountain, down to the country exercise,” moved *zhiquing* to rural farms. One high-school graduate from Beijing, Ye Weili, recalls her salient memories of the scarcity of food — especially vegetables, meat, and cooking oil. And when food was available, it often the countryside's staple food: a modest, simple meal of *bajiao* (芭蕉), or plantains, cooked with rice.<sup>15</sup> The *zhiquing*, many of whom had never touched a stove in their life, were forced to wake up at three o'clock each morning to cook the same breakfast: rice porridge with a vegetable dish.

The Cultural Revolution's vision of an equalized society even took form in culinary instruction. In a 1973 cookbook titled 《大众菜谱》, or *A Cookbook for the Masses*, the very first lines, translated from Chinese, read “Chairman Mao has long pointed out to us that we ought to profoundly take notice of the life of the masses, the land and labor issues... we should incorporate all of the issues surrounding the life of the masses into our daily lives.”<sup>16</sup> The cookbook's communist propaganda is a mere page, but it is nonetheless a departure from Chinese cookbooks' often lengthy *xuyan* (序言), or preface, in which authors explain generally do not explain their political beliefs but simply recall their defining culinary experiences. The recipes in 《大众菜谱》 are in accordance with the period's scarcity of meat, with the cookbook largely comprised of vegetable dish recipes that



- 17 Ibid., II.  
18 Graham Earnshaw, "Capital Cafe in Peking," *The Daily Telegraph* [Beijing], Nov. 6 1980.  
19 Swislocki, *Culinary Nostalgia*, 27.

demonstrate a significant lack of the creativity that was once highly characteristic of Chinese cuisine. For example, a recipe for *chaojiucai* (炒韭菜), or stir-fried chives, features a mere three ingredients — chives, oil, and salt — whereas a traditional *chaojiucai* would be cooked with *rousi* (肉丝), or julienned pork, and glazed in some kind of sauce.<sup>17</sup> But in reality, to even eat *chaojiucai* in most of China is an absurd concept, as it is not a standalone dish outside of Southern China, but an ingredient for the filling of dumplings or steamed buns. This disintegration of Chinese cuisine to its lowest forms mirrors the Cultural Revolution's effect on pressuring Chinese society towards the lowest social class, the proletariat.

Culinary relief was finally granted in 1978 following Mao's death when Deng Xiaoping became the leader of the Chinese Communist Party and transformed China into a market economy — food culture found its rebirth, and the Chinese concept of food as a function of family was restored. The unity of eating and family found itself under the national spotlight two years after the Reforms began when the first private restaurant since the Cultural Revolution opened in Beijing in 1980. The owner was Liu Guixian (刘桂仙), a 47 year-old housewife who had previously worked several jobs as a chef's assistant. Liu walked an hour to visit the Chinese Business Bureau each day for an entire month until she finally received permission to begin selling food. A poor Beijing native, she recruited her husband, four sons and daughter to "beg for a wagon of waste material, old bricks, old pads, woods" to build a modest restaurant with a small kitchen and four tables. Local media picked up Liu's story, and within weeks, Liu and her restaurant became famous not only for the revival of Beijing's restaurant scene, but also for reestablishing eating as a family-centered practice.<sup>18</sup> The family-run nature of agriculture, too, was reestablished in 1981 when Deng de-collectivized agriculture through the Household-Responsibility System, a practice in which local managers — most often families themselves — were held accountable for profits and losses of their land, reversing collectivization's premise of the government absorbing any loss after providing communal farms with a production quota.

Though Chinese interest in Western cuisine had always been longstanding, with curiosity in adopting foreign cuisine dating back to the Han dynasty, circa 200AD,<sup>19</sup> Chinese interest in adopting Western ideology was a newfound phenomenon. Effects of the Reforms were economically visible within one year: GDP consistently rose 9 percent annually for years since 1978, and disposable income rose over 10 percent annually as a result of the allowing of foreign businesses and investment. Nothing is more motivating than wealth, and as Chinese individuals became more profitable in a reward-based system, interest in the West began to grow, critically affecting how KFC would be received and perceived in 1987. Tempted by the

promise of success as a product of individual effort, Chinese people on the outskirts of cities flocked into urban areas to participate in the new capitalist labor structure.<sup>20</sup> Although the increasing acceptance of Western lifestyle could be argued to support the success of *any* Western fast food chain in China, it is particularly specific for KFC (as it will be argued next). After all, Qianmenxi Street (前门西), the crowded two-way street home to KFC's first store, literally translates to "front door to the West."

## The KFC Model's Identifying Qualities in Relation to Chinese Sociopolitical Factors

By 1987, these events had effectively conditioned Chinese citizens to favor a family-oriented, flavorful, and emblematically Western restaurant. Coincidentally (or not), several key identifiers of the Chinese KFC model align with these preferences. Because these defining qualities cannot be said of other Western and domestic fast food chains, the extent to which they account for KFC's success is fully valid.

While it took only three years the second Western fast food chain enter the lucrative Chinese market — McDonald's, unsurprisingly — restaurants not including KFC still suffer from a sort of 'standardization syndrome' that limits their potential. Take McDonald's, for example — KFC's biggest competitor in China — as a contrast to KFC's culinary model. When the burger-serving juggernaut launched its first store in Shenzhen in 1990, the Chinese menu was exactly the same as the American menu. McDonald's most popular orders in America — the Big Mac, Filet-O-Fish, or McChicken with a side of French fries — can be mapped directly onto their Chinese counterparts. But when comparing the Chinese KFC menu with its American version, the difference is significant: several options available in China were entirely new to KFC's global franchise, and would be lost in culinary translation if offered in the US. The 1987 pioneering menu, for example, offers *doujiang* (soy milk), *mizhou* (congee) mixed with crispy bits of meat as sides to main dishes; the menu also offered variations on American fried chicken favorites, including what is now KFC's most popular order, the *xiangla jibao* (spicy chicken burger).<sup>21</sup> In the years since its opening, additions to the menu included *yumi jikuai* (corn-stuffed chicken nuggets) and the *zhenzhu naicha* (pearl milk tea). Similarly, it is almost impossible to find a difference between Chinese and American menus in other popular chains — Starbucks, for example, offers none of the culinary fusions that define KFC's Chinese presence. Perhaps the only Western fast food chain to adopt KFC's Eastern-Western culinary synthesis is Pizza Hut (必胜客), which opened in Beijing in 1990, but this similarity is precisely explained by the fact that Pizza Hut is run under the same parent brand as KFC, Yum! Brands.

- 22 Eugene Newton Anderson, *The Food of China*, (New Haven: Yale UP, 1988), 42.
- 23 William Mellor, “McDonald’s No Match for KFC in China as Colonel Rules Fast Food,” *Bloomberg*, Jan. 26, 2011.
- 24 肯德基网站, Kentucky Fried Chicken, May 4 2013.
- 25 “How KFC in Japan Is Different from KFC in the US,” *Fast Food in Japan*, May 4 2013.
- 26 Liu, *KFC in China*, 19.
- 27 *Ibid.*, 25.

Even more, Chinese KFCs are known to provide hyper-localized but also internationalized menus, specifically tailored to different regions of China and catered to growing cosmopolitanism. In China’s southwestern Sichuan Province, a region known for its spicy cuisine, KFC’s menu offers the *laobeijing jiroujuan* (老北京鸡肉卷套), popularized in English as the “Dragon Twister,” a spicy, crispy chicken wrap with Peking duck sauce meant to mimic the traditional wrapping-method of Peking duck in steamed pancakes, generously stuffed with scallion and cucumber sticks.<sup>22</sup> KFCs in Sichuan also offer a twist on the region’s famous *mapo doufu* (麻婆豆腐), or spicy chili tofu, offering *mapo doufu jiroufan* (麻婆豆腐鸡肉饭)—the same spicy tofu mixed with crispy chicken, served over rice.<sup>23</sup> As one of many campaigns designed to add a temporary touch of international flavors, KFC, for example, launched a “Taste of Ireland” campaign in China in 2011. The advertising spree marketed limited-time offerings of American-Chinese-Irish selections, including the *aierlan tiansuanjiroutui* (爱尔兰甜酒烤鸡腿), or Irish sweet-liqueur fried chicken—while labeled as “fried,” the chicken is actually mostly steamed, the traditional method of cooking in China, coated with a thin layer of American-style crisp, and finally drizzled with Bailey’s Irish Cream, an Irish cream-based whiskey.<sup>24</sup>

Though Sam Su, a Yum! Brands executive who partly oversaw KFC’s Chinese opening, admitted the menu selections were “risky,” the team was nonetheless confident in the Chinese peoples’ warm welcome, an assurance that stemmed from KFCs previous launches in other Asian locations: Japan in 1970, Hong Kong in 1973, and Taiwan in 1987. There, menus not only utilized Colonel Sanders’ top-secret fried chicken recipe, but also successfully fused it with local tastes. The seafood-rich country of Japan, for example, boasted a menu with a *panko* (bread crumb coated) fried salmon sandwich; the KFC franchise has since reached such popularity in Japan that the phrase *kurisumasu ni wa kentakkii* (“Kentucky for Christmas!”) signifies its widespread prominence Japanese society.<sup>25</sup> The Hong Kong stores are a slightly different story: although they officially opened in 1973, the branches were shut down by 1975, and then reopened in 1985 with greater, continuous success. The problem was the menu: while it offered several dishes that currently appear on KFC’s Chinese menu, including congee, the cuisine was designed to be authentically Hong Kong, ultimately being dismissed as a cheap Western imitation.<sup>26</sup> Having grasped this vital lesson, KFC carefully reformulated its Hong Kong and Chinese selections, and when the chain opened in Beijing, Yum! Brands executive Roger Eaton claimed that KFC’s menu had officially passed the “Chinese taste bud test.”<sup>27</sup>

Like other Western fast food chains in China, domestic Chinese restaurant chains also are lacking in this regard—in the ability to tastefully (quite literally) combine different cuisines

- 28 全聚德网站, QuanJuDe Restaurant, May 4 2013.
- 29 Janet Hazen, *Making Your Own Gourmet Mustards*, (Chronicle Books, 1993), 10.
- 30 狗不理集团股份有限公司, GouBuLi Restaurant, May 4 2013.
- 31 Anderson, *The Food of China*, 126.
- 32 Liu, *KFC in China* 66.
- 33 *Ibid.*, 67.

and dishes. Specifically, the most famous Chinese chains are known for producing exceptional traditional Chinese dishes, and not for innovation and culinary experimentation. Of course, there is little impetus for fixing what is not wrong, but the deep attachment to strictly Chinese dishes nonetheless limits a restaurant's room for variation in its dishes. For example, Quanjude (全聚德), a popular Chinese chain established in 1864, is known precisely for one dish: its authentic Peking roast duck. Its menu has hardly changed since the early 19th century, and of its main dishes, the closest plate that involves a blend of international flavors is the *jiemokaoya* (芥末烤鸭), or the mustard roast duck, that uses mustard paste originally popularized in Western Europe.<sup>28, 29</sup> Likewise, Goubuli (狗不理), which literally translates to "even dogs don't ignore," specializes in traditional *baozi* (包子), or Chinese stuffed buns. Like Quanjude, Goubuli places its effort not on the incorporation of regional or global tastes, but rather on the mastery of a single, authentic Chinese dish. The chain prides itself in offering *baozi* exclusively filled with traditional stuffing, such as ground pork, chives, and Chinese cabbage, a classically popular blend.<sup>30, 31</sup> As a result, by virtue of Chinese chain restaurants' dedication to perfecting Chinese cuisine, there were no Chinese food chains that were direct culinary competitors to KFC prior to its entry in China.

Lastly, in its physical setting, KFC emanates a distinct aura of family. Although several fast food chains in China are known for their sit-down, community atmosphere, Chinese KFC has a particularly strong connection to the notion of family. For example, KFC's pricing specials incentivize a family meal. Even from its first menu in 1987, KFC offered deals that provided discounts for larger order sizes;<sup>32</sup> for example, a single order of containing two *xianglajichi* (香辣鸡翅), or spicy chicken wings, is RMB7.50, while a larger order containing eight wings is RMB25, a price differential of about RMB4 had the larger order been simply multiplied by four. Similar deals can be found in KFC's *tao* (套), or meal sets, which are larger orders crafted for consumption by multiple individuals. Granted, in 1987, meal sets were most likely available in other Chinese restaurants, and definitely available in other Western chains upon their arrivals in China—but in 2002, KFC was the first chain in China (and still the only one) to introduce the *quanjiatong* (全家桶), or the Family Bucket.<sup>33</sup> Moreover, while Chinese restaurants traditionally required customers to be seated to be served, KFC's freely open tables were an utter novelty that welcomed individuals regardless of their intentions to purchase food. The order-at-the-counter model, yet another novelty, conveniently aligned with the Chinese notion of the family as the sole food producer and provider: with a no designated server, the physical provider of food to a family's table is a member of the family himself. Again, while other Western chains in China follow a similar physical layout, many Chinese customers at other chains prefer the

delivery service in lieu of eating in the store — a ubiquitous service in any Chinese McDonald's, but hardly ever available in a Chinese KFC. Thus, for at least three years prior to the next Western chain's appearance in China, KFC was able to be the sole Western restaurant associated with a family-oriented quality — a quality that still lasts today.

## KFC's Place in the Chinese Culinary Sphere: A True Novelty

34 Anderson, *The Food of China*, 127.

35 Liu, *KFC in China*, 20.

36 Yi-Ping Liu, "Multiple Origins of Chickens: Out of the Asian Jungles," *Molecular Phylogenetics and Evolution*, Vol 38, Issue 1: 2006, 12–19.

37 Kwang-chih Chang, ed., *Food in Chinese Culture: Anthropological and Historical Perspectives* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1977), 20.

Perhaps the most intuitive explanation for KFC's unparalleled success in China is the food. The success comes from the nonexistence of the menu's contents in Chinese cuisine. In other words, KFC's novelty — with 'novelty' defined less as 'new,' but more as 'not old' or 'never seen before' — contributed to its massive success in China.

Starting from a broader scale, the concept of fast food hardly existed in China prior to KFC. Perhaps the closest analogue to grab-and-go food is the classic Chinese breakfast food *youtiao* (油条), or a fried dough stick, that originated roughly 800 years ago during the Song Dynasty and is popularly sold as a snack taken to-go.<sup>34</sup> Also similar is *baozi*, or a stuffed bun, and like *youtiao*, both of the dishes are frequently for sale in small, family-run restaurants. But here the 'fast' in 'fast food' refers not to the full production cycle of the foods, but only to the speed at which pre-cooked *youtiao* and *baozi* can be fried and steamed, or to the convenience of purchasing already-cooked *youtiao* and *baozi*. Likewise, the Chinese *tanfan* (摊贩), or street vendors, employ a similar strategy in which ready-to-go foods, most often some form of a meat skewer (肉串), is sold. But expediency alone does not define fast food, at least as Westerners know it: *youtiao*, *baozi* and *tanfan* are frequently prepared in insanitary conditions, and vendors lack the capital to increase the quality of both the production and ingredients. KFC, however, operates under a systematic preparation of food in cleaner, brighter areas, resulting in fast processing and cooking of food within minutes of an order.<sup>35</sup> As such, KFC was the first restaurant in China to establish this fundamentally new conception of obtaining food quickly and efficiently.

Most notably, KFC's popularity can be explained by the central food on KFC's menu — fried chicken — which did not exist in a form familiar to Westerners in China prior to KFC's entry. Archaeological evidence indicates that chickens were domesticated from the red jungle fowl as early as 5400 BC in Hebei Province, the first evidence of chicken consumption in China.<sup>36</sup> Frying dates back to as early as 7 BC, when records indicated the consumption of fried meat dumplings. Fried spring rolls containing meat, with a shell similarly crispy but less textured than KFC's fried chicken, date back early 17th and 18th century.<sup>37</sup> But actually, by limitations of translation, "fried chicken" technically existed throughout China for at least a half a century.

- 38 Yuan Hui, 《菜谱集锦》 Volume 1, (Shanghai Publishing Company, 1960), 204.
- 39 Junshu Sun, 《菜谱》, (Shandong Science and Technology Publishing: Jinan, 1980), 1.
- 40 Ibid., 31.
- 41 Frederick Simmons, *Food in China: A Cultural and Historical Inquiry*, (CRC Press, 1991).
- 42 Anderson, *The Food of China*, 189.

For example, a cookbook 《菜谱集锦》 (*Caipu Jijin*), or “A Recipe Collection,” features a recipe for *youjian ziji* (油煎子鸡), which translates to “fried chicken.” The publication date—1960, amidst the Great Famine—suggests that the author was most likely an upper middle-class city dweller, and for the common Chinese man, the dish was probably more of a gift than a food. Ingredients include chicken, white soy sauce, chestnut powder, chicken broth, vinegar, and fermented rice wine. The cookbook instructs the reader, translated from Chinese, to “dice the chicken into pieces with the fermented rice wine, soy sauce, ginger... fry them in oil... next, boil the chicken in broth, sugar, vinegar...”<sup>38</sup> which would result in a type of chicken dish similar to forms of sweet and sour chicken—not any form of fried chicken similar to that of KFC. Although *youjian* and another character, *zha* (炸), both translate to “fried,” the nuance is that in traditional Chinese cooking, the former, *youjian*, refers to a pan-frying, whereas the latter indicates deep-frying in oil, a similar type of frying utilized in KFC’s kitchens. However, both forms of frying preclude a breading process, which, when deep-fried, is responsible for creating KFC fried chicken’s signature crispy, golden skin. Regardless, even the thought of affording enough chicken or oil—two scarce ingredients during this decade—would have been laughable to a common Chinese man.

Even with rising income during Deng’s Reforms, the popularization of a Chinese fried chicken dish seemed unlikely, for both budget constraints and health concerns. The introduction of a 1980 cookbook reads, translated from Chinese, “recipes in this book have been modified for the sake of being understood and used by the common people and food service workers.”<sup>39</sup> Within the cookbook, the closest recipe to fried chicken is *xiangzao youji* (香糟油鸡), or “marinated chicken.”<sup>40</sup> Instructions suggest using one chicken, whereas the previous cookbook had suggested using eight chicken legs—more evidence that the cookbook had been targeted for a financially unrepresentative subset of the Chinese population. Additionally, the *xiangzao youji* dish of this 1980 cookbook is a representative example of a traditional, popular method of cooking chicken: *hongshao* (红烧), directly translated as “red cooking,” which means soy-sauce marinating.<sup>41</sup> Aside from red cooking of chicken being less expensive than the frying of chicken, red cooking has been historically viewed to be a slower, healthier way to infuse flavor into chicken than a more immediate method like frying. According to the Chinese humoral theory, the human body is affected by heat and cold; the modern interpretation manifests itself in common classifications of fried food as *re* (热), or “hot,” whereas a healthier, steamed food would be classified as *liang* (凉), or “cool.”<sup>42</sup> Humoral theory provides an alternative explanation to financial infeasibility as to why the Chinese resisted popularizing fried chicken despite, in some instances, possessing the ingredients to do so. As if in anticipation of this



- 43 Paul French, and Matthew Crabbe, *Fat China: How Expanding Waistlines Are Changing a Nation*, (London: Anthem, 2010), 115.
- 44 Jacques Gernet, *Daily Life in China on the Eve of the Mongol Invasion, 1250–1276*, trans. H. M. Wright. (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1962), 10.
- 45 Zhong Liu, 《中国八大菜系菜谱选》, (Tianjin Publishing Company, 1984): 127.

notion, KFC markets itself as a “New Fast Food” brand, one that embodies healthy living and balanced nutrition. Other fast food chains are less explicit in addressing Chinese health concerns: McDonald’s, for example, simply restructured marketing platforms to advertise beef products due to concerns of the safety of chicken meat.<sup>43</sup>

Lastly, regional division of culinary trends suggests that the development of multi-dimensional flavors of KFC’s menu, much less the East-West fusion elements, would have been highly unlikely. As an ancient Chinese saying goes, *nantian beixian dongla xisuan* (南甜,北咸,东辣,西酸), or “the South is sweet, North is salty, East is spicy, West is sour.” This fragmented food culture, especially over the geographic giant of China, implies a slower integration of regional flavors, much less the concept of a national cuisine. For example, the culinary invention of Chinese KFC’s multi-dimensionally flavored *xian-gla jichi*, or spicy chicken wings with a sweet essence, would be highly unlikely. Although both spicy and sweet foods were well received throughout China, the flavor of regional expertise in one flavor often dominated the dish.<sup>44</sup> For example, a popular 1984 cookbook 《中国八大菜系菜谱选》 (*Selected Recipes from the Eight Chinese Cuisines*), in which the eight cuisines refer to eight of China’s largest provinces, provides an example of the difficulty of reconciling regional taste with other flavors. For instance, a recipe of Sichuan, a region known for spiciness, for *lazi jiding* (辣子鸡丁), or spicy chicken, uses *paohonglajiao* (泡红辣椒), one of the hottest chili peppers in China. The directions explicitly call for the chicken to be boiled in these diced pepper over a *wanghuo* (旺火), or a vigorous flame, thus extracting the full extent of the pepper’s spiciness: the spiciness is calculated to overpower sweeter ingredients such as sesame seeds, or delicate additions such as ginger, which functionally serve no purpose other than ornament.<sup>45</sup> As such, the interplay between flavors — especially in blending spicy, sweet and salty tastes — often resulted in a singular dominant flavor. Such culinary tensions made the diverse flavor profile of the entire KFC menu — from salty breakfast, to a spicy dinner, to a sweet dessert — a remarkable originality, offering not only a taste of the full Chinese flavor palate, but also a taste of the West. In China’s case, only an outsider like KFC was able to navigate through its complex culinary sphere and emerge as an unbiased, all-inclusive, masterful presenter of flavor. And in KFC’s case, only a country like China — in which culinary, social and economic norms aligned with their model — was able to provide the site for its biggest success to date.

## Conclusion

Ultimately, the investigation into KFC’s massive success in China is a critically interesting study — how did a restaurant

achieve unprecedented success in China? The answer, as presented in this paper, is a three-fold idea. First, three major events (Great Leap Forward, Cultural Revolution, and the Reforms) functioned to condition Chinese individuals to favor a family-oriented, richly flavored, and capitalist restaurant. Second, when KFC entered in China in 1987, it directly appealed to these three qualities, an ability that other Western fast food chains and domestic chains still fail to achieve today. And third, Chinese culinary history is notably missing fried chicken despite the country's preferences for all of the flavors that KFC offers, and this, too, contributed to KFC's success. In Beijing, for example, a KFC store can be spotted every few blocks, around a street corner, or behind a metro stop — and this phenomenon, as demonstrated, has very strong reasons behind it. It is not simply because “the Chinese really like fried chicken.” It is about asking *why* they prefer what they prefer, about examining how a US culinary tradition so successfully entered one of the world's richest food culture.

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# Four Ways to Matter in Pakistan: How Four of Pakistan's Most Important Politicians Retained Power in Exile, 1984–2014

Akbar Ahmed

- 1 Ayaz Wazir, former Pakistani ambassador to Afghanistan, interview with author, Islamabad, Pakistan, Jun. 5, 2013.
- 2 Javed Jabbar, former federal information minister, Bhutto aide & senator, interview with author, Karachi, Pakistan, Jun. 12, 2013.
- 3 “Special court denies Musharraf’s appeal for treatment abroad,” *Express Tribune*, Jan. 31, 2014, accessed Jan. 31, 2014, <[tribune.com.pk/story/665813/special-court-issues-bailable-warrant-for-musharraf-in-treason-case/](http://tribune.com.pk/story/665813/special-court-issues-bailable-warrant-for-musharraf-in-treason-case/)>.
- 4 “We have strong evidence against Musharraf in treason case: prosecution,” *Express Tribune*, Nov. 20 2013, accessed Jan 28, 2014, <[tribune.com.pk/story/634319/there-is-strong-evidence-against-musharraf-in-treason-case-prosecution/](http://tribune.com.pk/story/634319/there-is-strong-evidence-against-musharraf-in-treason-case-prosecution/)>.
- 5 *Ibid.*, 108.
- 6 *Ibid.*, 109.

Former Pakistani President and Chief of Army Staff Pervez Musharraf entered self-imposed exile in April 2009. Given that he knew he’d face criminal charges in Pakistan and that he had limited support and few political allies, why did he come back four years later?

I posed that question to former ambassador Ayaz Wazir, a political veteran, in Islamabad last summer. He considers Musharraf’s misstep so absurd that it must be a sign of divine meddling: “There’s a Quranic ayat [verse] that says Allah can make you blind if He wants to,” Wazir said. “So you step into the ditch willingly.”<sup>1</sup>

Javed Jabbar, a former federal information minister, offered me six scenarios for Musharraf’s future after his fraught return.<sup>2</sup> None involved a political future for the man who had tapped Jabbar to guide his media policy after he took power in a 1999 military coup. The cheeriest outcome Jabbar could imagine for his close friend and one-time boss was Musharraf’s being convicted for treason and then receiving a presidential pardon. “On Article 6 [the treason charge], I don’t think he can be acquitted,” Jabbar said.

Musharraf is, as of this writing, due in court within a week (Feb. 7, 2014).<sup>3</sup> Neither his supporters nor the government prosecuting him believe he can deny culpability. A few days after the government announced its decision to bring the case before a special court, Pakistan’s attorney general told the press that if Musharraf is found guilty, he will face either life imprisonment or the death penalty.<sup>4</sup> The stakes are high for a man once powerful enough to define Pakistan’s recent history by aligning it with the West in the War on Terror.

Niccolò Machiavelli spent his last few years far from Florence, with no statesmen to advise or policies to decide; trapped in exile, he was very much out of place. In a letter he wrote in December 1513 to the Florentine ambassador to Rome, the strategist griped about “pass[ing] time with the wood-cutters.”<sup>5</sup> News from passersby at the local inn was his substitute for that he’d once received from networks of spies.

The strategist’s only respite was pretense. Each night, Machiavelli donned formal robes in his study and mentally conversed with the ancients, being “received by them lovingly.”<sup>6</sup> Machiavelli strove to better strategize. He wanted to believe the years of pain could be useful. Each night, he was distilling knowledge into the text we now know as *The Prince*. That could be a

- 7 Ibid., iii.
- 8 Isaiah Berlin, "The Hedgehog and the Fox," in his *The Proper Study of Mankind*, (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1997): 436–98.
- 9 "Khomeini returns to Iran," *BBC*, Feb. 1, 1979, accessed Jan. 18, 2014, <[news.bbc.co.uk/onthisday/hi/dates/stories/february/1/newsid\\_2521000/2521003.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/onthisday/hi/dates/stories/february/1/newsid_2521000/2521003.stm)>.
- 10 Ron Synovitz, "Icons Of The Iraq War: Ahmed Chalabi And The Case For War," *Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty*, Mar. 17, 2013, accessed Jan. 28, 2014, <[www.rferl.org/content/iraq-war-chalabi/24930919.html](http://www.rferl.org/content/iraq-war-chalabi/24930919.html)>.
- 11 "Thai PM Yingluck Probed Over 'Rice Subsidy Scheme'," *BBC*, Jan. 16, 2014, accessed Jan. 28, 2014, <[www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-25759007](http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-25759007)>.

means, within his strategy of exile, to the end of return. He tells the ambassador of "the desire... that these Medici lords [who expelled him] begin to make use of [him] even if they begin by making [him] roll a stone."<sup>7</sup> The book could serve as proof of his usefulness. The slippery Machiavelli proved to be what Isaiah Berlin would call a single-minded hedgehog.<sup>8</sup> Seeing exile as a distraction from his political life, he focused on a strategy to escape it — and in the process, produced his finest work.

