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We dedicate this edition of the Southern California International Review to those that critically study the past to seek answers for the future.
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Editor’s Note:

Dear Reader,

It is with great pleasure that I introduce to you the twenty-second edition of the Southern California International Review (SCIR). This semester’s issue continues our mission of providing a platform for undergraduate scholars of international affairs to deliver their work to a larger, global audience.

We were incredibly fortunate to have dozens of submissions for this issue. Our editors spent staunch hours examining undergraduate research from all across the country and throughout the world. Of the many impressive submissions, the following five were outstanding for their original ideas and fresh perspectives on globalization topics. As you read this journal, you will understand why.

In the creation of this issue, the SCIR is extremely appreciative of the support of the University of Southern California’s School of International Relations Director Saori Katada, Associate Director Linda Cole, Professor Wayne Sandholtz, and the rest of the faculty and staff that give us the guidance we need to steadily grow. I also extend our thanks to Ms. Robin Friedheim for her generous scholarship that provides the foundation upon which our endeavor thrives.

Our five selected articles each approach a specific issue in different corners of the world—this is a theme that unifies this edition. The first article analyzes American foreign policy in Indonesia through a religious lens. Our second article examines failures of the Washington Consensus, while the third article compares Russian and Chinese disinformation campaigns. The fourth article explores how the Oslo Accords sought and ultimately failed to bring an end to Arab-Israeli conflict, and the last article argues the importance of emotions and memory in the context of contemporary Korea-Japan relations. Each author has carefully dissected their topics, completed original research, and presented their findings with professionalism that makes a meaningful contribution to the study of international affairs.

I would like to thank you, the reader, since without you, we are nothing. Remember, the content of this journal is just one part of a much larger dialogue.

Please read, ponder, explore, and enjoy.

Warm regards,
Joe Jocas
Editor-in-Chief
Currently, promoting religious freedom as a democratic ideal constitutes a keystone of U.S. foreign policy toward Indonesia, but this has not always been the case. As Indonesia transitioned from a dictatorship to a democratic society, religious liberties posed one of the greatest challenges to its democratization. Despite Indonesia’s constitutional guarantee of religious freedoms, the government only recognizes six religions, and extremist groups have further exacerbated tensions by inciting violence against those who follow minority religions. As the U.S. elevated its relationship with Indonesia over the years, so too did it enhance its messaging and cooperative initiatives to promote religious tolerance and respect for freedoms within the Southeast Asian country. This paper examines how religious-based foreign policy and programming have evolved throughout the U.S. presidencies of Barack Obama and Donald Trump. Through careful evaluation of both primary and secondary sources, it will explore changes in engagement between the U.S. and Indonesian governments as well as their subsequent non-governmental organizations. This study will then conclude with recommendations for how the Biden administration can continue to champion religious freedoms in Indonesia moving forward.

The aim of this paper is to evaluate the success of religious-based U.S. foreign policy programs initiated by cooperation between the United States and Indonesia. It will also examine how these programs have affected their bilateral relationship and Indonesia’s progress on religious freedom—or lack thereof. This topic merits more attention because issues of religious intolerance in Indonesia have caused considerable concern in recent years. While freedom of religion is often taken for granted in the U.S., the same cannot be said in Indonesia, where, despite the constitution’s written guarantee of religious freedoms, the government recognizes only six religions: Catholicism, Protestantism, Hinduism, Buddhism, Confucianism, and Islam. This was originally justified by Pancasila, the governing principles of Indonesia. Sunni Muslims comprise the largest religious population, and those who do not adhere to Sunni Islam often face discrimination, especially if they practice religions not recognized by the government (such as animism, Judaism, and other native religions), or rather no religion at all. To promote human rights in Indonesia, the United States has actively engaged with the country through both government actors and various non-governmental organizations (NGOs) on issues of religious tolerance and

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freedom.