Exile demands an inventive response from any strategist. She must evolve a way to restore her power even as she confronts challenges like establishing an operation in a new environment, losing popularity at home, and the constant risk of losing her focus on her end. The strategist's responses to this situation reflect who she is: the means an exile can employ are tied to, and sometimes made possible by, her identity. This means both her personal background and her location within social structures of power. Remembering the connection between identity and options is essential for students of leadership, history, and international relations trying to understand the heirs to Machiavelli — like Musharraf.

Important recent cases beyond the general-president's prompt a deeper analysis of exiles. There are lessons to be gleaned from Ayatollah Khomeini's approach to his 14 years in Iraq and Paris,<sup>9</sup> the successful effort by Iraqi exile Ahmed Chalabi to encourage a U.S. invasion of his home country in 2003,<sup>10</sup> and the strategy of former Thai prime minister Thaksin Shinawatra, whose influence despite his self-imposed exile has fuelled protests against his sister's government in Bangkok.<sup>11</sup> Most commonly, the problem of exile in today's global security environment is a product of a weak political culture — one prone to political victimization, military coups, foreign intervention, or conflicting personal interests — in some nations in the Global South.

This paper uses identity as a prism through which to understand the exile strategies of four of the most important political figures in a quasi-democratic country that is today at the center of global affairs: Pakistan. It outlines the structural constraints these strategists faced both due to who they were and due to their distance from their political home. Their experiences, and the ubiquity of parallel cases, make it clear that strategies of exile must be analyzed as a rich, important sub-field in strategic studies. This paper pushes that effort forward.

My work specifically provides essential insights into modern Pakistani history. The four figures I discuss — Musharraf, Benazir Bhutto, Nawaz Sharif, and Altaf Hussain — have made choices while living abroad that defined the country's trajectory. To understand that period, Pakistanis need to look beyond Islamabad. We must account for decisions made in London and Jeddah, Washington and Dubai, even Philadelphia. We must study exile as a factor that has shaped, and will continue to

- 12 Badar Alam, editor, *Herald* magazine (Pakistan), interview with author, Karachi, Pakistan, Jun. 7, 2013.
- 13 Sun Tzu, *The Art of War*, trans. Samuel B. Griffith (New York: Oxford UP, 1963): line 4, Book I, 64.

shape, our nation's future, for it has certainly shaped those who rule us. Understanding the interplay between these leaders' political plans and their shifting identities is essential for the Pakistani voter and for analysts interested in the country. Given its strategic position, nuclear arsenal, continuing tensions with India and Afghanistan, and potential to be a battlefield in the ongoing sectarian struggle in Islam, Pakistan matters. Because exile has been formative to the country's development, it must be given serious thought in attempts to map the Pakistani political scene.

Three of the leaders discussed here developed successful strategies to deal with exile — and to secure their ends. An example is Sharif, who was away in Saudi Arabia and London for seven years (2000–2007), long enough for an entire generation to grow up without seeing him as a tangible political presence in their country. Sharif used his time abroad to build himself into the kind of politician who could head what Badar Alam, the editor of the leading Pakistani magazine *Herald*, calls “a strong personality cult.”<sup>12</sup> In May 2013, voters delivered Sharif's party the parliamentary majority it needed to make him prime minister for a third time.

The most spectacular failure is the man who prematurely ended Sharif's last term in power back in 1999: Musharraf. Sharif's prosecution of his fellow exile is, in some circles, perceived as payback.

I use the cases of Musharraf, Sharif, and their peers to build up a Pakistan-based model for a grand strategy of exile. This strategy works to a precisely defined end. It requires the strategist to parse a flow of information coming through a well-run organization, to develop what Sun Tzu called “moral influence”<sup>13</sup> and a carefully curated public image, and to evolve a good sense of timing. I have spent months conducting interviews with political insiders and reading biographies to draw out components of this model. I gathered material on (with a particular focus on the first two, my best and worst cases):

- Two-time Prime Minister *Benazir Bhutto* (in exile in London, 1984–1986, and London/Dubai, 1999–2007), leader of the Pakistan People's Party (PPP) and the strongest strategist,
- Former Chief of Army Staff and President *Pervez Musharraf* (in exile in London/Dubai, 2009–2013), leader of the All-Pakistan Muslim League (APML) and the poorest strategist,
- Three-time Prime Minister *Nawaz Sharif* (in exile in Jeddah & London, 2000–2007), the leader of the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) and a moderately successful strategist, and,
- *Altaf Hussain* (in exile in London, 1992–present), the enigmatic leader of the Muttahida Qaumi Movement (MQM), a coalition partner in almost every federal government in the last 25 years.

My discussions with aides to each leader helped me understand the menu of options available to him or her given their identity and context. I also traced how changing conditions, from a more democratically-oriented Pakistani electorate to the telecommunications revolution of the late 1990s and 2000s, required these strategists to rethink their approaches. My paper therefore serves as an ancillary probe into a question the academy has just begun to grapple with: how do digital, particularly social, media serve or undermine the modern leader?

Through these four stories, I tell an overarching story about the Pakistani nation. I offer here a sense of the costs, challenges, opportunities, and concerns associated with trying to influence that nation from afar.

## Sign of the Times: Pakistani Exiles' Use of Technology

- 14 Shuja Nawaz, chair, South Asia Center, Atlantic Council, interview with author, over phone from Washington, D.C., Jun. 4, 2013.
- 15 Dr. Raza Bokhari, Musharraf spokesman and friend and Philadelphia entrepreneur, interview with author over phone, Jun. 22, 2013.

Given that much of exiles' strategizing has to do with projecting power despite physical absence, shifts in communications technology are especially important to them. How each of the four Pakistani exiles chose to engage with new options, from increasingly advanced email systems to social media, during the period when they first became widespread, serves as an important measure of their ability to master a potentially invaluable new means—or their failure to adapt.

Atlantic Council analyst Shuja Nawaz told me this past summer that one factor Musharraf's supporters liked to quote in the run-up to their leader's return was that the former president had over 80,000 Facebook followers. Nawaz was not impressed. "That doesn't translate to votes. They're all kinds of followers, including people like me who keep track of people I'm following through Facebook."<sup>14</sup>

Nawaz echoed an idea most of my other sources shared: that the Musharraf team often used new media not as a tactic but as a source of information. A number of those sources spoke of the general's over-estimating his support because of his popularity on social media. Instead of employing social media as a means to an end, the general's team seems to have accepted it as a marker of success. They were aware of a need to *use* social media strategically: Raza Bokhari, Musharraf's international spokesman and the man who manages his social media presence, told me that over the summer, he felt that he spent most of his time issuing statements to the international press—often through posts on the president's Facebook page.<sup>15</sup> Bokhari's activity keeps the general's online profile vibrant, an important factor given that Musharraf himself was prevented from making media appearances during much of 2013. But the consensus among thinkers outside the party, including some former members of Musharraf's government, is that for supporters like the Pakistani-American Bokhari, and an establishment with little grassroots support like Musharraf's young party, online activity

- 16 Badar Alam, interview with author.
- 17 Ambassador Sherry Rehman, former advisor to Bhutto, federal minister of information, and Pakistani ambassador to the United States, interview with author, Karachi, Pakistan, Jun. 11, 2013.
- 18 Naheed Khan, former personal secretary to Bhutto and parliamentarian, interview with author, Karachi, Pakistan, Jun. 9, 2013.
- 19 Paul Vale, "Altaf Hussain Faces British Police Probe Following Accusations of Threats Against Karachi Protesters," *The Huffington Post UK*, May 20, 2013, accessed Dec. 10, 2013.

promised to be a gauge for views among the faraway Pakistani electorate. It was a dangerously simple measure. "On Facebook and all the social media, [Musharraf] thought he had created a constituency," said the journalist Badar Alam.<sup>16</sup> "He was neck and neck with Imran Khan [a favorite of young Pakistani voters during the 2013 elections] as far as Facebook popularity was concerned, [but] he did not have any information from the ground." Excitement precluded an investigation of what Musharraf's online following really signified.

Musharraf's failure to effectively handle the most recent wave of media innovations seems especially damning compared to the way Bhutto and Hussain used other communications technologies to great success. But that judgment needs to be tempered—the other two had more time to get used to marginally older methods. Bhutto, for instance, became known as an email and BlackBerry obsessive, committed to a daily turn-around on decisions about everything from legislation to office-bearer appointments, according to top aide Sherry Rehman.<sup>17</sup> Whether Bhutto was in Dubai, London or elsewhere, that machine was a tangible physical link to the country she claimed to represent. She was an old hand at its main function: her personal secretary Naheed Khan told me long-distance calling was, by the period of Bhutto's second exile in the late 1990s, essential to the former prime minister's management of her party.<sup>18</sup> She would call multiple party office-bearers to hear their respective versions of meetings held in Pakistan, Khan remembered, or personally call low-level workers to maintain their belief that she was thinking of them even across borders.

Hussain has achieved a connection with his grassroots supporters mainly by using visuals. He has become notorious for addressing crowds of thousands via massive projections at rallies in Karachi. With multiple screens wrapping around a gathering, and a live-stream or recorded address being blasted on television and radio at the same time, Hussain compresses distance. Just how powerful, and potentially problematic, these gatherings can be became especially clear when Hussain delivered a belligerent speech that threatened affluent parts of the city following his party's disappointing performance in 2013's parliamentary elections. Karachi citizens called in complaints to London's Metropolitan Police, and Hussain ended up under investigation for inciting violence.<sup>19</sup> Hussain's—and London's—approaches to that incident are a fascinating instance of having to, in one go, address the questions of how to deal with exile, what sophisticated telecommunications enable, and where to enforce particular nation-states' laws. From a strategy perspective, it will become increasingly important to deal with those concerns conjunctively as exile continues to be significant in world politics. From a leadership point of view, the case illustrates how an exile may become too comfortable in the liminal world of electronic communications—and then risk his position through complacency.



20 Javed Jabbar, interview with author.

The most significant way in which technological change affected the landscape for these exiled strategists has to do with a choice one of them made while actually in power: Musharraf's decision to open up private ownership of electronic media, which produced scores of new indigenous television channels in the 2000s. Many of those channels are fiercely independent, if tabloid-like. All four of the leaders have jockeyed for visibility, but the channels make their own decisions about whom to favor. Alam and others, for instance, recalled how electronic media undermined Musharraf during his last two years in power, particularly after he imposed an emergency and strict censorship in November of 2007. (Former information minister Javed Jabbar, who wrote much of Musharraf's media law, takes offense to the channels' opposition: "Most media have tended to be hypercritical of Musharraf, in some ways very unfairly... they accuse him of trying to curb the media, and for 95 percent of his tenure, [he did not]. It's very unfair to take only that period of two weeks or two and a half weeks.")<sup>20</sup> This attitude persists. It has suppressed lingering fondness for the former military ruler even after his return. When consciously employed by specialized strategists with their own motivations, like media executives looking for profits, telecoms have become a means of which exiled strategists must be wary.

## London as a Haven for Exiled Pakistani Leaders

21 Yasmin Islam, close friend and relative of Benazir Bhutto, interview with author, London, United Kingdom, May 28, 2013.

22 Nasreen Jalil, senator, and MQM committee deputy convenor, interview with author, Karachi, Pakistan, Jun. 9, 2013.

23 Shuja Nawaz, interview with author.

When General Zia-ul-Haq began to hunt down supporters of the PPP in the early 1980s, Benazir Bhutto's friend Yasmin Niazi needed to escape.<sup>21</sup> Niazi went to the British embassy, asked for the passport she deserved by virtue of being born in the United Kingdom, and left the country. Her friend and political leader joined her soon after, setting up a PPP base in a cramped flat. Bhutto and Niazi knew that in London, they would be part of both expatriate and exile communities. When MQM member Nasreen Jalil traveled to the UK a decade later, fleeing a crackdown on her own party, she felt a similar comfort. "The UK is more familiar to Pakistanis than any other country, and there are many Pakistanis living over there," Jalil told me.<sup>22</sup> She added, like almost every Pakistani political figure I interviewed, that the UK seems "like a very friendly country as far as asylum-seekers are concerned." (This is rapidly changing given new British immigration laws.)

All four of the leaders I analyze in this paper chose London as their final destination before a return to Pakistan. (Hussain did not return.) That choice is not accidental. A London headquarters is invaluable to the Pakistani strategist. Atlantic Council analyst Shuja Nawaz told me this is likely because of historical associations, the value of the rule of law, and the guarantee of civil freedoms.<sup>23</sup> Such freedoms are not available, he and many of the politicians I interviewed reminded me, in the Middle Eastern



- 24 Dr. Raza Bokhari, interview with author.
- 25 Senior Western diplomat (requested anonymity), interview with author, Jul. 1, 2013.

kingdoms where Bhutto and Sharif began their most recent exiles; venues like Dubai and Jeddah, while also familiar to Pakistanis, ban overt political activity. This means that, in Musharraf aide Raza Bokhari's words, exiles must be "very, very careful" in descriptions of their plans to Arab governments.<sup>24</sup> In addition, being based in London offers the leaders access to networks of expatriate support and Pakistani media outlets, since many have stations in the UK. If Britain will accept the exiled Pakistani leader and they can find a way to fund a life there, it seems like an ideal destination. Meeting those conditions has historically been important to building a successful exile.

I was equally curious as to why Britain would *want* exiles, not just from Pakistan but from other tattered democracies as well. A senior Western diplomat I interviewed, who has worked closely with the Foreign & Commonwealth Office (FCO) on Pakistan, suggested that the U.K. has its own interest in serving as a hub for exiles, particularly from strategically important countries.<sup>25</sup> With such leaders based in London, they can keep the FCO informed about, and relevant to, their nation's futures. What Jalil interpreted as friendliness is also a strategic openness. This policy comes with risks, but also clear geopolitical dividends.

## Benazir Bhutto's Grand Strategy of Exile

- 26 Irfan Ali, "PPP insists rally broke 1986 record," *Daily Times*, Jun. 19, 2007, accessed Dec. 10, 2013, <[www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2007%5C10%5C19%5Cstory\\_19-10-2007\\_pg7\\_2](http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2007%5C10%5C19%5Cstory_19-10-2007_pg7_2)>.
- 27 Benazir Bhutto, *Daughter of Destiny: An Autobiography*, (New York: Harper Perennial, 2008): 273–8.
- 28 Dawn.com, "Musharraf Uniform Decision Positive Step: Benazir," *DAWN*, Nov. 28, 2008, accessed Dec. 10, 2013, <[www.dawn.com/news/277834/musharraf-uniform-decision-positive-step-benazir](http://www.dawn.com/news/277834/musharraf-uniform-decision-positive-step-benazir)>.
- 29 Senior Western diplomat, interview.

Benazir Bhutto returned from her first period of exile on April 10, 1986, to a thousands-strong rally in Lahore that set the bar for Pakistani political gatherings — particularly for the demonstrations to celebrate her second return.<sup>26</sup> Bhutto spent years after that Lahore rally building up her party's profile across Pakistan's four provinces,<sup>27</sup> pressuring then-military dictator Zia-ul-Haq to hold elections. After he died in a plane crash, she swept into power as Pakistan's first female Prime Minister. Bhutto's strategy for her first exile yielded results.

She was assassinated two months after she came back to Pakistan in 2007, following a second period of exile. There is no clear way to map whether she would have ultimately been as successful in managing that exile and return. But that year, news reports treated Bhutto as a key player in negotiations about then-President Musharraf's future and the February 2008 elections.<sup>28</sup> The senior Western diplomat I interviewed, who was heavily involved in those talks, confirmed Bhutto's importance in the planning. Musharraf "knew that he needed political parties, and he knew that the People's Party remained the most popular party in Pakistan despite" Bhutto's absence,<sup>29</sup> the diplomat told me this summer. "There was an understanding with Benazir that she would accommodate him at least in the short term." Such statements indicate that Bhutto was, even before she officially returned, wielding power. Musharraf needed her to bolster his rule. As press reports documented, he was willing to allow her back into the country, absolve her of corruption

charges through the National Reconciliation Ordinance, and hold open parliamentary elections that he knew her party would dominate, replacing his own favored political organization of PML-Nawaz defectors.

In the diplomat's words, "all went wrong when she was assassinated." While the attack did prevent Bhutto's potential rise to power, she was in an exceptionally strong position when she died. Months on, her party won the mandate to form a government. Her strategizing continued to shape Pakistan even after her death. Bhutto built the most effective grand strategy in exile, during both periods abroad, of the politicians I analyzed.

## Identity as Opportunity

30 Shuja Nawaz, interview with author.

31 Ibid.

32 Naheed Khan, interview with author.

33 Bhutto, 214.

34 Sherry Rehman, interview with author.

Bhutto's identity — the parts of it that she was born into, and those that she constructed — was the foundation of her strategy. She manipulated possibilities her identity granted her more than any of the other strategists. She was certainly born with more chances to do so than they were. As the daughter of Pakistan's first democratically elected prime minister and the scion of a powerful family in the province of Sindh, Bhutto was guaranteed name recognition,<sup>30</sup> wealth, a rural vote bank,<sup>31</sup> and a claim to the leadership of Pakistan's oldest national political party, one magazine editor Badar Alam called "a very stable political machine." Most accounts of Bhutto's life, including her own, suggest that her father trained her as his political protégée from her earliest days. That savvy and privilege translated into strong leverage abroad. Studying at Harvard and Oxford, Bhutto forged relationships that later ensured her access to Western political circles. This is a factor Naheed Khan, her personal secretary for 20 years, told me was instrumental during both her periods of exile.<sup>32</sup> Bhutto described the value of these connections extensively in her autobiography, noting, for instance, the role of her Harvard classmate, one-time Hill staffer and eventual first US Ambassador to Croatia Peter W. Galbraith.<sup>33</sup> Working with advice from people like Galbraith and her sense of power flows in transnational elite circles, Bhutto learned early how much influence she could gain by, say, lobbying Congress (given the importance of U.S. aid to Pakistan) or international organizations like Amnesty International.

A final aspect of Bhutto's identity that enabled her strategy is one she shared with Sharif and Musharraf but not Hussain: the ability to win further influence by virtue of her past position. When trying to win her press time or high-level meetings, her advisor Sherry Rehman said, "you [didn't] even have to say anything... She's the former Prime Minister!"<sup>34</sup> Bhutto had a ready-made personal narrative to present at these meetings: she was a democratic politician who had already won electoral mandates to form a government twice and was a victim of military rule. She could reference her personal history — including the story

- 35 Muhammed Ziauddin, managing editor, *Express Tribune* newspaper (Pakistan), interview with author, Islamabad, Pakistan, Jun. 5, 2013.
- 36 Ambassador Shirin Tahir-Kheli, former senior advisor for women's empowerment to Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, interview with author by telephone, Jul. 18, 2013.

of how General Zia overthrew her elected father — to argue that democracy in Pakistan was tied to her return. Mohammed Ziauddin, a veteran journalist and current executive editor of the *Express Tribune* newspaper, told me he believes this presentation — and the perceptions of her party's struggle — was critical to Bhutto's early success. He even suggested that broad awareness about PPP persecution, and not Bhutto's choices as a leader, enabled the strategist's eventual triumph in 1988.<sup>35</sup> Still, this part of her identity eventually became the most difficult for her to take advantage of. By the time of her second exile, Bhutto's references to her past time in government as a calling-card meant reminding foreign audiences that her name was associated with corruption charges. Shirin Tahir-Kheli, a Pakistani-American who worked on Pakistan at the State Department and the National Security Council during the Reagan and George W. Bush administrations, gave me a perspective that covered both of Bhutto's exile periods — and she recalled that “a lot of people were wary” of Bhutto in the early 2000s.<sup>36</sup> Unlike during her triumphant visit to Washington in 1984, Bhutto could “make the rounds but could not see the senior people,” Tahir-Kheli said. As I make clear, the PPP leader rose to the challenge. She focused on shoring up her image and pro-democracy narrative. Bhutto's choices reveal a grand strategy close to the ideal laid out above.

### A Three-Pronged, Outward-Looking Strategy

- 37 Bhutto.
- 38 Peter Popham, “Benazir Bhutto to stay in exile,” *The Independent*, May 15 1999, accessed Dec. 10, 2013.
- 39 John F. Burns, “HOUSE OF GRAFT: Tracing the Bhutto Millions — A special report; Bhutto Clan Leaves Trail of Corruption,” *The New York Times*, Jan. 9, 1998, accessed Dec. 10, 2013, <[www.nytimes.com/1998/01/09/world/house-graft-tracing-bhutto-millions-special-report-bhutto-clan-leaves-trail.html](http://www.nytimes.com/1998/01/09/world/house-graft-tracing-bhutto-millions-special-report-bhutto-clan-leaves-trail.html)>.

Conversations with close observers of Bhutto's political path and her inner sanctum suggest that her success was the product of a three-pronged grand strategy of exile. Bhutto: i) recognized her end early; ii) both closely managed her party and granted its members some independence; and iii) defined herself in ways she knew would appeal to international audiences.

Bhutto never doubted what her grand strategy was meant to achieve. Both her first and second time away, advisors suggested, Bhutto wanted to go back to Pakistan as soon as possible and seek office. In either case, her departure was a response to a rival's move. In the late '70s and early '80s, Bhutto and her mother led cloistered lives under the supervision of General Zia-ul-Haq's military following the general's coup against the elder Bhutto. Both eventually left the country for medical reasons.<sup>37</sup> In 1999, meanwhile, Bhutto left Pakistan to avoid jail-time for corruption charges (she maintained that these were politically motivated<sup>38</sup> despite widely circulated evidence to the contrary.)<sup>39</sup> During the first period, Bhutto set up an operation in London that was always meant to be temporary. Yasmin Islam, a close friend who went into exile just before Bhutto, told me “England never became home” for her or Bhutto. The young women would spend their days reading press clippings from Pakistan. Bhutto's decisions during this period, both personal and political, evince her obsession with going home. When

- 40 Bhutto, 252.  
41 *Ibid.*, 263.  
42 *Ibid.*  
43 Naheed Khan, interview with author.  
44 Tariq Islam, Bhutto's cousin and advisor, interview with author, Karachi, Pakistan, Jun 9, 2013.  
45 Bhutto, 218.  
46 Yasmin Islam, interview with author.  
47 Sherry Rehman, interview with author.

her brother died in France in an apparent murder, Bhutto told Islam and the rest of her party that no matter what General Zia's forces might do to her or how willing party members were to arrange the funeral in her family's hometown, "I have to take my brother back myself!" Return eventually meant house arrest.<sup>40</sup> Yet once freed, Bhutto came back to London certain that her final return to Pakistan could soon be reality. She announced this to her party a few months later.<sup>41</sup> A permanent departure would, she believed, grant General Zia what he wanted: a Pakistan with no credible opposition movement.<sup>42</sup>

The goal of securing political power at home reportedly defined Bhutto's second stint in exile as well, starting from her decision to leave. "Party people advised her to stay out," Bhutto's secretary Naheed Khan told me. "At least she could give instructions to the party... if she [were] behind bars, she would have been unable to do that."<sup>43</sup> Khan spoke of the decision to leave as a sacrifice Bhutto made for her party's future, a product of her concern about where she could be more useful. "She was always desperate to come back," Khan asserted. Bhutto's cousin Tariq Islam (Yasmin's husband) suggested more prosaic reasons for her departure: she had three children, and did not want them to be without either parent if she had to face the corruption cases and go to jail (her husband was in prison in Pakistan). Still, he said she "was acutely aware that you cannot do politics from exile or remote control — you have to be back on your soil."<sup>44</sup>

Once in exile, Bhutto ensured that the means she employed were firmly under her control. That way, she could use them in proportion and without nervousness about losing them due to her absence. Her large, complex party structure was her chief tool for information-gathering and eventual electoral victory, and she tightened her grip on it in both periods. In the first, she used internal elections to expel the group Yasmin Islam and Shuja Nawaz, the think tank analyst, refer to as "the uncles." These were party elders of her father's generation who saw themselves as his true heirs — and a young woman as a poor leader. After this Augustus-style purge, Bhutto recruited loyalists of her own, including London-based students like Khan and expatriate Pakistanis, while she communicated with PPP workers back home to identify sources for information within General Zia's prisons.<sup>45</sup> The message was clear: "All the power belonged to her... they never questioned her," Yasmin Islam told me.<sup>46</sup> In the early 2000s, Bhutto used telecommunications technology to be in touch with party leaders throughout the day. This period saw elections in 2002 — and PPP representatives moved from organizing against Musharraf in private constituencies to pushing laws in the legislature. Bhutto here managed a balance. Sherry Rehman, a PPP parliamentarian at the time, told me that for grassroots supporters and legislators, it was important that "the work to return to democracy was done in Pakistan."<sup>47</sup> Rehman said Bhutto retained influence by giving her party

leaders leeway to draft legislation at their own meetings in Islamabad, and then reserving final approval and veto power. As Khan told me, Bhutto continued to chair both of the party's top committees and, in consultation with members still in Pakistan, define its agenda. The exiled leader thought it essential to be personally involved with initiatives that would bear her name, shape her future and potentially lay a foundation for her return. This could lead to complicated maneuvers: PPP leaders flew to meetings abroad, and Rehman described how the hundred of aspiring politicians seeking Bhutto's support for a campaign in the run-up to the 2008 elections were asked to fly out to London and personally acquaint themselves with the absent leader. But because her identity — her vote bank, for instance, and her name recognition — was so vital to her party and PPP power so centralized in her hands, Bhutto could easily demand such demonstrations of respect.

Bhutto supplemented her insider's view of the PPP by gathering various perspectives on the party's performance, and used that information to ensure that it operated in a way that would enable her eventual return. She was wary, for instance, of alliances being formed without her knowledge, and so sought various office-bearers' versions of events: "she would not believe me, she would not believe you," Khan explained — she built her own understanding of each development. That included criticism, according to the editor Muhammaed Ziauddin.<sup>48</sup> He described Bhutto quizzing him on the PPP when he came to London as a correspondent for another paper, *DAWN*. Ziauddin told her he believed that despite her efforts, her absence and her deputies' ambitions were pushing the party toward collapse. With those notes, a feed of updates from the party, and regular policy meetings in her bases in Dubai and later London, Bhutto "ran a parallel shadow government" from exile, according to Rehman. She also recognized that beyond policy, the party had to rely on supporters making its work possible outside conference rooms: party workers. The Bhutto cult of personality drew rural Sindhis and under-educated volunteers from assorted parts of the country to the People's Party. To ensure that its charm did not fade in her absence, Bhutto personally called or corresponded with volunteers, Khan explained. Even when removed from the party, Bhutto made certain it was hers from top to bottom.

The third part of Bhutto's grand strategy of exile was a thoughtful approach to people outside her circle. She crafted a public image as an involved, aware and well-loved leader, commenting on Pakistan in international media and at conferences on leadership or global affairs. Enhancing her profile in the West, which during both her periods in exile was involved with Pakistan because of investments in Afghanistan, was a chief means to her end of destroying the hurdles to her return. This worked. Both Zia and Musharraf, close allies of Washington,

- 49 Gen. (R) Mahmud Ali Durrani, former National Security Advisor, Pakistani ambassador to the United States, and military aide to General Zia-ul-HAQ, interview with author, Islamabad, Pakistan, Jun. 5 2013.
- 50 Shuja Nawaz, interview with author.
- 51 Bhutto, 219.
- 52 Bhutto, 214.
- 53 Sun Tzu, line 4, Book I, 64.

eventually allowed her back into Pakistan without victimizing her significantly. Mahmud Ali Durrani, a retired Zia aide and general who interacted with Bhutto in Washington when he was Musharraf's ambassador there and served as National Security Advisor in her party's government after her death, told me, "She did a lot to present herself as the legitimate heir to power."<sup>49</sup> These efforts included hiring a Washington lobbyist<sup>50</sup> and sending sophisticated emissaries like the award-winning journalist Rehman to communicate with foreign governments. Often, she would lobby for herself with former classmates like Galbraith or notables who had known her father, such as former U.S. attorney general Ramsey Clark.<sup>51</sup>

When she was faced with challenges to the image she chose to project, Bhutto doubled down on her message. In the 80s, Yasmin Islam told me, some international figures treated the young exile with suspicion because of her brothers' connections to militants in Afghanistan; in the 2000s, as Tahir-Kheli explained, Bhutto was less popular in Washington than ever, and suspected of having stolen millions from her nation. Both times, Bhutto talked about something else, a topic she knew would pull at her listeners' heartstrings and bolster her appeal: the return of democracy to Pakistan. She underscored her symbolic value to a civilian-ruled Pakistan. In the 80s, she had linked her cause to humanitarian worries about General Zia's rule: she wrote, "I learned the value of providing information to Amnesty International when I saw how the human rights organization could mobilize world opinion."<sup>52</sup> With constant lobbying in the second period, Tahir-Kheli and the senior diplomat I spoke with said, Bhutto eventually convinced policymakers in the West that her return was in their interest. Retooling her appeal for a domestic audience, Bhutto valued the 'democrat' label enough to sign a Charter of Democracy with her former nemesis, Sharif. The document condemned military interference in politics and helped both exiles supplement their "moral influence"<sup>53</sup> Bhutto's focus on public relations management was a crucial means in her strategy. It ensured that those in a position to give her what she wanted saw that end as valuable for themselves. It won her their investment, concern, and sympathy. She became essential to them. So, then, did the strategic goal she very nearly accomplished.

## Pervez Musharraf's Grand Strategy of Exile

- 54 "Musharraf Lands in Karachi, Alleges Conspiracy," *DAWN*, Mar. 24, 2013, accessed Dec. 5, 2013, <[www.dawn.com/news/797759/musharraf-lands-in-karachi-alleges-conspiracy](http://www.dawn.com/news/797759/musharraf-lands-in-karachi-alleges-conspiracy)>.

Musharraf did not get a Bhutto-style welcome when he came back to Pakistan on March 24, 2013.<sup>54</sup> His two-and-a-half-year-old political party, which he had formed in London,<sup>55</sup> lacked numbers on the ground. Less than a month later, he was placed under house arrest on the order of the Islamabad High Court.<sup>56</sup> Musharraf rapidly built up a legal team, both to disprove the five charges against him — including Bhutto's murder and a



- 55 “‘Sorry’ Pervez Musharraf Launches New Pakistan Party,” *BBC*, Oct. 1, 2013, accessed Dec. 5, 2013, <[www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-south-asia-11450507](http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-south-asia-11450507)>.
- 56 Jethro Mullen, Nic Robertson and Laura Smith-Spark, “In Pakistan, Musharraf Placed Under House Arrest,” *CNN*, Apr. 18, 2013, accessed Dec. 5, 2013. <[www.cnn.com/2013/04/18/world/asia/pakistan-politics/](http://www.cnn.com/2013/04/18/world/asia/pakistan-politics/)>.
- 57 Zahid Gishkori, “Judges Detention Case: FIA to Record Judges Statements,” *Express Tribune*, Jul. 15, 2013. Dec. 10, 2013. <[tribune.com.pk/story/576989/judges-detention-case-fia-to-record-judges-statements/](http://tribune.com.pk/story/576989/judges-detention-case-fia-to-record-judges-statements/)>.
- 58 “Lal Masjid Murder Case: Bail Approved, but Musharraf Awaits Release,” *Express Tribune*, Nov. 6, 2013, accessed Dec. 10 2013, <[tribune.com.pk/story/627875/lal-masjid-murder-case-bail-submitted-musharraf-to-walk-free/](http://tribune.com.pk/story/627875/lal-masjid-murder-case-bail-submitted-musharraf-to-walk-free/)>.
- 59 Ikram Junaidi, and Mohammad Asghar, “Musharraf now a free man,” *DAWN*, Nov. 7, 2013, accessed Dec. 10, 2013, <[www.dawn.com/news/1054674/musharraf-now-a-free-man](http://www.dawn.com/news/1054674/musharraf-now-a-free-man)>.
- 60 Dr. Raza Bokhari, interview with author.

treason charge for his declaration of an emergency in 2007—and to keep his story in the public eye.

Political observers told me they were confident that the Musharraf team could invalidate four of the cases. The treason charge would be the challenge. Still, Ahmad Raza Kasuri, Musharraf’s top lawyer and a leader in his APML party, said he believed that Prime Minister Sharif was avoiding the process after feeling pressured to promise a trial during its election campaign. “Since the 11th of May, the elections, the demeanor and style of the Muslim League-Nawaz has changed; they’re putting the whole muck on the shoulder of the court,” Kasuri said, referring to the government’s reliance on judges to consider private citizens’ petitions about the treason charge. Other than launching a Federal Investigation Agency probe in July,<sup>57</sup> the government took few steps towards a trial. Court after court granted Musharraf bail in the other cases. By November 6, the former president was set freed from house arrest. With the general’s ability to leave Pakistan still dependent on the courts’ and government’s say-so, rumors swirled about a deal with Sharif that would enable his withdrawal into permanent exile.<sup>58</sup> Unclear as Musharraf’s ultimate end remained, his immediate end, to escape the consequences of his botched homecoming, seemed attainable.

Then on November 18, the government announced that it was ready to try the former dictator. Like so much about Musharraf’s grand strategy of exile, the news came as a surprise even to those meant to be preparing for it: as late as November 7, Kasuri told the press that the government’s failure to move forward proved that no evidence was available.<sup>59</sup> When I spoke with Musharraf’s spokesman, Pakistani-American Raza Bokhari, three days after the government announcement, he said the trial “weakens the country, weakens the Pakistan military [and] is also an attempt to distract the nation and the world from other serious issues faced by Pakistan.”<sup>60</sup> He could not offer details on Musharraf’s future strategy. Bokhari wanted to talk about his leader’s strengths. “This is but a walk in the park compared to many other challenges that he has faced!”

Musharraf’s failure to manage exile has much to do with talk and exaggeration about his abilities. I see his strategy as the most flawed among those of the four exiles. Conversations with outside analysts, confidantes not involved with the ex-president’s party, and with the leadership of the APML, showed Musharraf to be an exile whose approach was marked by uncertainty, disorganization, and, above all, a lack of realism.

## What Musharraf’s Identity Crisis Cost Him

Musharraf capitalized on who he was—or had been—in securing a position for himself in exile. As a speaker represented by the well-known Harry Walker Agency,<sup>61</sup> he won exposure across

- 61 Kelly Eger, chief operating officer, The Harry Walker Agency, correspondence with author, Jul. 11, 2013.
- 62 General Mahmud Durrani, interview with author.
- 63 Maj. Gen. (R) Rashid Qureshi, former military spokesman at Inter-Services Public Relations and current spokesman for All-Pakistan Muslim League, interview with author, Islamabad, Pakistan, Jun. 6, 2013.
- 64 Shuja Nawaz, interview with author.
- 65 Javed Jabbar, interview with author.

Europe and North America and could fund his lifestyle largely using speaker's fees. But when he turned his focus to Pakistan, his identity was more a handicap, one he did not fully understand. As a military man entering electoral politics for the first time, Musharraf lacked the expertise that leaders like Bhutto, Sharif and Hussain gained through cycles of victory and defeat. Instead, his friends and advisors suggest, he operated off assumptions about Pakistani politicians that are common in the Pakistan Army. General Mahmud Durrani, who considers the ex-president like a brother, said Musharraf told him a "theory which has been repeated again and again,"<sup>62</sup> one linked to the Army's disappointment with the Bhutto- and Sharif-led elected governments of the 1990s. "The PPP [Bhutto] and the Muslim League [Sharif], they have both failed and there is a need for a third path... he obliquely implied being part of that third force," Durrani said. That 'third party' idea was one I heard parroted by Musharraf spokesman Raza Bokhari and another army friend of the general-president's who now supports his political aspirations as a top leader in the APM: retired Major General Rashid Qureshi.<sup>63</sup> What is missing from this calculus is how a general could build up that third force when he no longer had the Army behind him. "Both Benazir and Nawaz left behind political parties and allies who were badly treated by the government and therefore kind of coalesced around a leader in exile," Atlantic Council analyst Shuja Nawaz, whose brother served as Chief of Army Staff in the early 1990s, told me. "Musharraf's party was the Pakistan Army, and the Pakistan Army was lost the day he doctored his uniform."<sup>64</sup> Musharraf might have assumed that he would receive a *deus ex machina* from the military. Speaking in June, Nawaz predicted that this could never be the case. General Durrani agreed. Though he knew that he needed a 'force', Musharraf—precisely because he had spent his career in the military—had no way to develop one. He believed in a means that, for him, did not exist.

This military part of the former president's identity had important ramifications for how he could present himself to the Pakistani voter. Unlike Bhutto and Sharif, who vilified Musharraf for keeping them away during their periods in exile, this strategist could not speak of being victimized—he chose to leave Pakistan of his free own will. Javed Jabbar, who advised Musharraf on media policy, conceded that his friend "couldn't possibly use a sympathy-based appeal."<sup>65</sup> He was therefore unable to use a means that had been found effective by various other exiles, and one that Pakistani audiences had shown that they were receptive to. Again, Musharraf stood out from other Pakistani exiles—and suffered for it.

Taken together, the various strands of Musharraf's identity left him unable to offer a political option that could appeal to the changed mood in a Pakistan he had helped shape. This was why Musharraf and his surrogates continue to reference



his track record. His case shows that memories fail to ignite significant popular support for a leader if he lacks the capabilities and the political imagination to build a “third force” to compete with his rivals. While Musharraf was talking about economic growth during his rule, Durrani told me, regular Pakistani voters remembered the general-president more for mistakes: voters “don’t think this cellphone is with me because Musharraf was there,” Durrani argued. “For him, he feels that he’s done a great job and people remember that and respect him... the regular chap says this guy signed the NRO [the bill absolving Bhutto and Sharif of corruption charges, which enabled their 2007 return], brought in all those crooks, he mismanaged Lal Masjid.” Most commentators I spoke with said that Musharraf’s rule had left Pakistanis hungry to give democracy another chance. They were not, then, keen to elect the man they mentally associated with suppressing it for a decade. So while Musharraf’s policies “created a middle class that hates traditional politics, and a middle class that believes in politics only as a means of delivery of services... and he thought that these people would vote for him,” according to journalist Badar Alam, the support that Musharraf was looking for instead went to another contender in the elections: the never-exiled Imran Khan, who has selected technocrat advisors similar to those Musharraf brought in to help him rule in the early 2000s.

The general might have avoided his dramatic failure, sources said, had he listened to those around him. The senior Western diplomat I interviewed, General Durrani, former minister Jabbar and others spoke of warning Musharraf before his return that he could no longer be the right man for Pakistan. But another fatal element of his identity prevented from heeding their counsel: pride. According to Durrani and Jabbar, who both advised the General closely during his time in power, eight years of near-absolute control left Musharraf impatient with disagreement, even from friends. Jabbar recalls that when he told Musharraf not to return, he prefaced the recommendation by telling the then-exile, “As in the past, you will often not take good advice.”

## A Fragmented Strategy

Launching into a strategy of exile without a specific outcome in mind was, according to interviews I conducted and comparisons to successful strategist’s, Musharraf’s fundamental mistake. The other flaws in his planning were linked, together reinforcing the lack of realism mentioned above: i) his selection of uninformed, sycophantic advisors; and ii) his weak information-gathering effort.

I have yet to discern a specific end Musharraf identified when he planned either his exile or his current return, beyond some vague conception of being in power again. That Musharraf

66 “Ex-APML Spokesman Joins PPP,” Mar. 9, 2012, accessed Dec. 10, 2013, <[www.pakistantoday.com.pk/2012/03/09/news/national/ex-apml-spokesman-fawad-chaudhry-joins-ppp/](http://www.pakistantoday.com.pk/2012/03/09/news/national/ex-apml-spokesman-fawad-chaudhry-joins-ppp/)>.

67 Fawad Chaudhry, lawyer and former APML spokesman, interview with author, over phone, Jun. 9, 2013.

chose to return prior to the 2013 elections grants credence to his party’s argument that Musharraf wanted to be the third option. According to Qureshi, he envisioned forming a coalition with smaller parties like Hussain’s MQM (Senator Nasreen Jalil, an MQM decision-maker, chuckled at the suggestion during our interview) and Imran Khan’s Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf. With their backing and that of independent candidates, Musharraf apparently planned to bring together enough National Assembly votes to be elected Leader of the Opposition or Prime Minister.

Fawad Chaudhry, a former spokesman for the Musharraf operation who very publicly resigned from it last year,<sup>66</sup> told me the APML considered another path to that number: an alliance with the Sharif defectors who had served as ministers with Musharraf.<sup>67</sup> This is evidence of some level of grand strategizing. If placing securing the PM job for Musharraf was the party’s end, the combined voting numbers and legislative alliances needed to vote in a PM were its essential means. But that strategy does not incorporate any explanation of why one-time Musharraf supporters might return to the fold of the terminally unpopular former ruler. In addition, the position Musharraf allegedly sought would likely not satisfy him as an end. Even as Prime Minister, he would not be able to operate with the same leeway he had when he was both President and Chief of Army Staff. Securing this end might leave him worse off, overburdened, limited, and frustrated. It is unclear whether Musharraf anticipated that even his ideal outcome would not have been a significant triumph.

Musharraf might have developed a more appropriate grand strategy had he been working out of, and with advice from, political structure that had been tested. Instead, he spent much of his time abroad with expatriates like his Pakistani-American spokesman, Bokhari. Lt. General Talat Masood, a one-time Musharraf advisor and political commentator, told me such supporters could prepare the general-president for the zeitgeist he wanted to return to. Indeed, they seem to have instead encouraged positions views that are anathema to the Pakistani mainstream. Bokhari, for instance, told me twice in our first interview that he supported drone strikes and military rule. While such individuals populated the higher ranks of the APML, Musharraf’s Pakistani political operation was stocked with Pakistanis on the ground whom Bokhari called “executors, operators.” Those representatives were not meant to be eventual candidates for office, Bokhari told me. This structuring some sense given the APML plan to gain independent candidates and ally with other parties, but it was a source of institutional weakness: what was meant to motivate these operators? Again, the party had little to offer in terms of incentives, given its weak electoral prospects. This could be an important reason behind its organizers’ ineffectiveness. As an uninvolved friend

who says he heard political gossip about the party, Durrani said he believed Musharraf “overrated the strength of his party structure, which was nowhere.” Durrani, Chaudhry and Qureshi all suggested that APMML representatives were hiding their failure to rally support, and the poor public reception they received, from their leader.

With this limited ground presence, it is no wonder that Musharraf’s grand strategy of exile also failed him in terms of information gathering. Musharraf cannot have anticipated the level of change that went on in Pakistan after his departure, my sources told me. Nor did he fully grasp how regular Pakistanis perceived him. Hearing limited voices from Pakistan, Musharraf was not able to tailor his means, his timing, or his message to shifts in public sentiment.

Musharraf could have done a far better job presenting himself and learning about where he was headed had he identified an end, something to work towards once he landed. For now, as he waits for his trial to begin, the best result he can hope for may be what Jabbar suggested back in June — and his entire grand strategy of exile, from departure to return, could have been for naught.

## Nawaz Sharif’s Grand Strategy of Exile: An Identity Born Abroad but Fiercely Homegrown

68 Badar Alam, interview with author.

For Nawaz Sharif in exile, identity was strategy. The man who is now Prime Minister of Pakistan used his time abroad to rethink his political approach and public persona. As almost a new leader with a new party, he has now met resounding success. Lessons from Sharif’s absence had shown him the necessity of that overhaul. Following his forced departure from Pakistan in 2000, Sharif watched from Saudi Arabia as aides abandoned his party en masse. Many joined a rival organization established by the general who had overthrown him, Pervez Musharraf. Suddenly, his end — returning to Pakistan, and to power — seemed less feasible than ever. Because Sharif always wanted to come home, as party insiders and journalists told me over the summer, he evolved a fresh approach to doing politics in Pakistan, and a modified grand strategy of exile, fast. Two days after Sharif was sworn in this past summer, the journalist Badar Alam told me that spending seven years abroad had driven the country’s new leader and his chief political deputy, his younger brother Shahbaz, to reform their political operation: “When the Sharifs were away, it was the first time they realized the limitation of politics for money.... They started creating a political machine, with a strong ideology and a strong personality cult.”<sup>68</sup> That party now controls the federal government.

The exiled Sharif both remade his party internally, by trying to shift its model from patronizing local power players to centering on his own story, and reshaped its alliances in the

broader world of Pakistani politics. According to Alam and Atlantic Council analyst Shuja Nawaz,<sup>69</sup> Sharif had been accustomed to recruiting Punjabi politicians known as “electables,” who could use family loyalties to deliver their districts in successive election cycles. He would grant them cabinet positions or lucrative government contracts in exchange. He and his brother had, unlike their rival Benazir Bhutto, established civilian governments that usually received some approval from the powerful Pakistan Army, part of what Pakistanis call “the establishment.” Indeed, they had begun their careers under the wing of the military dictator preceding Musharraf, General Zia-ul-Haq. They were unprepared for either a military coup or an election like that of 2002, in which only Lahore, the capital of their own province, still voted for their party. “They initially thought that two things would keep them in power forever,” Alam told me. “One was money, the second was the establishment’s backing. In 1999, [with Chief of Army Staff Musharraf’s coup] the establishment’s backing went away. In 2002, they realized money wouldn’t help so much.” Their old identity no longer offered them the means they needed for their end. So Sharif worked on internal control and tied his party to a popular, increasingly influential institution not part of the traditional establishment: the judiciary. The man whose cabinet ministers and party workers had attacked the Supreme Court in 1997 when their leader was summoned for contempt charges, who had used military support to remove both a President and a Chief Justice, sent the Pakistani press statement after statement about the rule of law.

Sharif’s identity transformation went beyond logistics to ideas. He began to re-define what his party would look like back in Pakistan. He cultivated a solid, nationalist, fiercely democratic ideology that was a far cry from the brutal opportunism that marked his last term as Prime Minister. The means he employed reflected those Pakistan-centric beliefs — foreign support was not a priority. Sharif’s identity had to be consistent. Only that way could he manipulate it well enough to land himself back into the Prime Minister’s residence.

## With a New Persona, New Strategies

As Sharif ascended to the premiership for the third time this past summer, the man who rudely expelled him from that office 14 years ago was trapped inside his home, probably watching the inauguration on television. Sharif’s position is the culmination of a long, well-constructed grand strategy: he attained his end. My interviews suggest that Sharif never wavered in that regard. Though he had to leave the country under a deal — whether with Musharraf or the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is a disputed question<sup>70</sup> — that included a pledge to leave Pakistani politics for at least a decade, Sharif continued to publicly state

71 Safdar Abbasi, PPP senator and advisor to Bhutto, interview with author, Jun. 11, 2013.

72 Sun Tzu, line 4, Book I, 64.

his intent to return. “It was always clear that [Sharif and Benazir] would come back to Pakistan at some point, and they would be the people” to negotiate with, the senior Western diplomat told me, noting that he had met with Sharif multiple times both in London and Islamabad (“It was part of my job.”).

With this end set, Sharif used exile to focus on Pakistan more than perhaps any of the other leaders I analyze. Discussing why these exiled leaders choose to return to a Pakistan that had rejected them once, analyst Shuja Nawaz asked me to consider the confluence of different factors. These included drive and political background, but also investment — particularly in people. Even a top PPP leader, Senator Safdar Abbasi, conceded that the Sharif brothers used exile to hone their core team. “Sharif has this advantage of having people around him who are now pretty seasoned,”<sup>71</sup> Abbasi told me. This was particularly notable given Musharraf’s poaching of many Sharif stalwarts. Sharif focused on giving his leaders the experience to enter government again, and a reminder of what Bhutto aide Sherry Rehman called the “hierarchical” model of establishment Punjab, referring to the strong traditional values of the Sharifs’ home province. He wanted to cultivate a political team he could rely on, one he would not be worried about losing, even if this meant enforcing the hierarchy more than his rivals. Sharif’s focus on his internal leadership confirms that his end was always related to Pakistan. So does his reported ambivalence towards foreign actors, particularly in the West. Shirin Tahir-Kheli, who worked on South Asian issues in the White House for much of the Bush period, called him “a bit of an enigma.” While his lieutenants attempted lobbying in Washington, she said, no memories stood out. This reflects Sharif’s thinking: as a center-right nationalist, Sharif did not want to locate the solution to exile in foreign influence. This principle potentially cost him a smoother return: most of my sources credited Western pressure on Musharraf for his willingness to negotiate with Bhutto. But owing to his past with Musharraf, Sharif had reasons to avoid any mediator too closely linked to the general, which meant most Western powers. Though he wanted to return home as soon as possible, Sharif was careful about the way he would get there.

The main tactic in Sharif’s grand strategy illustrated how an exiled leader can build what Sun Tzu called “moral influence”<sup>72</sup>: marketing himself as a victim. Sharif entered exile with his family, his possessions, little dignity and a party bereft of some of its leading lights. He developed an anti-military, pro-democracy ideology that, according to Alam, relied on deputies like Javed Hashmi, a parliamentarian whose three-and-a-half year sentence for reading out an anti-Musharraf speech in the legislature reminded Pakistanis that Musharraf’s relatively benevolent rule was predicated on force. Sharif strove to shape public opinion, as his statements against the military in his

- 73 Warraich, 169.  
 74 *Ibid.*, 170.  
 75 “‘Democracy Charter’ for Pakistan,” BBC.

saccharine approved biography evince. “The Chief of the Army Staff, after taking over the charge, starts thinking of himself as the king or the super prime minister,” he observed in an interview early in the Musharraf period.<sup>73</sup> The tactic of building support around an idea gave Sharif more than a way to boost his legitimacy. He made statements encouraging the growth of anti-Musharraf sentiment within Pakistan, despite his and Bhutto’s absence — one example: “many movements have run without leaders”<sup>74</sup> — so that he could publicly explain why his exile should not kill the hopes of his supporters or other pro-democracy citizens. Such rhetoric neatly tied him to the democracy movement, and he anointed himself as its leader in absentia. Sharif followed this trend with his later activism in support of the dismissed Chief Justice. He ramped up his involvement in the movement to restore the top judge once he was back in Pakistan full-time. In exile, then, he found a new way, and a new motivation, to engage in politics.

A further significant Sharif tactic was his cooperation with the other exiled national leader, Bhutto. This extended from the Charter of Democracy,<sup>75</sup> which committed both their parties to never again siding with the Army against each other, to joint planning sessions in London, where Bhutto aide Sherry Rehman said Sharif aides attendees would absorb the lessons for a successful exile operation that the PPP had already enshrined during Bhutto’s first stint abroad. The leaders’ decision to combine the two forces where possible amplified their moral authority as democratic leaders-in-waiting. Considering their very visible animosity in the 1990s, such amity was a big development. With his moral authority growing, while Bhutto saw corruption allegations continue to undercut hers, Sharif could afford to make this kind of concession as part of his grand strategy. He knew it would serve his end, by helping to guarantee the survival of democracy — and his chance to enter office.

## Altaf Hussain’s Grand Strategy of Exile

- 76 Altaf Hussain, *My Life’s Journey*, Original Urdu version compiled by Khalid Athar, (Oxford University Press: Karachi, 2011).  
 77 Nasreen Jalil, interview.

Altaf Hussain is not a national leader. He has never held public office at even the provincial level. He has not as much as set foot in Pakistan since his abrupt departure in January 1992, in advance of a military offensive against his party’s military wing and following multiple death threats.<sup>76</sup> Still, the party he leads, the MQM, has significant influence in the federal government, often serving as an essential coalition partner (though not in the current Sharif set-up). In Karachi, the MQM uses members of the ethnic group it represents, the Mohajirs, to run strikes that can instantly paralyze the flow of much of Pakistan’s GDP. Hussain matters, because he dictates how the party behaves. All parliamentary actions and political negotiations are discussed with him, I learned from Senator Nasreen Jalil, a deputy convenor for the MQM’s central committee,<sup>77</sup> and he alone can



- 78 “Altaf Hussain Announces New MQM Coordination Committee,” *Express Tribune*, May 26, 2013, accessed Dec. 10, 2013, <[tribune.com.pk/story/554651/party-to-emerge-stronger-than-before-altaf-hussain/](http://tribune.com.pk/story/554651/party-to-emerge-stronger-than-before-altaf-hussain/)>.
- 79 Wasay Jalil, member of MQM Rabita (Communications) Committee and chief spokesperson, interview with author, Dec. 5, 2013.

unilaterally demand a reshuffle within party ranks, as he did following the MQM’s disappointing performance in the May elections.<sup>78</sup> The MQM is a party unlike any other in Pakistan, Jalil claimed: “it’s not running on personalities.” Instead, it centers on one personality. Jalil continued: “Everybody in the MQM, however much he might have a high profile...they’re all workers of the MQM and can be asked to leave work or stay at home” by Hussain at any time. That includes her, a 71-year-old woman. If her exiled leader told her to do so over Skype, she would restrict herself to conducting his correspondence from her bedroom, she joked.

Hussain has developed a grand strategy that makes exile work as a permanent state. His end may well be his status quo: supreme power and influence with no requirement to perform any duties in Pakistan. Other political aspirants who want to enact change on the ground are welcome to do so through the MQM — and improve Hussain’s image along the way. He here has a built-in tactic to strengthen his base, so long as he can continue to issue an ethnically tinged rallying call to ambitious, capable young people from his well-educated Mohajir community. Political commentators told me that the party’s standing rose significantly when a young crop of party politicians took control of the local government of Karachi in the late Musharraf era. “There was a chance for the MQM to show it can govern,” said Jalil, who served as the deputy mayor for the city at large. Current party spokesman Wasay Jalil (no relation) ran one of Karachi’s constituent towns; he told me he was “given tremendous power” without interference from Hussain, and felt that he could demonstrate the MQM’s ability to serve very local needs, such as fixing roads.<sup>79</sup> This tactic of granting people within his party the agency to pursue projects that matter to them permits Hussain to satisfy his base *by doing nothing at all*. Surely this is the acme of Sun Tzu’s economy of force.