This paper covers a period of twelve years, spanning from 2009 to the present, examining the Obama and Trump administrations. The scope in focus is mainly sociocultural and will discuss three different religious groups: Muslims, non-Muslims who follow any of the other five government-approved religions, and those who practice a religion not accepted by the government. This paper is organized into five parts: 1.) an introduction that broadly overviews U.S. policy toward Indonesia, the state of religious freedoms in Indonesia, and the two countries’ relationship prior to 2009; 2.) an analysis of U.S. engagement with Indonesia on both government and NGO levels during President Obama’s first term (2008-2012); 3.) an examination of changes in and the progress of these same efforts during Obama’s second term (2013-2016); 4.) an evaluation of these two levels of engagement under President Trump (2017-2021); and 5.) a conclusion that summarizes developments and discusses prospects for the current Biden administration and beyond.


As the largest country in Southeast Asia and a leading member of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), Indonesia is an increasingly important partner of the United States’ in the Indo-Pacific region. With a population of 271 million, Indonesia is the world’s largest Muslim-majority country and third-largest democracy. More than 87 percent of Indonesia’s population identify as Muslim, 7 percent as Protestant, 2.9 percent as Roman Catholic, and 1.7 percent as Hindu. Approximately 0.9 percent identify with other religious groups, including Buddhism, Confucianism, Gafatar, other Christian denominations, or traditional indigenous religions. Indonesia’s contemporary relationship with the United States began in 1949 and was among the country’s first after it received independence from the Netherlands in 1945. After Suharto’s 32-year authoritarian regime ended in 1998, the country experienced a period of democratization and stable reform. Despite these progressive underpinnings, however, Indonesia’s democracy had much room for improvement, especially regarding religious issues.

As Indonesia transitioned from a dictatorship to a democratic society, respect for religious freedoms posed one of the greatest challenges to this process. The country’s first president Sukarno established Indonesian democracy around the concept of Pancasila,

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five governing principles for Indonesia: belief in God, humanitarianism, national unity, representative democracy by consensus, and social justice.\(^5\) As such, the second amendment of Indonesia’s 1945 constitution guaranteed the right to worship under one’s own belief. However, the country only recognized six religions: Catholicism, Protestantism, Hinduism, Buddhism, Confucianism, and Islam.\(^6\) The constitution also acknowledged freedoms of thought, conscience, and religion as indisputable rights, yet these were also constrained within the confines of Pancasila. In practice, Pancasila’s emphasis on “belief in God” effectively required all citizens to either identify with one of these official religions—and inscribe it on their national identification cards—or subject themselves to social and legal discrimination.

Furthermore, anyone who violates the blasphemy law, which criminalized any disgrace to the six recognized religions, faced arrest, detainment, and imprisonment.\(^7\) Enacted in 1965 as Article 156(A) of the Indonesian Criminal Code and still enforced today, the blasphemy law targets leaders and followers of minority religious groups considered to be deviant to the norms, and sentences could amount to five years in prison. Since Suharto’s dictatorship heavy-handedly suppressed dissenting viewpoints, the offense was prosecuted only eight times prior to 1998. After all, neither minority nor radical groups had platforms on which they could vocalize their beliefs. No one was convicted under presidents Bacharuddin Jusuf Habibie (1998-1999), Abdurrahman Wahid (1999-2001), nor Megawati Sukarnoputri (2001-2004), but convictions spiked to 125 under President Yudhoyono, who served two five-year terms beginning in 2004.\(^8\) Almost all those accused of blasphemy were convicted.\(^9\) Thus, the end of Suharto’s regime unleashed greater freedoms for the Indonesian people but also created a paradox. The unintended empowerment of religious hardliners and Yudhoyono’s push for democratization under Pancasila, with its assumption that all Indonesians adhere to a pre-approved faith, conversely paved the way for institutionalizing the persecution of religious minorities.