Hussain’s relationship with his exile — his reasons for staying away, and his willingness to return — are kept deliberately vague: obfuscation is part of this grand strategy. Jalil told me that he constantly yearns for his city, and that she and other leaders of the party must exhort him to stay in London, for safety’s sake. Others with some experience of the party have different theories. “I don’t think Altaf has ever really showed any signs of wanting to come back,” the senior Western diplomat I interviewed told me this past summer. He has had conversations about the matter with officials at the British Home and Foreign Offices, he explained. Their recommendation is to leave Hussain to his own business, “not to dignify him” with diplomatic calls but to correspond through his deputies within Pakistan. Beyond that, the British government gives Hussain a wide berth, for he has taken steps to ensure that he would be difficult to directly challenge. To secure his position in London, he has married a British Pakistani woman. In Pakistan, he has developed

80 Muhammed Ziauddin,  
interview with author.

81 “Imran Farooq murder case:  
MQM London office raided,  
reports BBC.” BBC.

what the *Express Tribune* editor Muhammed Ziauddin described to me as a “mafia.”<sup>80</sup>

Hussain’s approach is striking because of the leeway it offers him. He can conduct Pakistani politics as he pleases so long as he does not break British law. As I mentioned, the leader chose to test that barrier in 2013 with a vitriolic speech to Karachi residents that the London Metropolitan Police is exploring as an incitement to violence. The police are also investigating Hussain’s potential involvement in the murder of another exiled senior leader in the MQM in London in 2010; over the summer, his home was raided.<sup>81</sup> If damning revelations emerge, Hussain may well regret the limited attention he has paid to a core component of my proposed model for a grand strategy of exile: managing public perceptions. Currently, much of Hussain’s authority rests on a general awareness of his unquestioned leadership and blind faith among members of a particular ethnic group. This could change. How the accusation is covered and discussed in Pakistan will, therefore, matter for Hussain’s support base and capabilities. It will be important to follow this permanent exile’s moves carefully as the Scotland Yard investigation continues, to see whether he evolves new tactics as police work threatens his comfortable status quo-cum-end.

That pages worth of strategic analysis can be drawn out of simply four cases of exile in one nation suggests that much has yet to be discovered and explored about strategists’ approaches to the condition. This paper emphasizes the importance of a clearly defined end, a support structure — particularly in the home country — that the exiled leader can rely on for information, and careful management of relationships with global players. It highlights how going into exile forced even leaders with experience as chief executives of a sizeable, nuclear-armed country to reformulate their operations. It also explores exiles’ struggles to make modern strategic means, like social media, make up for absence as effectively as we are often told these technologies can. By opening up the topic of exile in a country of singular global import, my work invites further analysis of what makes Pakistan and similar states in the Global South sites inhospitable to some kinds of strategists. It prompts more analysis into how the experience of being based abroad can reshape an important global leader, like Musharraf and now Sharif. Above all, the triumphs and mistakes described here contribute to a base of knowledge for strategists who want to wield power in Islamabad — and shows how much could be gained from further detailed considerations of Pakistani leaders’ decision-making. Perhaps a model for not just exile but governance can be evolved. My nation recently saw its first transfer of power between two democratically elected governments. Now is the moment for a Pakistani leader to devise a grand strategy that works. In the words of the patriotic Florentine statesman mentioned near the beginning of this paper, “one should not



let this opportunity pass, for [Pakistan], after so much time, to see her redeemer.”<sup>82</sup>

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### Interviews

FOR PERVEZ MUSHARRAF

Major General Mahmud Durrani — close friend, former ambassador to Washington under Musharraf (and later national security advisor under PPP Prime Minister Gilani).

Javed Jabbar — friend, former information minister, former PPP member & minister.

Fawad Chaudhry — former spokesperson and general secretary for All Pakistan Muslim League; currently a member of the Pakistan People's Party.

Major General Rashid Qureshi — close friend, current spokesperson for All Pakistan Muslim League, former director general of Inter-Services Public Relations.

Lieutenant General Talat Masood — friend & mentor; briefly a Musharraf advisor; defense analyst.

Dr. Raza Bokhari — friend; top spokesperson for North America.

Parvaiz Mahmood — relative; APML chapter leader for New York.

Ahmed Raza Kasuri — senior counsel; APML leader; veteran Pakistani politician.

Lieutenant General Munir Hafeez — close friend; former chairman, National Accountability Bureau.

Humayun Gauhar — close friend (ghostwriter for autobiography); noted newspaper columnist.

Syed Zaheer Ahsan Jafri — leader of APML breakaway youth wing; aide to Kasuri.

FOR BENAZIR BHUTTO

Tariq Islam — cousin; in exile with her in 1980s.

Yasmin Islam (née Niazi) — close friend; in exile with Bhutto in 1980s; cousin by marriage (wife of Tariq Islam).

Ambassador Sherry Rehman — close aide; former member of national assembly, information minister & ambassador to Washington; one-time journalist/editor.

Naheed Khan — very close friend; in exile with Bhutto in 1980s; former personal secretary and member of national assembly; helped run PPP during second period in exile.

Senator Safdar Abbasi — family friend; with Bhutto in exile in 1980s; current senator.

FOR NAWAZ SHARIF

Lord Nazir Ahmed — British Pakistani peer; advisor to Sharif brothers and Bhutto when in exile in London.

FOR ALTAH HUSSAIN

Senator Nasreen Jalil — deputy convenor of MQM's Coordination Committee; former deputy mayor; spent time in exile in early 1990s.

Wasay Jalil — member of MQM Rabita (communications) committee & chief spokesperson.

GENERAL COMMENTARY

Ambassador Shirin Tahir-Kheli — international relations academic; former senior advisor to Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice and National Security Council staffer.

Senior Western diplomat — requested anonymity for purposes of discussing sensitive foreign policy meetings; formerly posted in Islamabad.

Shuja Nawaz — director, South Asia Center, Atlantic Council.

Imran Aslam — leading Pakistani journalist; President, GEO television.

Muhammad Badar Alam — editor, *Herald* magazine.

Muhammad Ziauddin — managing editor, *Express Tribune* daily newspaper; formerly correspondent for *DAWN*.

Asif Rangoonwala — British-Pakistani entrepreneur; chair, British Pakistan Foundation.

Saira Awan-Malik — British-Pakistani attorney; board member for British Pakistan Foundation.

Kashif Zafar — British-Pakistani banker; board member, British Pakistan Foundation.

# The Invisible Ring and the Invisible Contract: Corporate Social Contract as the Normative Basis of Corporate Environmental Responsibility

Dilong Sun

- 1 Plato, *Plato: Complete Works*, n.p.: Hackett Publishing Company, 1997.

In *Book I* of the *Republic*, Plato proposes one of the most troubling and puzzling ethical questions in Western philosophical tradition through the “Ring of Gyges” parable: should a person be moral even if he can do whatever he wants with impunity?<sup>1</sup> The same ethical dilemma is relevant today in the multinational corporations’ decision-making. In the past decades, multinational corporations like Texaco have established operations in many developing countries with weak environmental regulations. This regulatory vacuum essentially creates a “Ring of Gyges” for multinational corporations to maximize their profits through environmentally destructive operations with impunity. One of the most heated controversies in this field, Texaco’s (now acquired by Chevron Corporation) environmentally irresponsible operation in the Agua Agrio region renders a suitable candidate for the analysis of this “Ring of Gyges” dilemma in business ethics. This paper seeks to apply the methodology of social contract theory to formulate an ethical criticism against Texaco’s behaviors and provide a universally applicable normative basis for environmental protection in corporate decision-making.

The second section of the paper examines the case study of Texaco’s unethical behaviors in Ecuador and presents the crucial philosophical question whether multinational corporations are morally obligated to protect the environment in their host countries even if the environmental regulation in those nations is underdeveloped. The paper will examine various theories that attempt to provide a normative basis to corporate social responsibility and refute them as insufficient in providing a universally applicable ethical standard.

The third section of the paper will dedicate to examining the corporate social contract constructed by Thomas Donaldson and various other scholars. In this section, the paper will first define the parties of the contract as corporations and civil society. Then the reciprocal obligations of the two parties will be examined. In order to analyze corporations’ obligations to civil society, the paper will apply the social contract methodology again to provide a normative justification of corporations’ existence, namely, a set of reasons why civil society authorizes corporations to be created as productive organizations. Hence, the paper will treat these reasons as corporations’ moral obligations to civil society.

This paper argues that corporations have a moral and contractual obligation to minimize environmental pollution. Since

Texaco has polluted the environment and severely harmed the overall welfare of people in Lago Agrio region, the multinational corporation has violated the abstract, implicit, but binding contract between corporations and society. A potential refutation will be presented at the last section of the essay concerning the moral status of corporations. The paper will attempt to respond to this criticism and end with limitations of the core argument presented in the paper.

## Case Study of Chevron's Environmentally Unethical Operations in Ecuador

### *The Economic and Political Contexts in which Texaco Operated*

- 2 Judith Kimerling, "Indigenous Peoples and the Oil Frontier in Amazonia: The Case of Ecuador, Chevrontexaco, and Aguinda v Texaco," *New York University Journal of International Law and Politics*, no. 3 (March 2006): 413-665, 415.
- 3 Martz, John D. *Politics and Petroleum in Ecuador*. (New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 1987), 370.
- 4 Kimerling, "Indigenous Peoples and the Oil Frontier in Amazonia," 424.
- 5 *Ibid.*, 426.
- 6 Judith Kimerling, *Amazon Crude*, (New York: Natural Resource Defense Council, 1991), 336.
- 7 Kimerling, "Indigenous Peoples," 426.
- 8 *Ibid.*, 420.

This section introduces the economic and political context in which Texaco operated. After crude oil reserves were discovered in 1967 in the Amazonian region in Ecuador, multinational oil companies entered this oil rush that initially brought prospect of economic prosperity to Ecuador. In the 1960s and 1970s, oil became Ecuador's centerpiece for modernization.<sup>2</sup> However, after the first few years of construction and extraction of Amazon crude, a fear emerged and began to spread in the Ecuador that existing oil reserves might be exhausted in the near future.<sup>3</sup> Since oil extraction is a capital-intensive and technology-driven industry and Ecuador's own national corporations had only limited capacity to develop reserves on their own, the nation needed multinational corporations like Texaco to find and develop new reserves.<sup>4</sup>

Thus, the Ecuadorian state increasingly relied on the support from foreign multinational oil companies such as Texaco to finance costly exploration and production and to implement new technology.<sup>5</sup> This financial and technological dependency, coupled with the importance of oil revenues and investment to the Ecuadorian economy, gave Texaco enormous bargaining power in its relations with the Ecuadorian state.<sup>6, 7</sup> Consequently, Texaco served not only as a private operator in the energy industry in Ecuador, but also as a crucial policy advisor and to some extent, a mentor to the Ecuadorian environmental regulatory agency. Taking this advantage, Texaco continued to pressure the Ecuadorian state to formulate laws and contracts to accommodate their interests.<sup>8</sup>

### *Environmental Policy in Ecuador during Texaco's Operations*

- 9 Gerhard Drekonja, *Ecuador: How to Handle the Banana Republic Turned Oil State*, (N.p.: Centro de Estudios Y Documentación Latinoamericanos, 1980).

Before Texaco first entered the Ecuadorian market and established its extraction site in Lago Agrio, Ecuador had been a "banana republic" in the most literal sense: the main pillar of its economy was agriculture, which chiefly relied on the production and export of bananas, coffee, cocoa, and sugar.<sup>9</sup> Therefore, the nation had almost no tradition or awareness of environmental protection when oil-intensive industrialization began in the 1960s and

- 10 Kimerling “Indigenous Peoples,” 435.
- 11 *Ibid.*, 441. “We thought oil would generate a lot of money, and that development would benefit the country. But we did not have technical know-how, and no one told us that oil was bad [for the environment]” (Interview with General René Vargas Pazzos)
- 12 *Ibid.*, 436.
- 13 In Texaco’s business contract with the Ecuadorian state, the corporation was required to “adopt suitable measures to protect the flora, fauna, and other natural resources and to prevent contamination of water, air and soil under the control of pertinent organs of the state” (*Decreto Supremo No. 925*, from General Guillermo Rodríguez Lara, President of Ecuador, Aug. 16, 1973); *Ley de Aguas* [Law of Waters], *Decreto Supremo No. 369*
- 14 Suzana Sawyer, *Crude Chronicles: Indigenous Politics, Multinational Oil, and Neoliberalism in Ecuador*, Durham, (NC: Duke University Press Books, 2004), 116.

- 15 Kimerling, “Indigenous Peoples,” 450.
- 16 *Ibid.*, 449.
- 17 U.S. Department of Energy, *A White Paper Describing Produced Water from Production of Crude Oil, Natural Gas, and Coal Bed Methane, Doc.* (2004), 1.
- 18 *Ibid.*, 11.

1970s. The general public was further distracted from environmental awareness by the fear of not being able to discover new oil reserves and thereby losing the momentum of economic growth.<sup>10</sup>

Due to this lack of experience and Texaco’s political influence, the Ecuadorian state placed trust on Texaco not only to operate in the Amazonian regions, but also to serve as an advisor to the government on formulating environmental regulations. Texaco’s role as the advisor to oil policy-making is further confirmed by a series of testimonies by government and corporate officials from the Ecuadorian state and Texaco. According to General René Vargas Pazzos, who was a key policymaker when the oil rush began, the government did not question Texaco about environmental standards because government regulators were not aware of the potential damages of the company’s operations.<sup>11</sup>

Thus, taking advantage of its special role, Texaco set its own environmental standards, and policed itself.<sup>12</sup> Although Ecuador had broadly-defined environmental laws and Texaco’s contract with the state reflected those regulations, there was little enforcement (*Decreto Supremo*, 1973; *Ley de Aguas* [Law of Waters], *Decreto Supremo No. 369*).<sup>13</sup> Therefore, as foreign oil companies entered the Ecuadorian market, the state was “being redefined such that it increasingly assumed the role of an administrative and calculating organ that facilitated the workings of transnational capitalism.”<sup>14</sup> This regulatory vacuum was Texaco’s “Ring of Gyges,” with which the oil multinational operated with impunity in its pursuit of profits, a pursuit that has cost lives of indigenous peoples and caused destruction of the ecological system in the Lago Agrio region.

#### *Texaco’s Environmentally Irresponsible Operations and their Effects*

According to official data, during its tenure as operator, Texaco drilled 339 wells and built 18 central production stations. Its operations covered more than a million acres in Ecuador’s northern Amazon, primarily in the provinces of Orellana and Sucumbíos.<sup>15</sup> Taking advantage of the weak environmental regulation in Ecuador, Texaco deliberately dumped enormous amount of toxic drilling and maintenance wastes and an estimated 19.3 billion gallons of oil field brine into the water system of Lago Agrio without treatment or monitoring.<sup>16</sup>

Among other toxic wastes, the chief source of pollution was Texaco’s emission of oil field brine, which is also known as produced water. Produced water refers to the combination of two types of liquids: 1) the formation water (a layer of natural water) that lies under the hydrocarbons in oil and gas reservoirs; 2) the water injected into the ground to force the oil to the surface.<sup>17</sup> Produced water may also contain benzene and polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs), heavy metals, and levels of salts that are toxic to plant and animal life.<sup>18</sup>

- 19 Kimerling, *Amazon Crude*, 65, 69, 144.
- 20 The EPA “no discharge standard” dictates that it is “unlawful to discharge any pollutant from a point source into navigable waters, unless a permit was obtained” <[www.epa.gov/regulations/laws/cwa.html](http://www.epa.gov/regulations/laws/cwa.html)>.



The discharge pipes.

The high salt content also makes it difficult to treat produced water on earth surface to significantly reduce or eliminate toxicity.<sup>19</sup> Hence, due to the acute toxicity and chronic environmental effect of produced water, U.S. regulatory agencies require companies to re-inject it back underground after the extraction operation. The discharge of produced water and other wastes into fresh waters has been generally prohibited by federal law since 1979 (Clean Water Act, United States Environmental Protection Agency).<sup>20</sup>

In spite of Texaco’s knowledge of the toxicity of produced water and its promise to the Ecuadorian state to use the best technology to avoid contamination, the company discharged almost all of the produced water into the environment via unlined, open waste ponds known as production pits.<sup>21</sup> Indigenous peoples experienced an increase in cancer rates (including cancer in mouth, stomach, and uterine) and the court-appointed expert estimated that Texaco’s operations have caused at least 1,400 cancer cases.<sup>22</sup> In addition to the harmful effect on human health, Texaco’s operations also severely disturbed the local ecological system, killing several types of fish that used to inhabit rivers and streams in the Lago Agrio region. This ecological disturbance in turn destroyed the economic mode of living of the indigenous peoples who had depended on fishing for food and trade.<sup>23</sup>

#### *The “Ring of Gyges” Dilemma for Texaco*

In the vacuum of strong environmental regulation, Texaco could have chosen a more environmentally responsible extraction strategy, with impaired economic profit but simultaneously less environmental harm to the Amazonian indigenous peoples and the surrounding ecological system. But was Texaco morally obligated to do so? Some advocates of CSR (Corporate Social Responsibility) would argue that corporations are morally bound to take into account environmental factors in their decision-making because CSR will bring them both good reputation and profits. One prevailing argument in this school of thought is articulated by Benjamin Heineman, the former General Consul of General Electric. Heineman combines “doing good” and “doing well” by arguing that high integrity in a corporation will bring high performance to the corporation in the long run, if not immediately.<sup>24</sup> Essentially Heineman’s justification of CSR

- 21 Steven Donziger, “Oil in the Jungle: A Talk with Steven Donziger,” Lecture, Yale Environmental Law Association, New Haven, CT, February 14, 2013. See *image above*.
- 22 Amazon Watch [NGO], accessed May 2, 2013, <[amazonwatch.org/work/chevron](http://amazonwatch.org/work/chevron)>.
- 23 Ibid.



- 24 Benjamin W. Heineman, Jr., *High Performance with High Integrity (Memo to the CEO)*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard Business Review Press, 2008.
- 25 Benjamin W. Heineman, Jr., "Ethics and Multinational Firms." Lecture, Yale University, New Haven, CT, February 29, 2013.
- 26 Milton Friedman, "The Social Responsibility of Business is to Increase its Profits," *New York Times Magazine*, September 13, 1970.
- 27 Milton Friedman, *Capitalism and Freedom*, (Chicago, IL: University Of Chicago Press, 1962), 133.
- 28 Milton Friedman, "The Social Responsibility of Business," 1970.

is based on a "prudential" basis, namely, the idea that a corporation should do good because doing so will help with the corporation's performance at least in the long run.<sup>25</sup>

This view, however, does not provide a strictly normative reason why corporations should protect the environment. In other words, if we apply Heineman's argument to the case of Texaco in Ecuador, his argument seems to be incapable of persuading the corporation to protect the environment in the first place. As we have demonstrated before, Texaco tried to save costs and maximize profits by discharging produced water into rivers without any treatment. Clearly, the company's low integrity has brought enormous profits — high performance — in the short run. Now according to Heineman's argument, in the long run Texaco's illicit practices would jeopardize its performance. Nonetheless, Texaco can — and did — use its political influence in the Ecuadorian politics to avoid the disclosure of its scheme and thus evaded punishment during its tenure as operator. Furthermore, the company may not care about long-term results. In developing countries like Ecuador where coup d'états have happened quite often, it is reasonable for multinational corporations to plan on reaping short-term benefits and leaving the country before the next political upheaval takes place. Therefore, lacking universal and normative binding power, Heineman's argument may not be sufficient to either morally criticize Texaco's actions or persuade corporations to make environmentally responsible decisions.

On the other end of the spectrum is Milton Friedman's doctrine of free market, which states that a corporation's only social responsibility is to "use its resources and engage in activities designed to increase its profits so long as it stays within the rules of the game, which is to say, engages in open and free competition without deception or fraud."<sup>26</sup> According to Friedman, CSR in the traditional sense shows "a fundamental misconception of the character and nature of a free economy."<sup>27</sup> In Friedman's perspective, CSR restricts people's economic freedom, which is essential to political freedom. If corporations take on any social responsibility other than profit maximization within the rules of the game, the corporations are imposing a tax on their owners and in turn using this tax to provide for public goods. This creates a situation similar to "taxation without representation" and betrays the spirit of checks and balances of the American political system. Essentially, the fact that corporate agents use their principles' (the owners') resources to provide for public good jeopardizes the foundation of the freedom and liberty of Western society because CSR in ordinary sense is imposing political mechanism — rather than market mechanism — to the allocation of scarce resources in the economic system.<sup>28</sup> Hence, corporate leaders who incorporate CSR in decision-making might lead Western society toward socialism.

29 Muel Kaptein, and Johan Wempe, "The Corporation as Social Contract," Social Science Research Network, Accessed April 27, 2013, 6, <papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract\_id=1940396>.

30 Ibid.

However, the free market model that Friedman advocates might fail to provide a normative standard to resolve the "Ring of Gyges" dilemma (the conflict between morality and self-interest). As Kaptein and Wempe argue, if society does not impose any moral obligation on corporations other than profit maximization, the free market model could not help corporate leaders find a socially desired optimum because of its various imperfections.<sup>29</sup> For example, in a perfectly competitive market, the participants' inclination to ignore negative externalities and to pass the costs to the community is partially the cause of the environmental pollution in Ecuador.<sup>30</sup> Therefore, Friedman's free market model may fail to provide a normative basis to resolve the ethical question in Texaco's case.

## The Corporate Social Contract: The Invisible Contract that Binds

31 Thomas Donaldson, *Corporations & Morality*, (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1982), 36.

Among the theories that attempt to establish a normative basis for corporate social responsibility, the corporate social contract proposed by Thomas Donaldson and a few other scholars appears to be especially relevant in addressing the "Ring of Gyges" dilemma in Texaco's case. In political philosophy, the social contract is used to justify the creation of civil government by individuals in the state of nature. Though this contract has binding moral power, it is not a physical contract; rather, it is a thought experiment designed to explain the reciprocal rights and obligations between the people and the civil state.<sup>31</sup> Borrowing the concept and methodology from the political social contract, scholars of corporate social contract endeavor to create a normative theory that requires corporations to fulfill a set of duties to civil society, among which environmental protection stands out as one of the chief corporate moral obligations. With this powerful analytical tool in hand, this paper seeks to raise a normative criticism against Texaco's operations through constructing a corporate social contract between Texaco and the individuals who have been affected by the firm's actions. Before we delve into the corporate social contract, it is helpful to first examine its origin — the political social contract in historical perspective.

### *Intellectual History of the Political Social Contract*

Ever since its debut in the early Enlightenment era, the political social contract has evolved and generated many variations in the course of Western philosophical tradition. The idea of the political social contract was first proposed by Thomas Hobbes (1588–1679), and later developed by classical theorists such as John Locke (1632–1704) and Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712–1778). Instead of attempting to empirically trace the historical root of the emergence of government, political philosophers construct the social contract model to normatively justify the existence of the civil state and to provide a moral founda-



- 32 Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan*, ed. Edwin Curley, (N.p.: Hackett Publishing Company, 1994), Chapter XIII 6–7.
- 33 *Ibid.*, XIV 1.
- 34 *Ibid.*, XIV 4.
- 35 *Ibid.*, XIII 13.
- 36 John Locke, *Second Treatise of Government*, ed. C. B. Macpherson, (N.p.: Hackett, 1980), Chapter II, 6.
- 37 *Ibid.*, VII 87,88.
- 38 Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *The Basic Political Writings*, ed. Donald A. Cress, (N.p.: Hackett Publishing, 1987), Chapter XI.
- 39 *Ibid.*
- 40 Donaldson, 40.

tion for politics. Due to the space constraint of this essay, only three principal philosophers' thoughts will be introduced here as the inspiration of the corporate social contract.

Hobbes begins his argument from what he calls “a state of nature,” namely, a world without — and hypothetically prior to — any political institution such as the civil state.<sup>32</sup> In the Hobbesian state of nature, a human being is rational and self-interested.<sup>33</sup> Thus, Hobbes concludes that the essence of the state of nature is a state of war, namely, continuous struggles among individual human beings to preserve his own interests.<sup>34</sup> Consequently, no moral standard is valid and nothing can be unjust in this everlasting struggle of survival.<sup>35</sup> According to Hobbes, in order to bring peace and security, individuals must give up some of their natural rights and enter a contract with each other. The civil state — the result of this social contract — is governed by the sovereign, who enters a second social contract with citizens. In the second contract, citizens must obey the benevolent, monarchical sovereign in exchange for protection and peace.

John Locke inherited the methodology of the political social contract from Hobbes. However, different the Hobbesian state of war, the Lockean state of nature is not as violent and unpredictable as the state of war. The Lockean state is governed by a law of nature obliging individuals not to “harm another in his life, health, liberty, or possessions.”<sup>36</sup> But in this primitive state there is no common law-enforcing authority to make sure the law of nature is executed. Hence a social contract arises to accommodate this social demand for law and order. In entering this contract each individual must give up his or her own power to judge offences so as to empower a commonwealth with legislative, judicial, and executive powers.<sup>37</sup>

Jean-Jacques Rousseau has a different conception of the social contract than that of either Hobbes or Locke. According to Rousseau, the social contract arises when every individual gives up all his rights to form a common authority called the “general will.”<sup>38</sup> Thus, “in giving himself to all, each person gives himself to no one.”<sup>39</sup> This way, argues Donaldson, Rousseau achieves his special aim to align the interest of the state with the desires and well being of the people of that state.<sup>40</sup>

#### *Methodology of Constructing the Corporate Social Contract*

Having explored the philosophical origin of the corporate social contract, we now introduce the methodology of constructing this contract between Texaco and civil society. First we need to consider possible contractual models we can use for our purpose. As summarized by Kaptein and Wempe, two approaches of constructing the social contract have been used in political philosophy.<sup>41</sup> The first approach to the political social contract is to directly analyze the contract between government and citizens without examining the creation of the civil state (in

- 41 Kaptein and Wempe, 5.

- 42 Locke, IX 124.
- 43 Kaptein and Wempe, 8.
- 44 Donaldson, 40.

other words, assuming the existence of the government). In this contract, government and citizens are the two parties bound by the contract with reciprocal rights and obligations. For example, in Locke’s writings, he lists “the preservation of property” of the citizens as primary obligation of the civil government to the people.<sup>42</sup>

Secondly, some philosophers conceive the emergence of the civil state as the result of the social contract formed among individual human beings in the state of nature (hypothetically prior to the establishment of civil government).<sup>43, 44</sup> In this state, lacking security of life and property, people decide to give up some of their natural rights to empower a common authority to enforce order. In other words, the common authority, namely, the civil state, is the equilibrium outcome of the non-cooperative and independent bargaining among individual human beings. In this approach, individual human beings are the parties of the social contract and the establishment of the government is the crystallization of this implicit contract.

In order to morally evaluate Texaco’s operations, we need to start from the first contractual model, namely, the social contract between corporations and civil society. We first need to clarify society’s obligations to corporations as productive organizations. These obligations comprise of recognition by the law as single legal person and the right to utilize natural resources and hire employees. On the other hand, corporations’ obligations to civil society are often very ambiguous and are the heated battlefield for CSR scholars. Here we make use of the second contractual model to construct a micro social contract that justifies the existence of the corporation as a productive organization. Intuitively, rational and self-interested individuals will only enter a contract if the benefits of doing so outweigh the costs. Hence, individuals in civil society will demand the maximization of a set of benefits and the minimization of costs as the primary conditions for them to enter the micro social contract and to authorize the existence of a corporation as a productive organization. These two goals — maximizing benefits (such as efficiency) and minimizing costs (such as pollution) — comprise of a corporation’s moral obligations to civil society. Finally, we apply the complete corporate social contract to between corporations and civil society to ethically evaluate the Texaco’s actions in Lago Agrio and argue that the multinational should be morally criticized because it has violated four clauses in the abstract, invisible contract.

#### *The Parties of the Corporate Social Contract*

Before we specify terms of the corporate social contract, it is crucial to delimit the parties of this contract. We use the term “civil society” to describe one party of the contract in previous sections. Civil society may carry different connotations: it could refer to Rousseau’s superhuman “general will” or to every

45 Ibid., 42.

46 Ibid.

individual in society. For the purpose of this paper, we use the latter as the definition of civil society.<sup>45</sup>

Then we need to define what we mean by the term “corporation.” As Donaldson points out, the more precise definition in the discussion of corporate social responsibility conceives the corporation as “productive organization, one where people cooperate to produce at least one specific product or service.”<sup>46</sup> In Texaco’s case, the company is conceived as a productive organization that produces multiple goods and services, one of which is the extraction crude oil from the Lago Agrio region.

#### *Civil Society’s Obligations to Texaco as a Productive Organization*

47 Ibid.

48 Ibid., 43.

49 Chief Justice Marshall, *Dartmouth College v. Woodward*, 4 Wheat 518.636 1819.

50 Donaldson, 3.

51 Ibid., 5.

52 Ibid.

53 Richard Ells, and Clarence Walton, *Conceptual Foundations of Business*, (N.p.: R.D. Irwin Inc., 1974).

54 Donaldson, 5.

Now that we have clarified the parties of the corporate social contract, we can proceed to specify terms of the contract. The contract follows the basic form “if civil society agrees to do X, then the corporation agrees to do Y.”<sup>47</sup>

As Donaldson claims, society has two chief obligations to corporations: 1) society authorizes corporations to hire employees and use natural resources; 2) society provides the legal framework in which corporation can exist and operate as a single agent.<sup>48</sup> While the first obligation may seem *prima facie*, society’s second obligation to corporations needs more justification and elaboration.

Texaco as a productive organization can only exist and function because society provides the legal framework for it to do so. As Chief Justice Marshall argues, “a corporation is an artificial being, invisible, intangible, and existing only in the contemplation of law. Being the mere creation of law, it possesses only those properties which the charter of its creation confers upon it, either expressly, or as incidental to its very existence.”<sup>49</sup> According to Marshall, the law authorizes corporations to exist as legal persons with many of the rights and obligations that natural persons possess under the law. Like the political institutions in Hobbes’ *Leviathan*, corporations are created in the image of their creators, namely, natural persons: companies must pay taxes, can sign legal contracts, etc.<sup>50</sup>

Some people may object to this view by citing the freedom of assembly and association guaranteed by the *Bill of Rights*.<sup>51</sup> In their perspective, corporations are not created by public act, but are merely natural products of people’s exercising their right of association.<sup>52, 53</sup> These critics are right about the fact that social organizations in general are concrete expression of people’s freedom of assembly and association. However, as clarified in the previous section, corporations are not merely organizations; instead, they are productive organizations that produce goods and services. In order to fulfill its mission of producing these goods and services, a corporation needs to be recognized by the law as a single agent to sign contract and to possess the right to be protected by the law in tort cases.<sup>54</sup>

Therefore, it is legitimate to assert that corporations owe their legal existence to civil society. Together with material support (natural resources), the legal justification of corporations' existence is what society provides as one party in the corporate social contract.

#### *Texaco's Obligations to Civil Society*

55 Ibid., 45.

Although it is not difficult to define society's obligations to Texaco, the company's duties to society are relatively ambiguous and have been the focus of debate in CSR. Many arguments to support corporate obligations to society resemble subjective, personal value judgments rather than universally applicable standards. A potential route to provide a normative basis for corporations' social obligations is through the second contractual model we mentioned before. This model first imagines a state without a certain institution and then justifies its existence by examining the benefits and costs of establishing it. To be more concrete, this model hypothesizes a society with neither the collective mode of production nor any productive organizations. Donaldson calls this state "a state of individual production," in which people produce goods and services alone. In this state, there would be no banks, no post offices, no multinational corporations such as Texaco, etc.<sup>55</sup> We then use the net benefits that the introduction of a productive organization will bring to individual producers to justify the creation of corporations. Analogous to the political social contract here, we hence use reasons that justify the existence of corporations as the normative basis for corporations' obligations to civil society.

#### *An Instrumental Device: the Micro Social Contract to Justify Corporation's Existence*

56 Ibid., 44.

57 Ibid., 43-44.

In the state of individual production analogous to the "state of nature," individuals are rational and self-interested, but not as violent as depicted by Hobbes, nor as primitive and pure as depicted by Rousseau. Given the existence of the civil state to ensure the preservation of one's own life and property under the law, an individual pursues a purely economic interest. These economically driven individuals, as Donaldson portrays, "have not yet organized themselves, or been organized, into productive organizations."<sup>56</sup>

Presumably, rational and self-interested individuals will only enter an economic contract when the marginal benefits from creating productive organizations outweigh the costs of creating them.<sup>57</sup> We then need to analyze and compare the specific benefits and costs that the introduction of productive organizations will bring to individual producers. Generally speaking, on one hand, the emergence of corporations will bring about economies of scale and lower production and technology costs. On the other hand, when individual producers form productive organizations, they have to sacrifice the independence and con-

- 58 R. H. Coase, "The Nature of the Firm," *Economica* 4, no. 16 (November 1937): 386–405. accessed May 1, 2013, <[www.jstor.org/betasearch](http://www.jstor.org/betasearch)>.
- 59 Donaldson, 45.

control they enjoy in the state of individual production and follow the command of the conscious central organizer of the corporation, namely, the manager.<sup>58</sup>

In order to conduct the cost-benefit analyses in more detail, it is crucial to divide people in the state of individual production into two groups. The first group is the consumer, who, according to Donaldson, is "economically interested" in the emergence of corporations.<sup>59</sup> This broad definition of consumer includes not only the people who purchase goods manufactured by corporations, but also those who are affected by the production process in an indirect manner (the community whose environment deteriorates due to industrial waste). Thus, the indigenous peoples whose living environment was disturbed by Texaco's intrusion belong to this category. The second category is the employee, which refers to anyone who works in corporations. It is important to note that these two categories are not mutually exclusive.

#### *Benefits and Costs on Consumers*

- 60 Donaldson, 46–48.
- 61 Adam Smith, *The Wealth of Nations*, (N.p.: Simon & Brown, 2012), Book I, Chapter I, 1.
- 62 Donaldson, 47.

Consumers will choose to establish productive organizations when the benefits of doing so outweigh the costs. In other words, economically driven, rational individuals will hope to enhance their economic interests through entering this social contract. Based on Donaldson's reasoning, these benefits could include: improving efficiency through division of labor, economies of scale, and enhanced decision-making mechanism; stabilizing level of output and system of distribution.<sup>60</sup>

The first advantage of establishing a productive organization like Texaco is enhancing efficiency through specialization and economies of scale. As the size of the firm becomes larger, a specialized cooperative system in which each worker is in charge of one aspect of production is more efficient than the system in which one worker is in charge of all aspects of production and produces alone.<sup>61</sup> In Texaco's case, the division of labor within the oil multinational enables each worker to concentrate on one specific aspect of production. This way, an average worker will sharpen his skill in certain aspect and make fewer mistakes in production, thereby lowering the cost of production. The drop in cost of production will in turn cause a decrease in price for consumers.

A second, related advantage of productive organizations is the enhanced decision-making mechanism. A corporation like Texaco typically has decision-making mechanisms such as the board of directors, thereby reducing the risk of making unsound decisions. In addition, corporations tend to have superhuman longevity as well as superhuman institutional memory.<sup>62</sup> Thus, a corporation like Texaco can avoid making the same mistakes by referring to memos in its database. The enhanced decision-making mechanism will ultimately benefit the consumers because they will enjoy goods of better quality and experience

- 63 Kimerling, "Indigenous Peoples," 427–28.
- 64 Donaldson, 51.
- 65 Ibid.
- 66 James Madison, John Jay, and Alexander Hamilton, *The Essential Federalist and Anti-Federalist Papers*, ed. David Wootton, (N.p.: Hackett, 2003).

fewer industrial disasters caused by mistakes of the corporate leadership.

In addition to enhancing efficiency, the introduction of productive organization will also improve consumer welfare with stabilized level of output and channels of distribution. For example, when Texaco came in Ecuador in the 1960s, the first project they conducted was not oil extraction, but the establishment of infrastructure such as roads and pipelines to transport crude oil to the Pacific coast of Ecuador.<sup>63</sup> The construction of pipelines as well as extraction sites made possible the stable extraction and export of crude oil, which was distributed efficiently through the transportation network built by Texaco. This level of efficiency and stability could not have been achieved had Texaco — a multinational productive organization — not established a presence in Ecuador.

Having discussed the consumer benefits, we also need to consider the costs of establishing a productive organization like Texaco on its consumers. Increase in scale of production and centralization of factors of production lead to larger amount of pollution.<sup>64</sup> Though consumers may enjoy the benefits of establishing a productive organization in their community, they must be acutely aware of the potential environmental consequences that this sharp increase in scale and amount of production could cause. In the state of individual production, though individual producers may still cause pollution, but since they lack the technology and resources to build a complicated discharging system as that built by Texaco, the environmental externality caused by individual production is rather insignificant compared to that caused by the oil multinational.

The centralization of factors of production in a productive organization also creates a higher risk of abuse of the political power that the corporation possesses as a socio-economic Leviathan.<sup>65</sup> Corporations such as Texaco typically possess enormous political influence resulting from their economic power. As the authors of the *Federalist Papers* comment, men are not angels.<sup>66</sup> If there is a risk of abuse of government power, then it is reasonable to expect a similar risk of abuse of corporate political power because in many aspects gigantic corporations are similar to the political institutions described in the *Leviathan* (enormous control over the market, ability to lobby and influence policy-making, etc.).

#### *Benefits and Costs on Employees*

Establishing productive organizations also generates benefits to the employees such as increasing income potential and securing fixed income regardless of the fluctuation of the market.<sup>67</sup> Firstly, as discussed before, in a corporation such as Texaco, workers form a specialized and cooperative system in productive organizations and thus they can produce more than if they work independently. This increase in production

- 67 Donaldson, 48.

normally leads to higher revenues for corporations as well as higher income for workers. In addition, in productive organizations employees typically receive fixed income. For example, even if the global oil market is at the nadir of the business cycle, as long as Texaco continues to exist, its workers possess the right to ask for regular wages from the corporation. This can hardly be true in the state of individual production because in that state an individual's income fluctuates according to his or her rate of production and sales. In other words, productive organizations provide a shelter for employees during economic recessions.

While the introduction of productive organizations can bring benefits to employees, it can also incur costs. One potential cost would be the lack of worker control over working conditions. In the state of individual production, a worker can choose the working environment that suits him the best. However, in productive organizations, the central planner — the corporate manager — has the final say over the working conditions. Sometimes, in order to maximize marginal profit, managers would put employees in extremely unhealthy and even dangerous conditions to keep the cost of production low.

#### *Completing the Contract: Specifying Corporate Obligations to Society*

68 Donaldson, 45, 53.

69 Donaldson, 54.

The cost-benefit analyses in the previous two sections indicate the advantages and costs that citizens (consumers and employees) must take into account when they decide whether or not to enter a social contract that requires them to leave the state of individual production for the establishment of productive organizations such as Texaco. These advantages and costs are the reasons why individuals might want to create corporations. Only when benefits outweigh the harms will individuals choose to change status quo (individual production) and organize themselves as corporations. Hence, when rational and self-interested individuals authorize the existence of a productive organization like Texaco, they expect the company to maximize the benefits and minimize harms aforementioned. Analogous to the political social contract, the reason why people allow the company to exist are the moral obligations that civil society imposes on the corporation as a productive organization.<sup>68</sup> The social contract between corporations and civil society not only provides a normative criticism against Texaco's environmentally irresponsible actions, but also serves as a measure to morally evaluate the performance of corporations as productive organizations. If a corporation lowers economic efficiency, accepts political favoritism, or intentionally emits pollution, it has violated its implicit, invisible contract with society. The company must fix its wrongs, or negate the moral foundation of its existence.<sup>69</sup>



### *Texaco's Violations of the Invisible Social Contract*

- 70 Donzinger, "Oil in the Jungle," 2013.
- 71 Hari, Osofsky, "Environmental Human Rights under the Alien Tort Statute: Redress for Indigenous Victims of Multinational Corporations," *Suffolk Transnational Law Review*, no. 2 (1997): 335-97, 338.
- 72 Miguel San Sebastián, and Anna-Karin Hurtig, "Oil Exploitation and Health in the Amazon Basin of Ecuador," accessed May 4, 2013, 7, <[www.ghwatch.org/sites/www.ghwatch.org/files/oil.pdf](http://www.ghwatch.org/sites/www.ghwatch.org/files/oil.pdf)>.

Now that we have completed the corporate social contract between corporations as productive organizations and civil society, we can use this powerful analytical tool to tackle the "Ring of Gyges" ethical dilemma involved in Texaco's case. If the company's actions fail to maximize welfare or cause harms for individuals who are economically and socially affected by these actions, then the corporate social contract dictates that Texaco has violated its obligations to civil society and thus is morally reprehensible. Among the company's other abuses, this paper will focus on Texaco's two main violations in its operations in Lago Agrio region: environmental pollution and abuse of political power.

As mentioned in the first section of this essay, Texaco has not only polluted the water system in the Amazonian forest, but also perpetuated the pollution process by leaving a set of pipelines in the extraction site they sold to Ecuadorian companies to channel produced water into lakes and rivers.<sup>70</sup> Consequently, when scientists surveyed samples from drinking, bathing, and fishing water in Lago Agrio, the toxicity was 10 to 1,000 times greater than the level permitted by the U.S. Environmental Agency domestically.<sup>71</sup> As we discussed in the first section, scientific evidence suggests a strong correlation between the toxic produced water and the increase in cancer and death rates among the indigenous peoples. Texaco's defenders could potentially argue that environmental harm is a necessary evil for economic progress, and as long as the company fulfills the obligation of improving the economic efficiency and income level in Lago Agrio region, the oil multinational's moral blame should be alleviated. This argument is invalid for three reasons. First, provided that there had been significant increase in personal income level for the indigenous peoples, why would they want the extra pesos if they would die from cancer at any time from drinking contaminated water? Second, if other regions in Ecuador prospered from the revenues generated by the oil business, this constitutes an act of organizational violence against the indigenous peoples because the nation is essentially sacrificing lives of the indigenous minorities for economic interest. Third, the economic and social welfare in Ecuador did not improve significantly either on a national level or in the Lago Agrio region. Nationally, Ecuador has the highest per capita debt (around \$1100 per person) in South America; during the oil rush from 1970 to 1990, national unemployment rate has not improved while the percentage of citizens in poverty doubled from 47 percent to 70 percent. Locally, the Amazon region has the most underdeveloped public facilities and the lowest economic and health indexes of the country.<sup>72</sup> Therefore, Texaco's operations that caused pollution can in no way be justified and is a violation of the corporate social contract.



- 73 Rose-Ackerman, Susan, "‘Grand’ Corruption and the Ethics of Global Business," *Journal of Banking & Finance*, no. 26 (2002): 1889–918.

Texaco’s second violation of the corporate social contract is its abuse of the corporation’s political power to pursue profits through unethical means. As we established in the first section of this paper, Texaco possessed enormous bargaining power over the Ecuadorian state due to the company’s technological and financial powers. The corporation’s use of its political sway to evade environmental regulation for a long span of time violates the moral obligation of a corporation to civil society. As Professor Rose-Ackerman suggests in her paper on corruption, since the corporation’s commercial operations were only made possible by the legal and political systems of Ecuador, Texaco should not jeopardize these systems by political manipulation, but rather should fulfill its obligation to society and help maintain the authority and legitimacy of political and legal systems.<sup>73</sup>

The analyses of Texaco’s two violations by the corporate social contract has proven that the invisible contract could be a promising route to resolve the “Ring of Gyges” dilemma. According to the reciprocal obligations between civil society and corporations as productive organizations, even in the vacuum of strong environmental regulation in their host countries, multinational corporations still have a binding moral obligation to use the best technology possible to minimize the environmental harms their production might cause. This proposition is enlightening and instrumental not only in criticizing and evaluating a corporation’s actions, but also in providing normative guidance to corporate leaders when they face the “Ring of Gyges” dilemma in environmental decision-making.

## Possible Refutation from Texaco and Author’s Response

- 74 Peter A. French, “The Corporation as a Moral Person,” *American Philosophical Quarterly* 16, no. 3 (July 1979): 207–15.
- 75 R. E. Ewin, “The Moral Status of the Corporation,” *Journal of Business Ethics* 10, no. 10 (October 1991): 749–56, 749.

### *Criticism on Corporation’s Moral Status*

Hypothetically defenders of Texaco could attempt to invalidate the corporate social contract argument by questioning the moral status of corporations. They could argue that since only natural persons have moral obligations in traditional ethics and corporations are not natural, but artificial persons, hence corporations are not proper moral agents. Consequently, no abstract or moral contract can even exist between corporations and civil society. Therefore, corporations are amoral and lie beyond the jurisdiction of ethical standards.

This possible refutation, however, can only invalidate Peter A. French’s argument that “corporations can be full-fledged moral persons and have whatever privileges, rights and duties as are, in the normal course of affairs, accorded to moral persons.”<sup>74</sup> As R. E. Ewin argues, corporations are incapable of exhibiting any virtue or vice.<sup>75</sup> According to Ewin, virtue is “a matter of caring about certain sorts of things.” In other words, since corporations have no emotional life as the people who manage them do, they lack the emotional feeling that drives a

76 *Ibid.*, 751.

77 *Ibid.*, 755.

78 Donaldson, 30.

virtuous individual human being to care decisions and deeds.<sup>76</sup> For example, motivation is an indispensable part of a virtuous deed. If I donate \$1,000,000 to the orphans in Beijing out of sympathy, I can claim my action to be virtuous and kind because I am motivated by my emotional feeling toward the orphans. However, when a corporation donates the same amount of money to establish a foundation, since it can neither care nor feel sympathy, we can't claim that the corporation possesses a virtuous emotional motivation. Therefore, the hypothetical refutation by Texaco is valid insofar as it denies corporations the emotional basis for morality.

Nonetheless, this refutation does not invalidate the corporation's identity as a Kantian moral agent with duties and rights, thereby failing to undermine the corporate social contract theory. From Ewin's analysis, we conclude that corporations are incapable of exhibiting virtues. However, the lack of virtue or vice does not mean that the corporation does not have to fulfill its obligations or claim its rights. For example, as long as the corporation can repay its debt — even “with bad grace or only under the threat of legal penalty” — the corporation fulfills its obligation as a moral agent.<sup>77</sup> Therefore, for the purpose of constructing a moral social contract between civil society and corporations, it suffices to define corporations' moral status in the Kantian perspective. This Kantian moral personality will enable corporations to enter contracts as moral agents taking into account rights and obligations in their decision-making process.<sup>78</sup>

## Conclusion

Ever since media and NGO groups disclosed the pollution scandal more than twenty years ago, Texaco and its current parent company Chevron have received criticisms and allegations from various perspectives. This paper attempts to contribute to this endeavor by providing a moral criticism against Texaco's environmentally irresponsible operations. Different from Heineman's mainstream “high-integrity-high-performance” argument, this paper seeks to build the ethical standards through corporate social contract theory. The paper attempts to propose a normative solution to tackle a practical problem in corporate management.

Due to the time and space constraint, this paper has only constructed a relatively primitive version of the corporate social contract. Although this version of the corporate social contract succeeds in providing a normative criticism against Texaco's actions and in offering an ethical solution to the “Ring of Gyges” dilemma, there are still various limitations on the argument presented in this paper. First, this paper only considers corporations' moral obligations to civil society insofar as corporations are treated as productive organizations. But clearly corporations are multifaceted socio-economic entities

that possess more identities than just productive organizations. Hence more research needs to be conducted in order to provide a more comprehensive understanding of corporations' moral obligations to society. Secondly, the social contract model in this paper does not take into the role of cultural difference in determining business ethics. Since the social contract theory traces its origin in Western political thought, would it be possible that this methodology is only applicable in societies that embrace Western values? Or does this methodology capture a set of universally applicable principles that can find audience anywhere around the globe? Again, more research needs to be done in order to address these issues. Lastly, more elaboration is needed to evaluate whether all the terms and obligations in the corporate social contract are of the same moral weight. This is especially important in cases in which several obligations conflict with each other.

On the other side of the coin, these limitations reflect the argument's potential for further development. As the Henry Ford II quotation in the beginning of this essay asserts, our society demands a more socially responsible corporate world. The corporate social contract theory examined in this paper represents a promising route to provide normative support for this movement of ethical corporate decision-making. If adopted properly, this theory not only makes for a respectable corporate public image but also an upright corporate essence.

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# Sinking Their Claws into the Arctic: Prospects for Sino-Russian Relations in the World's Newest Frontier

TaoTao Holmes

## Introduction: Dragons and Icebergs and Bears, Oh My!

- 1 Hannes Gerhardt, Philip E. Steinberg, Jeremy Tasch, Sandra J. Fabiano, and Rob Shields. "Contested Sovereignty in a Changing Arctic." *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, 100:4 (2010): 998.
- 2 "National Strategy for the Arctic Region," *Whitehouse.gov*, The White House, May 2013, Accessed Nov. 22 2013, 1.
- 3 Ariel Cohen, Alexandr Golts, Marlène Laruelle, and Katarzyna Zysk, "Russia in the Arctic," Ed. Stephen Blank, *Strategic Studies Institute*, U.S. Army War College, July 2011. Nov. 20, 2013, 93.
- 4 Philip Stephens, "The Grab for Greenland," *Financial Times*, Dec. 6, 2013. Accessed Dec. 9, 2013.
- 5 David Curtis Wright, *The Dragon Eyes the Top of the World: Arctic Policy Debate and Discussion in China*. (Newport, RI: China Maritime Studies Institute, U.S. Naval War College, 2011), 6.
- 6 "1 Oct. 2013: Russia's Strategy for Developing the Arctic Region Until 2020," *Sipri.org*, Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, Oct. 2013, Accessed Nov. 28 2013.
- 7 Kristofer Bergh, "July/Aug 11: Arctic Cooperation Must Become More Inclusive," *Sipri.org*, Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, Aug. 2011, Accessed Nov. 27, 2013.
- 8 *Ibid.*

The Arctic is not only the Arctic Ocean... It is the place where the Eurasian, North American, and Asian Pacific regions meet, where the frontiers come close to one another and the interests of the states... cross.<sup>1</sup>

—Mikhail Gorbachev

The shortest distance between the continents of Asia, Europe, and North America is over the Arctic Ocean, which is warming at a rate twice as fast as the rest of the earth. As the Arctic warms, ice melts, and fresh opportunities arise: newly accessible natural resources, shorter maritime transport routes, and shifting strategic partnerships. These new developments could be just the lucky break that Russia has been waiting for — a crown of oil, gas, and strategic riches that will raise the faltering state back to its rightful position as a global superpower. But a rising China is paying close attention to the Arctic, too, with its economy demanding more and more resources and its global influence growing. Both countries have deep-seated expansionist tendencies, and the Arctic, described by the US as "one of our planet's last great frontiers"<sup>2</sup> holds new sorts of promise.

All great frontiers are accompanied by a scramble; the terms "gold rush"<sup>3</sup> (or "cold rush"<sup>4</sup>) and "dividing up the melon"<sup>5</sup> have, sure enough, wound their way into Arctic discourse. Yet the Arctic, despite Russia and China's growing hopes, remains shrouded in uncertainty — its treasures and dangers unknown, its icebergs uncharted, its territory not yet properly sliced up. Today's "Arctic euphoria"<sup>6</sup> is a product of the last five years of growing international attention. While many media reports portray the Arctic as a modern Wild West, in reality, most of its resources are within uncontested state zones.<sup>7</sup> Even so, the current Arctic governance regime remains in "embryonic form."<sup>8</sup> With remote expanses of the Arctic under no naval surveillance or satellite systems and the logistics of search-and-rescue and icebreaking still very weak, Arctic activity, whether economic or political, comes with plenty of risks. Such risks, heightened by emerging environmental pressures, could spur increased cooperation or stir new tensions as Arctic activity continues to expand. With ice melt unpredictable and the Arctic's profitability dependent upon a complex web of factors, do the risks up north

outweigh the rewards, and does the thinning ice really hold commercial and geopolitical weight?

Both Russia and China appear to think so. Both covet the Arctic's "three resplendent jewels"<sup>9</sup>: resources, sea routes, and strategic significance. They have both begun to build up their Arctic capabilities, one with the intent of securing Arctic dominance, the other seeking to exert outside influence. Interdependence of Russian and Chinese energy and transport interests in the Arctic could be a critical driver for Arctic development and bears the potential to bring about significant changes to their relationship. While nothing is certain, the US should start to pay closer attention.

## What Constitutes "The Arctic," and Why Does It Matter?

10 "Arctic Governance in an Era of Transformative Change: Critical Questions, Governance Principles, Ways Forward," *Arcticgovernance.org*, The Arctic Governance Project, Apr. 14, 2010. Accessed Oct. 23, 2013, 4.

11 William C. Wonders, *The Arctic Circle: Aspects of the North from the Circumpolar Nations*, (Don Mills, Ont.: Longman Canada, 1976), 13–14.

12 Finland, Prime Minister's Office, *Finland's Strategy for the Arctic Region 2013*, N.p.: n.p., 2013, Accessed Oct. 29, 2013.

13 Wright, 21.

14 "Arctic Governance in an Era of Transformative Change: Critical Questions, Governance Principles, Ways Forward," 4.

15 Kingdom of Denmark, *Kingdom of Denmark Strategy for the Arctic 2011–2020*, European Commission, Jan. 1, 2012. Accessed Oct. 25, 2013, 9.

What, precisely, qualifies as "the Arctic"? While a universally accepted definition does not exist,<sup>10</sup> the dictionary defines "arctic" as "of or relating to regions around the North Pole," which, under current international law, belongs to no one. While there is no official southern boundary for the region, the 60°N parallel is a reasonable stand-in measure.<sup>11</sup> The only Arctic strategy published by one of the eight Arctic states to mention this definitional ambiguity is that of Finland, which states that "No single, unambiguous definition exists for the Arctic region. Its boundaries vary according to academic disciplines or political agreements. Similarly, for the purposes of the strategy, the Arctic region is to be understood flexibly in the given context."<sup>12</sup> On the other hand, Chinese Arctic commentator Li Zhenfu has written that, "In actuality, the Arctic is not part of any country,"<sup>13</sup> a statement that is clearly false.

"Who owns the Arctic?" asked an October 2007 cover of *Time* magazine in response to Russia's disputed decision to plant its flag on the ocean floor of the North Pole. Technically speaking, eight states in total claim Arctic status: the United States, Canada, Norway, Russia, Denmark (with Greenland), Iceland, Finland, and Sweden. The first five, as the only Arctic coastal states, comprise the "Arctic Five"; under the United Nations Convention of the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), each is granted an Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) that can extend 200 miles off its Arctic coastline, beyond which lie international waters. Biophysically, socioeconomically, and culturally diverse, the Arctic is home to around four million residents, including 30 different indigenous peoples.<sup>14,15</sup> The main Arctic forum for cooperation is the Arctic Council, founded in 1996 through a Finnish initiative. It has since grown in scope and importance, and has accepted the applications of 12 observer members, including China. However, the power of the Arctic Council is limited. It has no legal authority to bind its members, and its mission has always been restricted to environmental protection and sustainable development. It does not serve



- 16 “The Arctic Council in Transition: Nordic to North American Leadership (SIPRI Workshop),” *Sipri.org*, Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, Nov. 29, 2012, Accessed Nov. 28, 2013.
- 17 Heather Conley, Terry Toland, and Jamie Kraut. “A New Security Architecture for the Arctic: An American Perspective,” *A Report of the CSIS Europe Program* (2012): 31.
- 18 “The Melting North,” *The Economist*, Jun. 16, 2013, Accessed Oct. 24, 2013.
- 19 Wright, 15.
- 20 “1 Oct. 2013: Russia’s Strategy for Developing the Arctic Region Until 2020.”
- 21 Conley, 1.
- 22 “The Melting North.”
- 23 Pilita Clark, “Arctic Sea Ice Melting Faster than Expected, UN Report Finds,” *Financial Times*, Sept. 18, 2013, Accessed Nov. 6, 2013.
- 24 United States Department of Defense, *Report to Congress on Arctic Operations and the Northwest Passage*, 2011, Accessed Oct. 23, 2013.
- 25 Conley, 1.
- 26 Kingdom of Denmark, 24.

within a security framework, and it remains to be seen whether it will assume this role; thus far members have only discussed possible “task forces” and “permanent seminars” to avoid misunderstandings between Arctic states in traditional security issues.<sup>16</sup>

Climate change has brought about formerly unconsidered quandaries forcing Arctic coastal states to begin to rethink and readjust their land and maritime security postures.<sup>17</sup> A recent *Economist* article commented, “the great melt is going to make a lot of people rich.”<sup>18</sup> More forebodingly, Li Zhenfu has remarked, “Whoever has control over the Arctic route will control the new passage of world economics and world strategies.”<sup>19</sup> Less forebodingly, Anton Vasiliev, Russia’s ambassador to the Arctic Council, has stated that the Arctic can be characterized as positive, stable, and predictable, and is becoming “a model for other less stable regions of the world.”<sup>20</sup>

Meanwhile, the Arctic’s current warming trend is surpassing all previously recorded levels. September 2011 marked the lowest volume of sea ice ever recorded in the northern polar region,<sup>21</sup> and climate models predict the Arctic Ocean could be ice-free in summer as late as 2060 or as early as 2014.<sup>22, 23</sup> Ultimately, however, the extent, impact, and rate of climate change are uncertain, unpredictable, and “poorly understood.”<sup>24</sup>

What seems less poorly understood is a set of numbers that make an appearance in every Arctic-related article, the primary pair being 13 and 30: the Arctic promises 13 percent of the world’s undiscovered oil resources and 30 percent of its gas resources.<sup>25</sup> As such, about 97 percent of these resources are believed to exist within the EEZs of the Arctic states.<sup>26</sup> The situation breeds a precarious “Arctic paradox”: rising temperatures caused by burning fossil fuels enable more Arctic hydrocarbons to be extracted and burned, and thus more warming.<sup>27</sup> But much still rests on greedy conjecture. “When you don’t know for sure, you act as if the area is extremely rich,” said Jens Ostreng, Norway’s prime minister. “It is not easy to give up strategic resources.”<sup>28</sup>

## Both Russia and China Stand to Benefit from Engagement in the Arctic

- 27 Lassi Heininen, Alexander Sergunin, and Gleb Yarovoy, “Russia’s Energy Strategies in the Arctic,” *Valdaiclub.com*, Valdai Discussion Club, Jan. 7, 2013, Accessed Nov. 1, 2013.
- 28 Walter Gibbs, “Russia and Norway Reach Accord on Barents Sea,” *The New York Times*, Apr. 27, 2010. Accessed Oct. 25, 2013.

Russia and China share a proclivity for claiming things, and when it comes to the Arctic, their dispositions are no different. Russia, with its undying great power ambitions, wants to claim as much of the Arctic as possible for its own. While the region offers many opportunities for gain, the patriotic desire to expand its frontiers seems to drive Russia’s efforts more than level-headed pragmatism; one could even call such cravings for conquest an “identity-building project.”<sup>29</sup>

Russia has 10,000 miles (the lion’s share) of Arctic coastline, half of the Arctic region’s inhabitants, and a historical presence in the region dating back around 500 years;<sup>30</sup> in other words, if



- 29 Cohen, 63.
- 30 Gerhardt, 996.
- 31 Cohen, 16.
- 32 Linda Jakobson, "Northeast Asia Turns Its Attention to the Arctic." The National Bureau of Asian Research, Dec. 2012, Accessed Nov. 24, 2013, <www.nbr.org/publications/issue.aspx?id=275#.UqiymGRDujI>.
- 33 Wright, 7.
- 34 Ibid., 32.
- 35 Ekaterina Klimenko, "Oct.13: Interdependence, Not Sovereignty, Is the Key to the Development of Russia's Arctic Region," *Sipri.org*, Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, Oct. 13, 2013, Accessed Nov. 15, 2013. I.
- 36 Cohen, 17.
- 37 Cohen, 96.
- 38 Heininen.
- 39 Jakobson, "Northeast Asia Turns Its Attention to the Arctic."
- 40 "The Melting North."
- 41 Linda Jakobson, and Jingchao Peng, "China's Arctic Aspirations," *SIPRI*, Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, Nov. 2012, 7.

the Arctic were to crown a king, the clear choice would be Russia. At the core of Russia's Arctic endeavors is the belief that more Arctic means more size means more influence. At a 2009 address to the Russian Geographical Society, Putin rhapsodized, "When we say great, a great country, a great state—certainly, size matters... When there is no size there is no influence, no meaning."<sup>31</sup>

China, though a non-Arctic state, sees its participation in the economy and governance of the Arctic as a given based on its position as a rising global power.<sup>32</sup> This mindset is reflected in a Chinese admiral's 2010 statement that since China has 20 percent of the world's population, it should have 20 percent of the Arctic's resources.<sup>33</sup> In addition, Chinese leaders raise the point that changes in the Arctic climate pose direct threats to China's domestic food production and weather, a factor that grants China an important say in Arctic discussion. For now, China is taking concrete diplomatic steps to ensure it becomes a player in the Arctic game and can eventually secure what it regards as its fair share of the Arctic treasure trove.<sup>34</sup> Chinese analysts have started to circulate the terms "near-Arctic state" and "Arctic stakeholder" to describe China's emerging role in the North.

Beyond the egoistic rhetoric, Russia and China both have serious economic and strategic interests in the High North. Russia's 2008 Arctic policy aims to make the region "Russia's national resource base of the 21st century"<sup>35</sup> and to make Russia a leading Arctic power by 2020. The Arctic is seen as crucially important for Russia's future wealth and global competitiveness, a zone "capable of fulfilling the socio-economic tasks associated with national growth."<sup>36</sup> Russia's central Arctic interests are composed of security, resources, and transportation infrastructure. To a struggling state whose economy depends almost entirely on oil and gas, the resource-rich Arctic is like manna from heaven: 80 percent of known Russian gas reserves and 90 percent of Russian hydrocarbon deposits are situated in the region,<sup>37</sup> while 60 percent of total Arctic oil exists in areas that belong to or are claimed by the Kremlin (equaling 375 billion barrels of oil—more than Saudi Arabia's oil reserves and Qatar's gas reserves combined<sup>38</sup>). Though Arctic infrastructure is still weak, Russia has already started making moves. In 2009, Russia's Rosneft announced plans to apply for operating licenses for the development of 30 offshore sites on its Arctic continental shelf,<sup>39</sup> and in April 2013, the company finalized a deal with ExxonMobil to invest up to \$500 billion in developing offshore reserves.<sup>40</sup>

China, while lacking Russia's Arctic proximity, has much to gain as well. Its key economic interests lie in securing access to Arctic shipping routes as well as Arctic resources and fishing waters. At the moment, China seems focused on the potential profits of the Northern Sea Route (NSR). This alternate shipping route to Europe shaves 6,100 nautical miles off of the current passage via the Suez Canal, which could save a week's sailing time and around \$600,000 per passage.<sup>41</sup> This would shift global

- 42 Linda Jakobson, "China Prepares for an Ice-Free Arctic," *Stockholm International Peace Research Institute*, n.p., Mar. 2010, Accessed Oct. 28, 2013, <books.sipri.org/files/insight/SIPRIInsight1002.pdf>.
- 43 "Infrastructure of the Northern Sea Route and Environmental Protection in the Arctic (Federal Media Monitoring: August 19–25, 2013)," *Arctic-info.com*, Arctic Info, Aug. 26, 2013, Accessed Nov. 20, 2013.
- 44 Jakobson and Peng, 8.
- 45 Wright, 33.
- 46 Cohen, 46.
- 47 Jakobson and Peng, 20.

trade and shipping patterns in a way that favors China and turn Asia's high latitude ports into new international shipping centers.<sup>42</sup> Apart from shipping, China also seeks to capitalize on the Arctic's natural resources, whether with permission of or in teamwork with Russia, and oil and resource deals are already underway. Presidents Xi and Putin have already agreed on the joint exploration of oil in the Barents Sea,<sup>43</sup> while the China National Petroleum Corporation and Russia's Sovcomflot group signed a 2010 agreement on transportation of hydrocarbons.<sup>44</sup> Meanwhile, both countries have built up strong polar research capabilities and continue to invest in Arctic research and infrastructure, which includes projects such as research stations and ice-fitted planes. Russia currently has 18 operational icebreakers, seven of which are nuclear powered, with even more in the works, while China, with only two in full operation, still has a larger and more modern fleet than either the US or Canada.<sup>45</sup>

Finally, there are also political interests at play. The Arctic is Russia's most important arena for international and military security,<sup>46</sup> especially now that climate change is melting away the fourth wall that has kept the Kremlin landlocked for centuries. Aside from granting Russia some long-sought legitimacy, the Arctic also offers an excellent opportunity for both Russia and China to engage peacefully and cooperatively in an emerging international space; the Arctic states, influenced by a strong Nordic contingent, put a premium on cooperation. While topics at the Arctic table have recently undergone a marked shift, the same spirit of cooperation can still continue, and Russia and China can, if they so choose, dispel beliefs that they will act aggressively and purely out of self-interest by participating pragmatically and respectfully within the Arctic Council and other forums. An underlying, though unstated objective, according to Arctic expert Linda Jakobson, is that "China seeks respect as a major power and wishes to be seen as a responsible member of the international community."<sup>47</sup> Russia and China have already begun to forge new partnerships with individual Arctic states, and hopefully such patterns will continue. Either way, it's clear that Russia and China are not afraid to get their feet cold.

## Russia and China Can't Go it Alone in the Arctic, Even if They Have Each Other

Unfortunately for Russia and China, and perhaps fortunately for everyone else, the two regional giants need outside help in order to be operational in the Arctic's onerous conditions. Russia, despite its expanding Arctic infrastructure and military presence, cannot access its own resources without foreign capital and technological expertise. China needs Russian authorization if it wants access to Arctic resources, and also relies on Russian maritime infrastructure, such as fueling, satellite, and search and rescue in addition to being equally reliant on Western technology.

- 48 Klimenk, 2.
- 49 Jakobson, "Northeast Asia Turns Its Attention to the Arctic."
- 50 Jakobson, "China Prepares for an Ice-Free Arctic."
- 51 Ibid.
- 52 Jakobson and Peng, 20.
- 53 Ibid.
- 54 Ibid.
- 55 Norway, Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *The Norwegian Government's High North Strategy*, n.p.: n.p., 2006, *Regjeringen.no*, Accessed Oct. 21, 2013, 18.

Russia does not possess the essential capital it needs for its resource ventures. Costs of operating in the icy waters are high: Russia needs to build modern harbors, establish a proper system of communications and crisis management, and maintain ice-breaker capability. Drifting ice, extreme temperatures, and poorly mapped waters all mean higher costs and risks, and Russia cannot bear them alone, especially if others are to share the same waters. At the 2013 Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation summit, President Putin invited all Asian states, including China, to invest in the development of the NSR.<sup>48</sup> In the realm of resource extraction, Russia's lack of technology and capital opens the way for trilateral joint ventures; such ventures would combine Russia's raw materials with Chinese (or other) capital and Western deep-sea extraction technology.

Practically speaking, China is woefully impotent in the Arctic without help. Its shipbuilding companies lack experience in building vessels for polar conditions; its second icebreaker required Finnish expertise.<sup>49</sup> As prospects for large-scale Arctic shipping draw nearer, China will need to emphasize the rights of non-Arctic states on issues such as emergency response and environmental standards. The country's best chance at investment lies in co-development projects with partners like Russia or Canada. China's keen Arctic interests could prove to be a catalyst for the region, potentially providing added impetus to Russia's development objectives.

In addition, China's participation in Arctic affairs relies on the receptiveness of the Arctic states, and in awareness of this fact, Beijing has encouraged them to consider mankind's common interests.<sup>50</sup> China relied on the Nordic countries to support granting it observer status on the Arctic Council, while Canada, the US, and Russia remained silent. An ice-free Arctic will increase the value of close ties with Nordic countries, since the NSR will make them China's new gateway to Europe,<sup>51</sup> and already, China has begun to buddy up with some of these states. Chinese resource companies have been most active in Greenland,<sup>52</sup> investing jointly with British corporations, and in June 2012, then President Hu Jintao paid Denmark its first ever visit by a Chinese head of state.<sup>53</sup> Similarly, Prime Minister Wen Jiabao's visits to Iceland in April 2012 were the first by a senior Chinese leader in 40 years.<sup>54</sup> While these visits indicate growing Arctic interests, they also reflect China's expanded activities as a rising global power. That said, the fact that China has let relations with Norway grow frosty since Wei Bo's 2010 Nobel Peace Prize signals that the Arctic is not yet a top-tier priority.

Russia and Norway, on the other hand, share the Barents Sea and consider each other the most important strategic bilateral partner among the Arctic states. They have both benefited from nearly a century of Norwegian-Russian marine research cooperation, while more recently, Norway has proposed a joint economic and industrial cooperation zone<sup>55</sup> and committed to

56 Ibid., 1.

57 Sweden, Ministry for Foreign Affairs. Government Offices of Sweden, *Sweden's Strategy for the Arctic Region*, Stockholm: n.p., 2011, *Government.se*, Oct. 23, 2013.

strengthening cooperation with Russia as part of its High North Strategy, citing the relationship as an important channel for European dialogue.<sup>56</sup> While Norway expresses disapproval of Russia's handling of certain issues such as freedom of expression and human rights, they consider their policy objectives separately. In 2010, Finland and Russia also launched an Arctic partnership, and Russian relations with Canada and Denmark have been improving.

Arctic enterprise is no easy maneuver, and Russia and China are fully aware of that fact. As the dragon and bear reach to sink their claws into the ice, they must solicit the assistance and partnership of other Arctic players to avoid slipping. Indeed, solving the unfamiliar challenges of climactic forecasting, comprehensive mapping, search and rescue, and disaster response in this icy, undeveloped region may require unprecedented levels of multilateral cooperation. Simply stated by Sweden's Arctic Policy, "The challenges facing the Arctic are too multifaceted and broad for any single individual state to successfully deal with them on its own."<sup>57</sup>

## As Coastal and Non-Coastal States, Russia and China Have Conflicting Arctic Interests

58 Dmitri Trenin, and Pavel Baev, "The Arctic: A View from Moscow," *The Carnegie Endowment for International Peace* (2010), Accessed Oct. 20, 2013.

59 Gerhardt, 996

60 Trenin, "The Arctic: A View from Moscow."

The simple facts of geography run a deep divide between Russia and China's fundamental approaches to appropriation of Arctic territory. Russia, boasting the longest swath of Arctic coastline, which comes with another 200 miles of extended continental shelf (under UNCLOS), wants to stake out ownership of the most Arctic area possible. It strongly favors the division of territory over the establishment of a common zone; such a division would greatly benefit Russia, since, after all, more size means more influence. However, as a non-coastal state, China has a very different set of priorities. It wants Arctic waters to be treated as international waters that allow for open passage. China is concerned about the possibility of Russia claiming total ownership over the NSR and charging exorbitant fees, a move that would take away the route's profitability.

Russia and China belong to two bigger camps. Countries with no direct access to the Arctic (non-coastal states), which includes Finland, Sweden, and Britain, underscore their rights as users of the region, while coastal states like Russia, Canada, Denmark, and Norway put emphasis on sovereignty and security and "want to settle on a formula for dividing up the region"<sup>58</sup>—back in 1907, Russia and Canada were already contending that their borders should extend to the North Pole.<sup>59</sup> The US, though a coastal state, belongs to the first camp, since its Arctic coastline is very limited and the country is a staunch defender of freedom of navigation.

Russia's "offensive" approach to the Arctic is characterized by words like "conquest" and "subjugation,"<sup>60</sup> the lofty ideal

- 61 Ibid.
- 62 Ibid.
- 63 Cohen, 108.
- 64 Ibid., 26.
- 65 Ibid., 13.
- 66 Caitlyn Antrim, "The New Maritime Arctic. Geopolitics and the Russian Arctic in the 21st Century," *Russia in Global Affairs*, Oct. 15, 2010, Accessed Oct. 25, 2013.
- 67 Gerhardt, 996.
- 68 Jakobson and Peng, 14.
- 69 Wright, 21.
- 70 Ibid., 3.
- 71 Ibid., 13.
- 72 Ibid., 17.
- 73 Jakobson and Peng, 17.
- 74 Jakobson, "Northeast Asia Turns Its Attention to the Arctic."
- 75 Jakobson, "China Prepares for an Ice-Free arctic."

of sovereignty over the Arctic a possible example of "control for control's sake."<sup>61</sup> Its vast Arctic territory is its central source of power in the High North, and any disputes could be "difficult, contentious, protracted."<sup>62</sup> To China's chagrin, Russia defines the NSR as a national transportation route under Russia's jurisdiction; navigation through the NSR must comply with Russia's laws, and also includes passage through straits within and between four Russian Arctic archipelagos.<sup>63</sup> In 2009, Russia announced it would charge ships a "fair" price to take the NSR from the Atlantic to the Pacific.<sup>64</sup> A similar mindset can be found in regards to Canada and its Northwest Passage (NWP), which it sees as clearly belonging to Canada. Canada and Russia together occupy 74 percent of Arctic coastline and both claim that the channels between their Arctic islands and coasts are their "internal waters," meaning that foreign vessels seeking passage require authorization.<sup>65</sup>

Russia has made other somewhat threatening moves, as well. Its 2007 flag-planting stunt spurred international media headlines like "Arctic Meltdown," "A New Cold War," and "Arctic Land Grab."<sup>66</sup> Though the squabble soon died down, Russia has left widespread impressions that it will do whatever necessary to stake out maximum claims and establish a comprehensive Arctic presence, even if that means acting unilaterally. That said, Canada has at times exhibited equally strong Arctic aggression. In response to the flag incident, Canadian foreign minister Peter Mackay declared, "The question of sovereignty in the Arctic is not a question. It's clear. It's our country. It's our property. It's our water ... The Arctic is Canadian."<sup>67</sup>

China, in contrast, sees the Arctic as "a treasure of human kind"<sup>68</sup> that belongs to everyone rather than to any one country or group of countries. Commentator Li Zhenfu writes that international seabed regions and their resources are the "shared heritage and wealth" of all nations.<sup>69</sup> China even sees a multilateral treaty system among Arctic powers to the exclusion of China as somewhat reminiscent of bullying suffered during its century of humiliation.<sup>70</sup> Old grievances aside, China continually emphasizes how Arctic issues have a bearing on the existence and development of all humankind, and therefore noncircumpolar states should not stand idly by.<sup>71</sup> China functions under the assumption that increased internationalization of Arctic affairs will work more to China's advantage than territorial dispensations, and even links China's Arctic interests with world peace.<sup>72</sup>

According to UNCLOS, all states enjoy freedom of navigation in a coastal state's EEZs,<sup>73</sup> as well as the right to exploit resources in international waters.<sup>74</sup> However, if Russia's claims over the underwater terrain between the Lomonosov and Mendeleev ridges are approved, Russia alone would have the rights to an enormous deposit of Arctic resources.<sup>75</sup> China would prefer an arrangement modeled after the 1920 Svalbard Treaty,

76 Jakobson, and Peng, 11.

77 Wright, 5.

which grants all signatory countries access to Svalbard while recognizing Norway's absolute sovereignty.<sup>76</sup> However, as it is, China finds itself in a rather ironic situation when commenting on the Arctic; while it seeks to question the territorial rights of Arctic states, it cannot truly do so without challenging fundamental notions of sovereignty, one of China's core principals.

For the time being, China must accept Arctic regulations and follow the stipulations of the Arctic Council, encouraging scientific, environmental, and economic cooperation when and where it can. With its "shared wealth of humankind" rhetoric running directly counter to Russian notions of ownership, China runs the risk of being too intrusive. In 2010, Reuters quoted Russian Navy commander Admiral Vladimir Vysotsky as saying, "We are observing the penetration of a host of states which... are advancing their interests very intensively, in every possible way, in particular China." He added that Russia "would not give up a single inch" in the Arctic.<sup>77</sup>

## The US Sees Russia's Arctic Behavior as Aggressive; Shares More in Common with China

78 Conley, 17.

79 United States Department of Defense.

80 United States Department of Defense.

81 "National Strategy for the Arctic Region," 7.

With its limited Arctic coastline, the US has come to view the High North region as peripheral to its national interests. Its Arctic coast is one-fifteenth that of Russia and its largest Arctic indigenous communities have only 4,000 inhabitants, compared to 325,000 in the Russian city of Murmansk.<sup>78</sup> It has allotted little funding for Arctic defense and infrastructure and has yet to sign UNCLOS and claim its exclusive economic zone. But shifts in the last five years have led the US to take Arctic politics more seriously. Like China, it wants to take advantage of Arctic resources and preserve the openness of Arctic waters, but it is also wary of Russia's growing presence in the North. The US has only recently begun to send representatives to various Arctic forums, and still holds a largely tentative approach. The US Department of Defense (DoD) expresses a reluctance to invest resources into the Arctic before it is truly necessary, which opens up the possibility of the US finding itself severely underprepared for future Arctic circumstances. The DoD writes that while the harsh Arctic environment and polar ice-cap have long enhanced U.S. security by acting as a significant physical barrier to access from the north, the current Arctic bears a "relatively low level of threat" despite uncertain effects of climate change.<sup>79</sup> The DoD does not expect the Arctic to shift to something more than a peripheral interest in the next decade or more, absent some external event.<sup>80</sup>

The US has, somewhat belatedly, published its own Arctic strategies, and its strategic priorities include advancing US security interests, pursuing responsible Arctic region stewardship, and strengthening international cooperation.<sup>81</sup> The latter two priorities align very neatly with China's primary stated



- 82 Jakobson and Peng,  
(conclusions).
- 83 Cohen (Laruelle), 63.
- 84 Cohen, 27.
- 85 *Ibid.*, 27.
- 86 Cohen (Golts), 47.
- 87 *Ibid.*, 67.

considerations. Both countries are looking to pursue arrangements that promote shared Arctic prosperity, environmental protection, and secure and reliable infrastructure. They both put a premium on cooperation through existing forums, namely the Arctic Council and the International Maritime Organization. And, of course, both are interested in Arctic oil and gas deposits to feed their domestic energy needs.

China's Arctic aspirations evoke the type of anxiety that accompanies the rise of any large power. In some places, U.S. and Chinese language addressing the Arctic seem interchangeable in a reflection of China's growing international status. Echoes of the American position of "international policeman" can be heard in rhetoric such as "China has a key role in safeguarding the Arctic."<sup>82</sup> In their so-called universal concern for the Arctic, the US and China share a similar stance, reflected most clearly in their attitudes towards freedom of navigation in international waters. The US attitude towards the NWP parallels Chinese sentiments towards the NSR. Like Russia, Canada has claimed ownership over passage waters, including an attempt to rename the route the Canadian Northwest Passage.<sup>83</sup> The NWP could become a major shipping lane for international trade between Europe and Asia, though currently, navigation is only possible within a seven-week period with the use of icebreakers,<sup>84</sup> and estimates for when the NWP could be ice-free in summer are similar to those for the NSR. The US sees the NWP as a strait for international navigation, while Canada considers it "inland seas" under Canadian sovereignty. Until resolved, the NWP will remain a point of tension between the US and Canada, since the US considers freedom of the seas a top national priority.<sup>85</sup>

China's emphasis on climate concerns, in large part a strategy to circumvent topics such as sovereignty and resources, can also play to American advantage. International cooperation on the environment will highlight common interests, strengthen ties, and further engage China in international frameworks. Interestingly, Linda Jakobson raises the idea that the US could observe China's Arctic policy for clues on China's long-term goals.

As for Russia, the US perceives a country planning to fight for possession of a huge Arctic space.<sup>86</sup> Russia's motions are colored by its great power ambitions and nationalist rhetoric, as well as significant emphasis on military capacity. Russia has declared full willingness to defend its national interests in the Arctic with military force if necessary, and has stated hopes for its navy to become the world's second-most powerful in the next 20 to 30 years.<sup>87</sup> The Arctic, in this light, provides an opportunity for Russia to develop and grow as a maritime power.

Russia has been very active in building up its capabilities in the High North, moving rapidly to establish comprehensive sea, ground, and air presence in the High North. Russian polar explorer Artur Chilingarov has said that even NATO lacks the technical capability to enhance its military presence in the



- 88 Ibid., 43.  
 89 Conley, 18.  
 90 Cohen, 14.  
 91 Wright, 33.  
 92 Trenin.  
 93 Cohen, 93.  
 94 Wright, 6. Quoted from Chinese magazine *Dangdai haijun*.

Arctic. “Only our country has the unique technical equipment capable of solving the problems of extreme Arctic conditions, and nothing can be compared with our fleet of icebreakers in terms of mobility and effectiveness,”<sup>88</sup> he concluded. Meantime, most of U.S. security infrastructure in the region is left over from the 1950s and 60s.<sup>89</sup> Inheriting the Arctic has given Russia a new boost; it has stepped up anti-American policies and rhetoric and is likely to challenge U.S. interests wherever it can, including up North.<sup>90</sup>

The US and China are similar in that they currently see the Arctic as a low priority. However, the U.S. defense system seriously risks falling behind the curve. As stated in a 2010 *New York Times* article, “How can the U.S. Coast Guard guard the Arctic coasts of the United States without the required vessels? Icebreakers are not Cold War relics but essential components of Arctic security. The need to repair and make more of them is pressing and real, now, and it will be in the future.”<sup>91</sup> At minimum, it is in U.S. interests to maintain defensive capabilities that will allow the US to participate in the security of the Arctic region. While speculation about a third world war or “War from the North” is outmoded,<sup>92</sup> and current Russian commanders have ruled out such possibilities, Russia still tends to be perceived as the “wild card” in the Arctic strategic equation.<sup>93</sup> The Arctic Five, while preaching peaceful cooperation, continue to bolster their military presence and capabilities, and occasional sensationalist statements still float the possibility of Arctic conflict, such as this line from Chinese magazine *Dongdai haijun*: “it is not difficult for us to imagine that the probability of the future outbreak of war in the Arctic is very high, and that as soon as war breaks out, the United States, Russia, and Canada will be its main principals.”<sup>94</sup> While Russia’s Arctic ambitions are still far from realization, it appears reasonable to expect the US to ensure that its military system is Arctic-ready.

Ultimately, the US needs to look at the warming Arctic from a practical standpoint. It needs to engage in Arctic forums and improve its Northern infrastructure. It will be pursuing these goals alongside China, which shares many US interests, and under the eye of Russia, who seems wary of any outsiders venturing near its Arctic territories. However, as the Arctic Five are greatly outnumbered by the rest of the Arctic Council and the world beyond, the US and China might have an opportunity to collaborate and push for their common interests.

## Conclusion: Whatever the Case, Uncle Sam Still Needs More Icebreakers

- 95 Vilhjalmur Stefansson, *The Arctic in Fact and Fable*, (New York: Foreign Policy Association, 1945), 5.

In 1945, Vilhjalmur Stefansson wrote that there are two kinds of Arctic problems, the imaginary and the real. “Of the two, the imaginary are the more real; for man finds it easier to change the face of nature than to change his own mind.”<sup>95</sup>

- 96 Cohen, 47.
- 97 *Ibid.*, 109.
- 98 Gerhardt, 996.
- 99 “1 Oct. 2013: Russia’s Strategy for Developing the Arctic Region Until 2020.”
- 100 Philip Stephens, “The Grab for Greenland.” *Financial Times*, Dec. 6 2013, Accessed Dec. 9, 2013.
- 101 “Putin Orders Russian Military to Boost Arctic Presence,” *BBC News*, Dec. 11 2013, Accessed Dec. 11 2013.
- 102 Stephens.
- 103 “Putin Orders Russian Military to Boost Arctic Presence.”
- 104 “Putin Orders Russian Military to Boost Arctic Presence.”
- 105 Stephens.

Shrouded in snow and ice, it can be difficult to decipher the more imaginary from the real when it comes to the Arctic. While geological estimates of energy and mineral resources exist, the numbers are far from certain, and a realistic timeline for proper extraction even murkier. The trajectory of climate change’s effects in the Arctic in the next decade, let alone half-century, is unknown. Russia’s temperament and consequent political moves are equally difficult to predict, and China’s rise, while labeled peaceful, is causing widespread anxiety.

Certain things appear to indicate that for now, though, the Arctic can stay off the main international radar. Lars Kullerud, President of the University of the Arctic, has stated, “The Arctic area would be of interest in 50 or 100 years — not now.”<sup>96</sup> Canada’s Chief of Defense Staff General Walter Natynczyk has joked, on a similar note, “If someone were to invade the Canadian Arctic, my first task would be to rescue them.”<sup>97</sup> In response to the 2007 flag-planting incident, Russian Arctic expert Sergei Balyasnikov said, “For me this is like planting a flag on the moon”<sup>98</sup> — too distanced from reality to really matter. The shale revolution has already reduced the importance of Arctic energy resources, and Western countries have been slowly moving away from energy dependence on Russia. Current military build-up is premised on cooperation, not competition, and participants at a recent Arctic conference agreed that not only is armed conflict in the Arctic highly unlikely, but the region is one of the most stable in the world.<sup>99</sup>

However, current actions don’t all reflect this dismissive talk. International maneuvering and dialogue is reflecting the Arctic’s sudden rise. “What happens in the Arctic will touch the security and prosperity of the rest of the planet,” recently stated one of Greenland’s government ministers.<sup>100</sup> The US has begun to send its Secretary of State to Arctic meetings, where until recently it dispatched only junior representatives. In December 2013, Putin gave one of his most direct orders yet to build up forces in the Arctic as a priority.<sup>101</sup> Norway has begun hosting regular exercises for NATO troops in its High North region.<sup>102</sup> Russia, Canada, and Denmark have all placed recent claims to parts of the continental shelf beneath the North Pole — “the center of a large, inhospitable ocean that is in total darkness for three months each year, thousands of miles from any port.”<sup>103</sup> In other words, it’s not about economic stakes, but rather domestic politics.<sup>104</sup> China’s clear interest in the Arctic, from its new engagements with Greenland and Iceland to its expanded icebreaker capacity, is causing more and more heads to turn. “If China is paying attention,” said a US official, “we cannot afford not to.”<sup>105</sup>

Indeed, in today’s Arctic, the US is a decidedly beta power. Instead, new players like Russia and Norway are at the top of the world, and in the most literal sense possible. The recent expansion of the Arctic Council to include observer states including China, Italy, and India indicates that the Arctic is clearly

already of international interest. Climate change, more threatening than ever, is changing the dynamic between enclosable land and free-flowing water, raising new questions around claims to sovereignty and freedom of navigation. And at the heart of the growing Arctic dialogue is the High North relationship between Russia and China. Their emerging Arctic interdependence in energy and transport interests will be crucial in the Arctic's future development, and climate change will only speed up these developments. The Arctic could drive the two mammoth states closer together or farther apart.

The outcomes of the Sino-Russian relationship in the Arctic provide both threats and opportunities to U.S. interests. A closer relationship strengthened through increased bilateral cooperation in the Arctic could put the US in a position of weakness and vulnerability in the High North. Economically, the two could edge out the US; militarily, they could bolster their already more capable Arctic defense systems; and strategically, they could ally on Arctic issues or agreements to the exclusion of other states (for example, an exclusive bilateral agreement over use of the NSR).

Alternatively, Russia and China's incongruity in priorities shaped by their statuses as coastal and non-coastal states could push them apart. This might manifest itself in dispute over international waters and the NSR, disagreements within Arctic Council discussion and China's proper extent of involvement, or undesired military or political maneuvering by China. Economically, they might butt heads in claiming partnerships with Arctic states such as Iceland and Greenland. This could benefit the US in certain ways, such as helping to promote freedom of navigation, but ultimately, such tensions would harm US interests more than they would help.

The US is best served by Russia and China's current strategic partnership or a slightly warmer Sino-Russian bilateral relationship. A rift in the relationship or some sort of cooling would be more problematic, potentially isolating Russia and increasing the possibility of unilateral actions by either of the two countries. Currently, the Sino-Russian economic partnership is beneficial to both and their militaries are not yet a threat. It is possible to conjecture that their relationship might provide a stabilizing force in the Eastern region. Sino-Russian conflict could stir expansionist disputes over territory or rights to resources in areas such as Central Asia and the Middle East. None of this would be favorable for the US. With this in mind, the US should seek a cooperative stance with both countries in the Arctic, seeking China's support on the issue of freedom of navigation and becoming an informed and consistent participant in the Arctic Council. In the far future, China will be a more important Arctic ally, but the US cannot afford to alienate Russia any further. Russia and China's peaceful cooperation within Arctic forums can set a positive precedent for their cooperation more broadly.

An unusual territory of water and ice, the Arctic provides a unique space for the processes of multilateral governance and cooperation to play out—and to observe the way each player is playing. The US should keep its eye on the icy expanse as a means to gain a sense of other states' geopolitical motives, with a specific focus on Russia and China. Their interaction in the Arctic could be indicative of their individual objectives as well as the nature or aims of the bilateral relationship. Much is still uncertain, but the US cannot ignore the collision between two of the world's most pressing problems and two of its biggest strongmen: global warming and the need for raw materials combined with Moscow and Beijing, converging all together in the Arctic to shape the world's geopolitical contours. Russia and China are edging to sink in their claws and shape things to their own advantage. Uncle Sam needs to invest in some snow boots, unless he wants the two of them to succeed.

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- "1 Oct. 2013: Russia's Strategy for Developing the Arctic Region Until 2020." *Sipri.org*. Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, Oct. 2013. Accessed Nov. 28, 2013. <[www.sipri.org/research/security/arctic/arcticevents/russias-strategy-for-developing-the-arctic-region](http://www.sipri.org/research/security/arctic/arcticevents/russias-strategy-for-developing-the-arctic-region)>.
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# The Historiography of Postwar and Contemporary Histories of the Outbreak of World War I

Tess McCann

The Allied and Associated Governments affirm and Germany accepts the responsibility of Germany and her allies for causing all the loss and damage to which the Allied and Associated Governments and their nationals have been subjected as a consequence of the war imposed upon them by the aggression of Germany and her allies.

— Article 231, Treaty of Versailles, 1919

There is something fundamental in the human need to find the origin of tragedy: to find someone to blame in order to rationalize it. World War I is not exempt from this axiom. The literature surrounding the question of who is to blame for the outbreak of the War arguably began with the passing of the 1919 Treaty of Versailles and continues to the present day. Readers are no less interested in the distant past now than they were when it was in living memory; in fact, with the upcoming centennial of the outbreak of the War, they may be more interested than ever in finding a party to blame.

The Treaty of Versailles easily set Germany up to be the object of the world's contempt. As time wore on, and another World War came — and this time very obviously because of German actions — Germany remained at the center of almost all histories of the outbreak of the First World War, if not as the guilty party, then as a key instigator of prewar brinksmanship. A wave of arguments about the outbreak of war in 1914 hit the bookshelves in the post-WWII era. From this time and throughout the Cold War historians trained their eyes on Germany — understandably as it was ground zero for the physical developments of the Soviet-American relationship for half a century. In addition, German sources were becoming available for scholarship as archives were gradually opened up by the Western powers. It is only recently that there has been a shift in the literature about the outbreak of the First World War. Arguments no longer revolve around German war aims, as if in a vacuum, but rather center on a complex and dynamic system in which Germany and the other countries of the world were all involved. Specifically, the center of gravity has shifted to the East and South: to Russia, Turkey and Serbia, now that those archives are open, too. What can account for this wider focus? I argue a two-pronged answer to this question: first, historians now analyze sources that were novel in the postwar era, namely the archives of major powers, in new ways, and are presented with



new sources from other countries, like Russia, Turkey and Serbia. Second, the historians context has changed drastically — it would be difficult, perhaps even impossible, to sustain arguments from the 1950s in today's globalized and transnational world. New context necessitates new histories. Specifically, in our time, an expanding European Union requires an expanding view of European history and its main actors.

While this particular trend of redefining Europe is unique to the present day, the general tendency for history to change in the face of changing contemporary contexts is not; in fact it is integral to the study of historiography. In 1961 the Prime Minister David Lloyd George's old tale of "slithering into war" in 1914 seemed naïve, and required reexamination. In today's world, the old tale of a German war is too simple for a developing European Union of countries in an age of transnational history. Historians have responded to changing times, and built off of old arguments to tell these old tales in new lights.

## Postwar Arguments, 1956–1981

A historiographical discussion about contemporary outbreak literature must begin with an investigation into previous arguments. This examination will provide the framework with which to properly observe the developments and changes that have recently occurred in the genre. Though only three authors are discussed, there are hundreds among their rank of leading postwar historians of World War I. I choose to only discuss three below, Gerhard Ritter, Fritz Fischer and Volker Berghahn, in order to give a wide breadth of answers to the following four questions, which must be kept in mind when wading through postwar arguments. First, there is the question of inevitability of war: did Europe slither into it, or did some guilty party will war into being? A part of this question also has to do with the scale of war: did this party want a Balkan war, but not a European war? A European war but not a world war? Second, was Germany or were all of the European powers to blame? Third, regarding the actors themselves, there are multiple questions: how divided was the society of the blameworthy country? Did the whole of German, French and or British society have a hand in going to war, or was it just the upper echelons of the military, civilian or royal factions of society? Were these actors rational or irrational in the final months of peace? And finally, if it was Germany, as many of the following authors conclude, around which the July Crisis and ensuing War revolved, is there continuity in German history? Or, more bluntly put, was the same militarism that was seen in 1939 in the invasion of Poland also seen in 1914 in the invasion of France? It is, in my opinion, the answer to this question that necessitates the authors to answer the previous three in the ways that they do. Since this was the question on everyone's

mind in the aftermath of the Second World War, our investigation must begin here.

## Gerhard Ritter, 1956

- 1 Gerhard Ritter, *Der Schlieffen Plan: Kritik eines Mythos* (München: Verlag R. Oldenbourg, 1956), translated into English as *The Schlieffen Plan: Critique of a Myth* (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1958), 66.
- 2 *Ibid.*, 45–46.
- 3 *Ibid.*, 79.
- 4 *Ibid.*, 89.
- 5 *Ibid.*, 90.
- 6 *Ibid.*, 90.
- 7 Gerhart Ritter, *Staatkunst und Kriegshandwerk: Das Problem des Militarismus in Deutschland*, 4 vols. (Verlag R. Oldenbourg, 1968), vol II, xiv.
- 8 Ritter, *Der Schlieffen Plan*, 102.

Gerhard Ritter, the eminent nationalist German historian, published a small book in 1956 entitled *Der Schlieffen Plan, Kritik eines Mythos*. Published in English in 1958, this short book focuses on the Schlieffen Plan, and specifically is a critique of the myth surrounding it: rather than being a masterpiece of strategic planning, the risk in the plan itself was the magic that would carry it to success.

Ritter's argument separates the military planners from every other faction of German society in the prewar Wilhelmine era. The plan itself was "a strictly-guarded secret in the safes of the Great General Staff."<sup>1</sup> And so separated was the General Staff from the rest of the Wilhelmine government. The Plan, in its 1905 form, "resulted from purely technical considerations... Non-technical considerations — particularly political ones — played no part in its development."<sup>2</sup> Schlieffen "does not seem to have worried unduly about the grave political consequences."<sup>3</sup> This complete isolation of the German General Staff, and of Schlieffen himself, was toxic: "When the long-expected crisis broke in July 1914, Germany had prepared nothing diplomatically... She had nothing but a plan for a military offensive, whose rigid timetable robbed her diplomacy of all freedom of maneuver."<sup>4</sup>

In Ritter's argument, "the outbreak of war in 1914 is the most tragic example of a government's helpless dependence on the planning of strategists that history has ever seen."<sup>5</sup> And the lead role in this tragedy is Chancellor Bethmann Hollweg, who "was almost crushed by his heavy responsibilities and the difficulties which were mounting on all sides against his policy of peace and mediation."<sup>6</sup> Moreover, this argument is not only featured within this small book: Bethmann Hollweg appears in the third and fourth volumes of Ritter's magnum opus, *Staatkunst und Kriegshandwerk*, in which he is also portrayed as the tragic hero of the nation.<sup>7</sup> It is clear that the political leaders of Germany did not want war — and Ritter attests that Schlieffen did not either: in his various memoranda, "[Schlieffen] nowhere demands an opening of hostilities at the favourable [sic] moment."<sup>8</sup>

In answering the questions regarding the postwar authors, we can conclude that Ritter believed the pure separation between military and diplomatic planning was at the center of the outbreak of war. This conception negates all blame that could be thrown at Schlieffen or any other leaders of Wilhelmine Germany, and undermines the conclusion that National Socialist war aims had any foundations in those of 1914. The German people did not want to go to war, the Kaiser did not want to go to war; war came, in the end, because the country's leaders

- 9 Annika Mombauer, *The Origins of the First World War: Controversies and Consensus* (New York: Longmans, 2002), 119.
- 10 Ritter, *The Schlieffen Plan*, 11.
- 11 Mombauer, *Origins of the First World War*, 121.
- 12 *Ibid.*, 118.
- 13 Peter Paret, 'Gerhard Ritter, 1888–1967,' *Central European History*, vol. 1, no. 1 (March 1968), 100–102.

allowed themselves to be drawn into a state of dependence on pure military strategy, as there was a complete lack of dialogue between civilian and military leaders.

Ritter's sources shed some light on the nature of his argument: 1956, the publication date of the German edition of his book, was the first year when the Allied governments opened the archives of West Germany.<sup>9</sup> The Schlieffen memoranda were unearthed prior, in 1953, and were "published for the first time in their entirety" in Ritter's book.<sup>10, 11</sup> His close analysis and argument in this small book provides an important step in the building of his larger analysis, found in *Staatkunst und Kriegshandwerk*, especially the second and third volumes.

However Ritter's argument is perhaps more illuminated when seen in the light of its immediate historical context: in 1956 the German economy was still struggling to rebuild itself; the deutschmark was introduced in 1948 as a new currency. However, in order to gain traction in an international economy, it needed support from the Western currencies, especially the reserve currency of the dollar. Moreover, 1955 marked the beginning of German rearmament.<sup>12</sup> This contentious process necessitated arguments that disproved any continuity in the trend of German aggression: rearming a nation that had aggressive war in its DNA would not sit well with Western nations and their populations. It became necessary, both for the revitalization of the German economy, and in order to quell any fears of the Western populations, for German history to accommodate German assimilation. This necessity existed for Ritter on a personal level as well. Having lived through both world wars, and fought in the first, it would have perhaps been too much to conclude that what he had seen was at all intrinsic to German society at large.<sup>13</sup> Ritter was one of the historians that took up the charge of clearing Germany's name, on international, national and personal levels: by using newly available sources, including the entirety of Schlieffen's documents, he attempted to argue Germany's way back into Western society.

## Fritz Fischer, 1961

One man in particular foiled Ritter's attempts. Fritz Fischer published *Griff nach der Weltmacht* in 1961, though its English translation was not available until 1967. In complete opposition to Ritter's arguments of German relative innocence, Fischer argues that Wilhelmine Germany intended to go to war, for the same reasons that National Socialist Germany went to war in 1939: imperialist expansion with racial undertones. A direct translation of the German title would give readers this impression; though its English publication title is innocuously *German War Aims in the First World War*, the German is more directly translated into "snatch" or "grasp" at world power, which pre-emptly Fischer's controversial argument. Although his narrative

- 14 Fritz Fischer, *Griff nach der Weltmacht: Die Kriegszielpolitik des Kaiserlichen Deutschland (1914–1918)* (Düsseldorf: Droste, 1961), translated into English as *German War Aims in the First World War* by C. A. Macartney (New York: W. W. Norton and Co., 1967).
- 15 *Ibid.*, 119.
- 16 *Ibid.*, 46.
- 17 *Ibid.*, 63.
- 18 *Ibid.*, 88.
- 19 *Ibid.*, 81.
- 20 *Ibid.*, 101.
- 21 *Ibid.*, 91.

stretches from the prewar era into 1918, this discussion will center on his arguments about prewar aims and actions of military and political leaders.

The “Fischer Thesis” reads that German leaders, the military, Bethmann Hollweg and even the Kaiser, had shown expansionist tendencies since the mid-1890s. They saw the July Crisis of 1914 as the perfect time to act on those tendencies, and by military force, expand to achieve their ultimate goal of a *Mittel-europa* and a *Mittelafrika*.<sup>14</sup> Unlike Ritter, Fischer does not separate the German people from the actions of the politicians and military strategists. In fact, he shows “how strongly the German government felt itself constrained by public opinion, by the parties and associations.”<sup>15</sup> Fischer claims that each faction of German society, military, political, royal and even civilian, had reasons to go to war, and these reasons were founded in their desire for world power status. And, unlike in Ritter’s argument, England and the rest of the great powers in Europe played vital roles in the German *decision* to go to war in 1914.

World War I, the “crisis of German imperialism” that ensued after various German attempts to lay claim to its world power status, was allowed to happen under the construction of the Wilhelmine constitution, which allowed diplomatic actions without the knowledge of the government.<sup>16</sup> Fischer’s argument is starkly clear: “[Germany] took the risk of war with open eyes...and undisguisedly threaten[ed] the European powers with a major conflict if the Serbian question were not confined to Serbia and Austria.”<sup>17</sup> Consequently, “any limited or local war in Europe directly involving one great power must inevitably carry with it the imminent danger of a general war. As Germany willed and coveted the Austro-Serbian war and, in her confidence in her military superiority, deliberately faced the risk of a conflict with Russia and France, her leaders must bear a substantial share of the historical responsibility for the outbreak of general war in 1914.”<sup>18</sup>

It can also be seen in the above that Fischer’s argument has a wider scope than that of Ritter. He draws attention to the vital role of the British in the German unleashing of war. British neutrality was of “cardinal importance to German foreign policy considerations.”<sup>19</sup> It is especially with Britain that Bethmann Hollweg concerned himself. Throughout his narrative, Fischer paints the Chancellor not as a tragic hero, but a calculating politician, whose war aims were no less expansionary and violent than those of the military leaders or the Kaiser. Bethmann Hollweg believed that “only a Germany reinforced by ‘Mitteleuropa’ would be in a position to maintain herself as an equal world power between the world powers of Britain and the United States on one side and Russia on the other.”<sup>20</sup> Fischer puts it quite bluntly, that the diaries of Kurt Riezler, “furnish irrefutable proof that... Bethmann Hollweg was ready for war.”<sup>21</sup>

- 22 Ibid., bibliography.
- 23 Ibid., bibliography.
- 24 John Moses, 'Fritz Fischer,' *The Encyclopedia of Historians and Historian Writing*, vol. 1 (Chicago: Fitzroy Dearborn Publishers, 1999), 387.

Returning to our questions, we can summarize the discussion above with the following: Fischer argues the combined war aims of all factions of German society revolved around world power, and, specifically, the forging of a *Mitteleuropa* and *Mittelafrika* by force. Bethmann Hollweg, importantly, is not a tragic hero in this narrative, but rather an integral player in the outbreak of war, and a man whose diplomatic plans for world power fell around him as British neutrality proved to be a wild hope. All of Germany, therefore, was to blame for the outbreak of war, and the decision makers at the top acted with a cold-blooded rationality in their pursuit of a world power status. And the very same intentions for world power that can be seen in Fischer's sources, it follows, can be seen in the National Socialist regime that came 20 years later.

The reason for the wild shift in interpretation lies in Fischer's sources. Fischer spent years in the newly opened West German archives, but he did not stop there — he also examined those of Britain and Austria prior to the publication of his book, which accounts for the broader international view of his argument.<sup>22</sup> The most important source in Fischer's analysis is the "September Programme," a document from the West German archives. Authored by Riezler, and indirectly by Bethmann Hollweg, the Programme calls for the annexation of all of Belgium, Holland, and indeed most of Europe, East and West.<sup>23</sup> Taken alongside sources like the Riezler diaries and Austrian archival sources, the September Programme can easily be interpreted as annexationist. Though it has been largely discredited in the modern day, as there is no evidence that the Programme was ever implemented in policy, Fischer's conclusion at the time was earth shattering.

The other part of the answer to the above question is Fischer's age. He was born 20 years after Ritter, in 1908. He had come of age during the boom years of the *goldene Zwanziger*, and had lived through the Depression and the subsequent rise of National Socialism. Unlike Ritter, he had not seen the First World War. He did not need, for his own sake, to absolve Germany of any sins remaining from 1914. His findings do not need to play a role in the reintegration of Germany. In 1961, the year of publication, the Berlin Wall was erected by the Soviets.<sup>24</sup> Perhaps continuity in German history was an important, if unfortunate, point of unification between a country divided in two. Germany did not need to be whitewashed to fit the bill as a Western country, as it was not fully West. But it was also not fully East; it was not wholly anything because it was not whole. Fischer's generation of historians, those who did not see World War I except through the archives, possess an odd sort of honesty and clarity because of their birthdates and because of what they lived through as adults, and a continuity in their own history that their predecessors cannot, and do not, share.

- 25 Volker, Berghahn, *Germany and the Approach to War in 1914* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1993), 167
- 26 *Ibid.*, 168.
- 27 *Ibid.*, 185.
- 28 *Ibid.*, 191.
- 29 *Ibid.*, 190.
- 30 *Ibid.*, 192.
- 31 *Ibid.*, 167.

For a twist on the Fischerite narrative, we turn to Volker Berghahn. The main premise in his book, *Germany and the Approach of War in 1914*, is that the Wilhelmine governmental structures allowed the irrational choice to go to war to permeate the cadre of decision makers. To best show this, Berghahn analyzes the developments of the Anglo-German relationship, and finds that it is on that relationship that Bethmann Hollweg based his house-of-cards brinksmanship, and when it collapsed because of a failed link between the two powers, the Schlieffen Plan was all that Germany had to work with. This much of Berghahn's argument can be considered Fischerite. However, he questions the cold-blooded rationality that Fischer so clearly sees in documents like the September Programme. "Can one really expect," Berghahn asks, "a political leadership which suffered from a profound loss of reality... to plan a major war systematically and many years in advance?"<sup>25</sup>

Rather than a long narrative of militarism in German society and culture that led inexorably towards offensive war in 1914, Berghahn attests that the rationality with which Germany went to war in 1914 was much shorter-lived, and was plagued with the irrationality of its political leaders and brinksmanship in the prewar era. "The calculating element in German policy between 1912 and 1914... does not appear in the long-term preparation for a war to be started at a pre-set date, but in the assessment of the Reich's advantage over the enemy."<sup>26</sup> There was a balance in Berghahn's argument between the irrationality and the rationality of going to war.

Berghahn's Germany is stratified, like that of our previous authors, into political, military and civilian factions, but he introduces a new class to his analysis: the Junkers. He claims, "the fears of the Junkers and the military men coincide... when it becomes good to wage war for the protection of the status quo."<sup>27</sup> Bethmann Hollweg did not share these fears, and so went on trying to find the sinews of diplomacy in an increasingly cramped system, in full knowledge of the risks of a local war.<sup>28</sup> It is this that Berghahn claims is irrational, as by this time it was abundantly clear, given archival evidence, that Britain was going to enter any European conflict.<sup>29</sup> By the time July 1914 came around, and the crisis broke, he had no choice but to risk that very war, in order to unite the increasingly fractured population of Germany.<sup>30</sup> Berghahn's argument, and the nuance he introduces about the rationality of Germany's decision makers, can be summed up with this powerful quote, which draws on the old Bismarckian classification of preventive war: "Germany went to war in 1914 in an act of suicide in fear of death."<sup>31</sup>

Like his predecessors, Berghahn made use of the archives of all the major world powers: his bibliography includes the German *Reichsarchiv*, the French *Document Diplomatiques*,



32 <[www2.warwick.ac.uk/fac/arts/history/people/staff\\_index/berghahn/](http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/fac/arts/history/people/staff_index/berghahn/)>. Accessed December 1, 2013.

as well as British and Austro-Hungarian documents. Berghahn also drew from the personal writings of the major German leaders, like Bülow and Tirpitz, as well as soldiers. This all-encompassing bibliography is the first sign of a change in the nature of outbreak literature. It suggests that historians were beginning to think of history not as large movements of nation states and their leaders, but rather a conglomerate of the actions of political parties, diplomats, and everyday people. The aspect of social class that Berghahn introduces in his narrative, and is included in subsequent authors' narratives, is also part of the shift towards transnational history: the history of trends not confined by national borders, but felt in every country. Berghahn's attention to class can also be attributed to his age. Born in 1938, he did not truly come of age until well after the Second World War. Like Fischer, but to a greater extent, Berghahn did not, in his scholarship, have to come to terms with anything that he had done. The publication of his book in 1973 came just five years after the protests of 1968.<sup>32</sup> Tensions between classes were palpable while Berghahn was in the archives researching his book, both in Germany and abroad. It is in this context, the coming of a new age of transnational solidarity in protest, that we must see Berghahn's book. And it is in this way that he may be called an early transnational historian.

## Contemporary Arguments, 2011–2013

We have seen how narratives of the outbreak of the war fluctuated during the Cold War, but never lost their Germanic moorings. The most recently published books on the outbreak are detached from the notion that World War I was a German war, and rather take a broader view of the outbreak of war, encompassing all of Europe. In these arguments of larger scope, there has also been a shift of focus from the Western European countries to the powers in the East: Russia and Turkey. It is as if historiography has reached a second turning point in war guilt literature. Just as Fischer felt no need to tiptoe around the question of German war guilt, authors today are no longer tied to explanations for the outbreak of war that involve just the major Western powers of the day. In fact they are compelled by the nature of our modern global societies, by current geopolitics and by globalization, to argue that the outbreak of war was not only the fault of the major powers of 1914, but also of the current emerging and established powers. The following will be a discussion of the three contemporary authors that have published works on the outbreak of war. Unlike the post-war arguments, these cannot be distilled into four questions; the narratives with which modern readers are presented rest on the consensus that a Fischer Thesis is somewhat heavy-handed, and that all countries had some sort of hand in the outbreak of war — though some more than others. These contemporary



arguments are all examples of transnational histories, as well as both calls for and symptoms of a changing international system.

## Sean McMeekin, 2011

33 Sean McMeekin, *The Russian Origins of the First World War* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2011), 5.

34 *Ibid.*, 28.

35 *Ibid.*, 17.

36 *Ibid.*, 79.

37 *Ibid.*, 13.

38 *Ibid.*, 14.

39 *Ibid.*, 26.

The first of the contemporary authors presents an argument whose easterly shift is apparent just by reading the title: *The Russian Origins of the First World War*. McMeekin's book is the clearest example of a Fischer-like turning point in outbreak literature, as he attempts to open up a new line of dialogue about the Russian involvement and clear warmongering in the prewar era. His argument has the basic shape of previous ones: a framework in the strategic landscape of the day, a detailed analysis of diplomatic documents, especially those between Russia and France, and finally a conclusion that cites, among other things, the odd nature of Tsarist government as the enabling factor in Russia's own *Realpolitik*. As he powerfully states at the end of his introduction: "The war of 1914 was Russia's war even more than it was Germany's."<sup>33</sup>

McMeekin's argument rests on the fact that it was essential for the continued stability of the Russian economy, and indeed for that of the state itself, to keep the Black Sea Straits in friendly, or even better, Russian hands. "In economic terms, the importance of the Straits for Russia was stark and true."<sup>34</sup> With the collapse of the Ottoman Empire clearly looming, Russia's leaders understood that it would soon be in their best interest to act in order to finally get their hands on Constantinople and the Straits.<sup>35</sup> Having discerned this much, Russia's military leaders and especially the Foreign Minister Sergei Sazonov, then manipulated their allies, Britain and France, into going to war on the continent against Germany in order to fulfill Russia's own war aims. "France," it seems then, "[fell] on its sword for Russia, not the other way around."<sup>36</sup> These are bold claims. It is here we must pause and notice how minor players in the previous arguments, Russia's strategists and Sazonov, are now the masterminds that led Europe into war. It is a transformation in narrative as great as that concerning Bethmann Hollweg as the tragic hero to Bethmann Hollweg as the cold-blooded strategist.

To understand the direction of McMeekin's argument, we must look at Russia's so-called "strategic imperative of 1914," which I find to be the most interesting point of departure from postwar outbreak literature. McMeekin shows that Russia, not Germany, was the one to be concerned about encirclement in the 1910s: "The Romonov's long and ragged borders butted up against no less than five powers, either actively hostile, [or]... recently hostile."<sup>37</sup> Further, "Russia's seemingly inexorable imperial expansion," the one thing that Germany dreamed of, "had in fact been propelled largely by the self-perpetuating strategic problem of border insecurity," and insecurity that was only matched by internal disputes and fissures.<sup>38, 39</sup> Given

40 Ibid., 35.  
41 Ibid., 26.  
42 Ibid., 72.  
43 Ibid., 72–73.  
44 Ibid., 40.  
45 Ibid., 72.  
46 Ibid., 97.  
47 Ibid., 28.  
48 Ibid., 95–96.  
49 Ibid., 74–75.  
50 Ibid., 28.  
51 Christopher Hitchens,  
“From Berlin to Bin Laden,”  
*The Atlantic* (March 2011).  
Published online at <www.  
theatlantic.com/magazine/  
archive/2011/03/from-berlin-to-  
bin-laden/308369/>. Accessed  
December 1, 2013.  
52 McMeekin, *Russian Origins*, 28.  
53 Ibid., 94.  
54 Ibid., 114.  
55 Ibid., 243.

this strategic environment, conquering Constantinople only grew in its importance to the Tsar and Sazonov. “The strategic issue of the day was clear and unambiguous: Constantinople and the Straits.”<sup>40</sup> Though his plan for storming Constantinople was still nascent in 1912, Sazonov and the Russian strategists understood that “the shortest and safest operational route to Constantinople runs through Vienna... and Berlin.”<sup>41</sup> The way to get to Vienna and Berlin in the first place would be to “line up with the most favorable coalition possible” and then spur along a European war that would occupy the German power that lay alongside Russia’s exposed West flank, while it focused on it’s true aim, the Ottoman Empire.<sup>42, 43</sup>

It was imperative that the British and French publics did not see the expansionist nature of Russia’s war aims — they were even “slightly distasteful” to the diplomats from those allied countries who were aware of them.<sup>44–46</sup> It was Russia’s “shadowy pretensions” in the Balkans that beguiled the Allies and ignited a war.<sup>47</sup> Russia had not-so-small territorial aims in Eastern Europe. In fact, it had plans in the fall of 1914 to expand into Silesia and Galicia, claims to which “had been formulated long before the war of 1914... and thus Galicia and Turkey were intimately related in the minds of Russian policymakers... Russia’s annexationist war aims for Austrian Galicia and Turkey were broadly shared inside the Russian government.”<sup>49</sup> Throughout this prewar time, Sazonov is in charge, scheming, pulling the strings that hold Europe’s diplomacy in fragile balance, while Tsar Nicholas sits idly by, too powerless to act in the face of united diplomatic and military leaders.<sup>50</sup> One thing is clear from this narrative: “Russia’s designs on the Straits... were a matter of cold, hard national interest.”<sup>51</sup>

McMeekin fights an uphill battle against the prevailing narratives of German war guilt. Like Fischer, McMeekin scrutinizes newly available sources; like Fischer, McMeekin’s argument can, in a certain light, look too bold and conclusive to be supported by such sources. I see two forces driving McMeekin to his own conclusion: McMeekin himself, the sources he analyzes in his work, and the context surrounding the players in his narrative, namely Russia and Turkey.

McMeekin is a professor of history at Bilkent, a Turkish university. He has a Turkish wife, and though born and raised in America, is quite assimilated to Turkish culture.<sup>52</sup> It is not surprising that he finds the answer to a vital question of the past to be right on his doorstep in Istanbul. A Turkish perspective on the outbreak of World War I necessitates a discussion of the Russo-Turkish relationship, of which the Straits are an integral part. Another part, untouched in this discussion as of yet, is the religious divide between the two nations. Countless times in his narrative McMeekin references the “religious undertones” to all of Russian strategic goals.<sup>52–55</sup> A war with Turkey was not only a strategic imperative, but also one from God: a

- 56 Sean McMeekin, "On the Importance of the Ottoman Straits," *The Montreal Review* (June 2011). <[www.themontrealreview.com/2009/On-the-Importance-of-the-Ottoman-Straits.php](http://www.themontrealreview.com/2009/On-the-Importance-of-the-Ottoman-Straits.php)>. Accessed December 1, 2013.
- 57 McMeekin, *Russian Origins*, 2.
- 58 *Ibid.*, 4.
- 59 <[www.economist.com/topics/turkey](http://www.economist.com/topics/turkey)>. Accessed December 1, 2013.

final struggle between Islam and Christianity, of which Russia and its religion would be victor. Given the current religious climate, one in which Islam is tearing itself apart in the Middle East, and the Holy Lands are still a battlefield, it makes sense that McMeekin sees a religious backbone to war plans.<sup>56</sup> Rather than being grounded in nationalism, McMeekin's argument centers around perhaps the first aspect of society that is not confined by borders: religion.

The impetuses, of both a positional and a religious nature, give way to a persuading argument only by the new sources that are available today. This fact accounts for the timing of the publication of McMeekin's narrative. He gives a detailed account of the difficulty in gaining access to Russian archival sources in his introduction, citing it as a main reason for the "deep freeze" that has gripped the scholarship on the outbreak of war for much of recent history.<sup>57</sup> It is only recently that the Russians have opened their archives to historians, and the first full archive of World War I will not be available until 2015. McMeekin's story in particular is told through the records of the Imperial Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Though these have been available since 1917, the deep freeze of the Soviet Era prevailed, and scholars were compelled by the prevalent debate, Germany's vital importance in the postwar years, and by the complete bipolarity of the Cold War, to train their eyes on Germany and Germany alone.<sup>58</sup> Russia was closed to any scholarship. It is a lucky combination of McMeekin's positioning in Turkey and the religious conflicts of the present day that allow these sources to be finally analyzed to the result that McMeekin presents modern readers.

A final factor compels McMeekin to write this narrative today: Turkey's position in modern international politics. Since its inception, Turkey has straddled two continents, often to its great profit, and often to its despair. In today's world, however, Turkey is vying towards its European side: it has applied for a position in the European Union, and put forth many applications to host world sporting events. Turkey has shown itself to be a powerful economy, with a powerful democracy, as seen by the demonstrations just this past summer.<sup>59</sup> At the publication of McMeekin's book, this was no less apparent; indeed its application to the EU has existed since 1987. But if Turkey enters the EU, then what is the EU? It faces an identity crisis on the question of Turkey. By including Turkey as a vital player in European history, McMeekin is at once supporting its inclusion in modern Europe, and imploring the world to see that it does belong in Europe given its vital role. McMeekin is thus responding to the current geopolitical situation in which Turkey finds itself and demanding a change to that situation in the very publication of his argument.

- 60 Christopher Clark, *The Sleepwalkers: How Europe Went to War in 1914* (New York: Harper, 2012), xxix.
- 61 *Ibid.*, xxxi.
- 62 *Ibid.*, 7.
- 63 *Ibid.*, p.123.

Christopher Clark's title is eye catching: rather than starkly pointing the finger at a blameworthy party, *The Sleepwalkers: How Europe Went to War in 1914*, seems to sap all agency from the actors in the prewar era. His argument, however, does anything but. Clark does not employ the trope of the sleepwalker in a Lloyd George sort of way to suggest that Europe did not intend to go to war but rather slithered into it. Clark presents a more nuanced approach in his argument of agency, which draws attention to smaller actors, like Serbia, and does not find a guilty party in the end.

He could not summarize this in a clearer way than in his introduction:

The key decision makers...walked towards danger in watchful, calculated steps. The outbreak of war was the culmination of chains of decisions made by political actors with conscious objectives, who were capable of a degree of self-reflection, acknowledged a range of options and formed the best judgments they could on the basis of the best information they had to hand.<sup>60</sup>

He continues by saying that the large trends of militarism, armaments and nationalism all played roles, but the true nature of the outbreak becomes evident when decisions are seen in the context of those trends. The European decision makers are given agency in this narrative, rather than being shaped by forces beyond their control. The subtlety in Clark's argument comes with his distinction of causality that enabled war to happen and inevitability of that war. The actions of the decision makers could have easily also led to peace, and Clark even describes the war as "improbable."<sup>61</sup>

There are two specific aspects that distinguish Clark's book from other outbreak literature: first, is the heightened role that Serbia plays in this narrative; second, the escape from the ubiquitous blame game. Clark's narrative opens in Serbia, in 1903, with the assassination of Alexander of Serbia by the Black Hand, the very group that organized the assassination of Franz Ferdinand eleven years later.<sup>62</sup> This framework immediately pulls his argument South, to the Balkans, and even touches on Italy's actions; but rather than losing sight of the actions of the other main powers, Clark draws them in to his discussion on the Balkans. Clark's argument has a broad scope from the very beginning. But rather than getting hunkered down in the timeline of assassinations and talks between Austria Hungary and Serbia in the years before the war, Clark also pays attention to the geopolitical aspects to war, namely the changing alliance system, which "did not *cause* the war...but structured the environment in which the crucial decisions were made."<sup>63</sup>

- 64 Harold Evans, "On the Brink," *New York Times* (May 9, 2013). <[www.nytimes.com/2013/05/12/books/review/the-sleepwalkers-and-july-1914.html?pagewanted=2&\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2013/05/12/books/review/the-sleepwalkers-and-july-1914.html?pagewanted=2&_r=0)>. Accessed December 1, 2013.
- 65 Clark, *The Sleepwalkers*, 561.
- 66 *Ibid.*, 561.
- 67 *Ibid.*, xxiii.
- 68 *Ibid.*, xxiv.
- 69 *Ibid.*, 555.

The second and most crucial part of Clark's argument: that there is no one party to blame. In fact, Clark's narrative runs so broadly and deeply that it is hard to pick out familiar names out of the multitude of characters he presents as having some hand in the outbreak of war.<sup>64</sup> As he says, "Do we really need to make the case against a single guilty state, or to rank the states according to their respective share in responsibility for the outbreak of war? ... Such arguments are not supported by the evidence."<sup>65</sup> He continues: "There is no smoking gun in this story; or, rather, there is one in the hands of every major character ... The crisis that brought war in 1914 was the fruit of a shared political culture."<sup>66</sup> These conclusions are supported by the wide breadth and careful framing of Clark's narrative. In one so broad, and at the same time dense, as his, it is impossible to find just one man, or even a cadre of men in one nation, on whom blame should rest. This represents quite a departure from previous literature, but one that can be explained by Clark's sources and the immediate context in which he is writing.

Clark himself brings up these two issues in his introduction and conclusion. He cites the "oversupply of sources" as one of the main hurdles that historians must jump in order to get at the precise nature of the outbreak of war in 1914.<sup>67</sup> Each belligerent nation has many volumes on the outbreak of the war — Germany's alone is 57 volumes.<sup>68</sup> But this marks a palpable shift in the sources of postwar authors and McMeekin. Rather than archives just being opened, and new sources becoming available, as was the case for the postwar authors, Clark is presented with all of the archives of every nation. The familiarity of these sources might be one reason for the inclusion of all of them in Clark's narrative: instead of focusing on one, fresh archive, Clark has every archive open to his analytic disposal.

The prevalence of source material may have enabled the broad focus of his narrative, but it a symptom of a larger global trend. Much like McMeekin's narrative, which both was compelled by an expanding Europe and demanded a reimagining of that very Europe, Clark's both forces a new view of the continent and Union, and is urged along by the Eurozone's prevailing economic and political climate. As Clark clearly states, "The last section of this book was written at the height of the Eurozone financial crisis."<sup>69</sup> He draws direct comparisons between the men of 1914 and the actors in the Eurozone crisis, both of whom knew the possible catastrophes that could come from their policies, and exploited those shared possibilities for their own specific, national advantages. By directly connecting these two groups of decision makers, Clark thrusts the history of World War I into the present day. Seen in the light of the global financial crisis, an argument that finds no blameworthy party is comforting, as it suggests that there is no one guilty for our present crisis.

- 70 Ibid., 558.  
71 Ibid., 559.  
72 Ibid., 99.  
73 <europa.eu/index\_en.htm>.  
Accessed December 1, 2013.

I would take Clark's own connections to the present day further and say that his assertion that the Balkan question led to war<sup>70-72</sup> and the subsequent Southern shift in the center of gravity of his narrative can also find their explanations in the present day politics of the European Union: namely, the question of Western Balkan EU membership. In 2003 a Council was held that was going to spearhead the preparation of the Western Balkan states to be candidates for EU membership. Many Western Balkan countries adopted foreign policy with the end goal being membership. Just this last July, Croatia became the 28th member of the Union.<sup>73</sup> EU enlargement has for the past decade largely been concerned with the West Balkan states. It seems only fitting that, as most of them are still vying for positions in the Union, Clark's narrative should draw them back into the fold of the continent's most seminal crisis.

The broad nature of Clark's argument may seem contradictory to the general trend of transnational history in a global age. I rather see it as a different approach at transnational history: by framing his argument in such a way that gives decision makers agency in a world in which trends such as nationalism and militarism crossed borders, Clark is giving a narrative of international relations a transnational base. He does not evoke the voice of the masses in his argument, in a way that the post-war authors did—this day and age does not call for it. There were, at the time of publication, no popular uprisings in any European country, and the memory of the 68-ers has faded. Rather, the trends that Clark explicitly summons are palpable, in their own subtle ways, in our world today: terrorism; militant societies in a tumultuous Middle East; forces that exist to shape the decisions leaders of all countries make in the face of crises. It is this universality that makes Clark's work, though one that often focuses on the geostrategic thinking of Europe's decision makers, one of transnational history.

## Margaret MacMillan, 2013

- 74 Margaret MacMillan, *The War That Ended Peace* (New York: Random House, 2013), 3.  
75 Ibid., 7.

The final and most recent author we encounter is Margaret MacMillan, whose one volume history of the outbreak of war, *The War that Ended Peace*, is explicitly transnational. This interpretation can be immediately discerned from her title, which is ostensibly focused not on the fact that war happened, but that it ended *peace*, that universal state of calm, which pervaded Europe in the decades before the war. MacMillan opens her narrative with the Paris Exposition of 1900, a venue in which the world powers flaunted their power, and tensions were visible, but where the prevailing climate was one of marvel at the general prosperity that peace had brought to Europe.<sup>74, 75</sup> Like Clark, MacMillan attests, "any explanation of how the Great War came must balance the great currents of the past with the human beings who bobbed along in them but who sometimes



76 Ibid., xxvi.  
77 Ibid., xxvi.  
78 Ibid., xxxii.  
79 Ibid., xxxii.  
80 Ibid., xxxiv.  
81 Ibid., 691.  
82 Ibid., 245.

changed the direction of the flow.”<sup>76</sup> In her narrative, too, the leaders of Europe are given agency. But it becomes apparent throughout the book that there is an emphasis also on the “forces, ideas, prejudices, institutions, conflicts.”<sup>77</sup> Her argument, indeed, opens with the major cultural event of the new century, and diplomatic or political meaning is then assigned to it.

It is MacMillan’s emphasis on the alternative, on peace in place of war that gives her argument its clear transnational focus:

There is a danger in so concentrating on the factors pushing Europe towards war that we many neglect those pulling the other way, towards peace. The nineteenth century saw a proliferation of societies and associations for the outlawing of war... The world’s labor movements and socialist parties organized themselves into the Second International, which repeatedly passed motions against war...<sup>78</sup>

Further, Europe’s people “were linked to each other and the world through speedier communications, trade, investment, migration and the spread of official and unofficial empires.”<sup>79</sup> It is the crossing of boundaries that let Europe flourish, and the nationalism, Social Darwinism and “its cousin militarism,” that closed borders and allowed Europe to be led into war. Even when looking at the actors themselves, Bethmann Hollweg, Tsar Nicholas II, she emphasizes their personalities rather than nationalities.<sup>80</sup> Though she does attest to believing that some actors, notably Germany, Austria-Hungary and Russia, deserve a larger slice of the blame, she is predominantly concerned with the question of peace.

Much of the explanation of MacMillan’s argument can be found in her sources: they are, for the most part, secondary. Unlike McMeekin, she employs predominantly secondary sources, with the occasional diary or memoir of a world leader of the time — the nations’ archives are less put to use.<sup>81</sup> What does this mean for the nature of her argument? First, it suggests a broad argument that can cover many bases with substantial proof, instead of inferences made about society and trends from primary state documents. A mix of secondary and primary sources allows MacMillan to be broad but at the same time deft in her analysis: she can tackle international relations, diplomacy and preparations for war alongside “hopes, fears, ideas and unspoken assumptions,” which is, incidentally, the title of one of her chapters.<sup>82</sup>

MacMillan’s sources also reveal something about the environment in which she is writing. We have reached a point in our current literature where historians can build off the work of previous ones, not just by disagreeing and debating them, but by working with their conclusions to produce new ones. MacMillan’s work is a perfect example of this trend: though she sometimes has a seemingly Fischerite angle in her implication



- 83 Ibid., 108.  
84 Ibid., xxv.  
85 Ibid., xxxii.

of Germany, the use of secondary sources does not blind her to the other arguments that exist in today's world.<sup>83</sup> Her wide array of available secondary sources allows her to build a narrative that, though it has echoes of arguments past, is wholly unique in its *mélange*.

2013 is not very separated from 2012 in the general global mood—the financial crisis still rages in much of the world, Europe continues to expand South and East, and occasionally powers like Russia flex its muscles in such a way that calls attention to its proximity to Europe. MacMillan herself identifies, rather than a prevailing mood, the present's palpable roots in the past: her introduction plainly states that “the Great War still casts its shadow both physically and in our imaginations... because so many of us have family connections to it.”<sup>84</sup> Family, and moreover, family in the face of mass death and grieving, is the mood that she identifies to give her argument relevance in the present day. As another sign of relevance, she also cites globalization, the prewar variant of which “has been matched only by our own times since the end of the Cold War.”<sup>85</sup> MacMillan gives her readers these two general connections to the prewar era, imbuing her entire narrative with pertinence in the present day. But in deriving the nature of her argument in present day international relations and transnational forces, I have reached a separate conclusion from my previous ones: MacMillan's narrative is one that suggests a change in the nature of the study of the history of World War I. Its attention to detail across all countries, its analysis of the large movements in the international power structure, as well as its awareness of the transnational forces that existed at the time, all point to a new kind of narrative that builds off previous ones, and realizes that the job of historians is not assign blame in the face of crises, but to understand how they occur. MacMillan is, for now, the final brick on a road that has led a long way from Article 231 and arguments that find a guilty party. An attempt at objectivity is what comes from a history understood transnationally.

## Conclusions

From the framework of this discussion, I hope one truth can be discerned: that history is both a cause for and a symptom of shifting transnational forces and international relations of the time in which it was written. Indeed, that is the main basis for the study of historiography. The double-edged nature of history is perhaps most salient in the literature surrounding the outbreak of World War I, and the assigning of responsibility. As shown, from Ritter in the immediate postwar era, to Fischer, to Berghahn to Mommsen, the postwar and Cold War-era historians all were effected by the time in which they were writing, and the sources that became slowly available that enabled

- 86 Christopher Clark, 'The First Calamity,' *London Review of Books*, vol. 35, no. 16 (August 2013), 3–6. <[www.lrb.co.uk/v35/n16/christopher-clark/the-first-calamity](http://www.lrb.co.uk/v35/n16/christopher-clark/the-first-calamity)>. Accessed December 4, 2013.
- 87 *Historische Zeitschrift*, Bd. 194, H. 3 (June, 1962), 646–668.

their analyses. A shift occurred in the focus of their arguments: while Ritter and Fischer trained their eyes on Germany and the upper echelons of decision makers, Berghahn casts a wider view on the prevailing forces of the prewar era. However, even given the small glimmers of transnational history that are vaguely present in Berghahn's arguments, they are still quite German-centric.

By the time we arrive at the present day, the nature of these arguments has fundamentally changed. Rather than focusing on Germany, the arguments completely shift the focus East to Russia and Turkey, as McMeekin does, or widens the focus to include all of the European powers, their leaders, political, diplomatic and royal, and their populations. These one-volume histories cite the archives of all of the major European powers, the speeches and correspondence of most of the diplomats and political leaders of each country, and the public records of the nations, now that they are all fully available. They exist on a different level than their postwar predecessors, as they implicate every major power with the outbreak of war in 1914. This is no longer a German story; the arguments of contemporary literature cannot be summarized in four questions. It is a global story, which exists only in the age of globalization and transnational history.

Out of this discussion, readers can also understand that the Great War is far from over. It still rages today — perhaps not on the battlefields, but in academic discourse and popular memory. This is not likely to end anytime soon. There is a snowballing effect, briefly mentioned in the above section on MacMillan, in the recent tendency to analyze secondary as well as primary sources, that will prevent the war from ever really ending. It is a genre that is hemophilic in nature: a cut unable to scab. The causes of the war will forever be unanswerable, as with every reading of every primary source comes a secondary source. The multitude of these that flow through the bookstores today can be combined and analyzed in their own right, and so the genre multiplies.

Another aspect of this is the fact that scholars, for the most part, do not argue anymore on the subject — they accept that there can be different interpretations, and the flow of new literature on the outbreak of the war will keep being built off of previous arguments. Christopher Clark recently published a book review in the *London Review of Books*, which summarizes and lauds the works of McMeekin and MacMillan that were discussed in this paper.<sup>86</sup> There is no bristling opposition to their arguments, as there was when Ritter reviewed Fischer's work in 1962 — with the rather scathing title *Eine neue Kriegsschuldthese?*, or *A New Theory on War Guilt?*<sup>87</sup> Rather, it seems that historians have come to a sort of consensus that there can and will always be new arguments on the outbreak of war, and each will have its own nuances regarding inevitability, culpability, and prevailing intangible moods of the age, but will rest on the

same general archives, and a similar, although broad, constellation of previous arguments.

But we must not ignore the basic tenet of historiography that history is shaped by the time in which it was written. Throughout this discussion, I have measured the effect of the present day on the analysis of history. And though it is done with the help of hindsight for the postwar authors, it continues to be a viable tenet in today's literature as well. What insights can be gained from the historiography of this contemporary literature? That World War I is as salient an issue now as it was in 1919? That goes without saying. As Clark notes, the nature of our current geopolitics more closely resembles that of pre-1914 Europe than the balance of power during from the years 1919–1991,<sup>88</sup> and while we don't flinch with every crisis, nor do we teeter on the edge of a world war, there exist in the same way as did in 1914 transnational forces of which our leaders are only peripherally aware.<sup>89</sup> But it is also necessary to note that while the field of transnational history still supports the arguments of these contemporary authors, they are beginning to expand beyond this framework. The result is narratives that pay homage to the national moorings of previous arguments, with portrayals of general strategic landscapes, and diplomatic actions, but also analyze every state system, every leader, and every society, as depicted in that country's archives. This is not the absence of transnational history, but rather the development of it to suit our modern times: times in which the strategic landscape is ever more important as unipolarity fades; in which the truly universal trend that crosses national borders is a shared history, of which we are all aware given the abundance of information in our time.

A final insight regards the European Union, and is perhaps, by now, evident. Over the past 20 years, after the collapse of the Soviet Union, Europe has faced somewhat of a conundrum regarding expansion: given the economic benefits and prestige associated with membership, an increasing number of countries wish to join the Union. Just like Russia's inexorable expansion in McMeekin's narrative, the EU seems to be uncontrollably increasing in size. Simply put, an expanding Europe requires an expanding history of Europe. As the Union creeps eastward toward Russia and Turkey, and South toward the Balkans, it becomes ever more necessary to note these countries' contributions, both positive and negative, to European history, and in so doing, introduce them into the modern dialogue regarding Europe and the EU.

No matter how far away in time we might get from the ratification of the Treaty of Versailles and Article 231, the question of war guilt and the mystery of the outbreak of World War I will be relevant as a marker for trends, national, international and transnational, of the present day. All we must do is look to those of the past to understand those of our pres-

ent, and our position in the face of an unknown future will become clearer.

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