In addition to Indonesia’s religious society and restrictive laws, religious extremist groups also curb religious freedom by inciting multiple incidents of violence throughout the country. In May 1999, brutal fighting between Muslims and Christians led to the death of more than 9,000 people in the Moluccas, a conflict prolonged by government inaction. Similar violence between these two religious groups nearly erupted into

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6 Since the majority of Muslims in Indonesia are Sunni, this can be interpreted as a sole acceptance of Sunni Islam. Shiites, unfortunately, face discrimination.
a massacre on the island of Sulawesi in July 2001, although this time the government intervened quickly enough to prevent an escalation of the militant groups’ aggression. The vandalization and bombing of Hindu temples, burning and subsequent closures of Protestant churches, and mob attacks on Ahmadiyah mosques characterized 2005 and 2006. Pressured by extremists, the Indonesian Ministry of Religious Affairs issued a decree further restricting the construction of places of worship in 2006. This regulation required “community approval” for any expansions or new buildings, a difficult threshold to meet for followers of minority religions. Mob attacks, property destruction, and the targeting of minority religious groups continued throughout the next two years, although police officers rarely arrested those responsible for such crimes. In 2008, minority Muslim groups considered “deviant,” such as Dzikir Asmaul Husa, Tarekat Naqsabandiyah, and Nural Yaqin, faced heightened government harassment and communal violence.

Due to this sectarian violence and encroachment upon human rights, U.S.-Indonesian democratic cooperation began focusing on the promotion of religious freedom, a natural extension of freedom of expression. Starting in 1998, the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF) met frequently with Indonesian political leaders, human rights activists, journalists, and leaders of various faith traditions. Millions of dollars in U.S. government assistance to Indonesia through the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) supported programs in conflict resolution, multi-religious dialogue and tolerance, pluralism, and education. NGOs, such as the US-Indonesia Society (USINDO), also tried to foster organic dialogue between the two countries.

Despite these efforts, however, religious intolerance continued to pose a threat to human rights and democracy in Indonesia. USCIRF added Indonesia to its Special Watch List in 2002.

After the attacks of September 11, 2001, when radical Islam was on the rise, many feared that Indonesia would become the next hub for terrorism due to its majority-Muslim population. However, the Indonesian government became a key partner in U.S. counterterrorism efforts, and the bilateral relationship has continued to grow stronger over the years. In fact, U.S. policy toward Indonesia regarding religious freedoms in the early 2000s was largely influenced by President George W. Bush’s counterterrorism agenda. On September 19, 2001, Indonesia’s President Soekarnoputri met with President

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11 Ahmadiyah Muslims comprise a minority sect of Islam.
13 Ibid, 237.
14 “Data,” Foreign Aid Explorer, USAID Data Services, last updated February 25, 2021.
15 Founded in 1994 and based in Washington, D.C., USINDO strives to enhance mutual understanding in the areas of politics, economics, history, and culture between Indonesia and the United States and deepen the relationship between the two countries and their peoples.
Bush in the U.S. to issue a joint statement reaffirming the principles of religious freedom and tolerance.\textsuperscript{16} Despite these constitutional rights, Islamist extremist groups such as Al-Qaeda and Jemaah Islamiyah (JI) continued to commit acts of terror and violence. In 2002, 2003, and 2005, bombings linked to JI killed at least 202 at a Bali night club, 12 at a Jakarta Marriott hotel, and 20 at two Bali beaches, respectively, while injuring hundreds.\textsuperscript{17} Given its self-proclaimed proximity to Islam, Islamist terrorism became another challenge for religious freedom in Indonesia.

2. U.S. Religious Diplomacy During President Obama’s First Term (2009-2013)

The presidential election of Barack Obama in 2008 presented new opportunities for U.S. engagement with Indonesia because the president himself had spent four years of his childhood in Jakarta.\textsuperscript{18} Unlike previous presidents, Obama was personally familiar with the Southeast Asian country, and he did not hesitate to draw on his memories in public. When emphasizing the importance of religious freedom at Cairo University in June 2009, he said, “Islam has a proud tradition of tolerance…I saw it firsthand as a child in Indonesia, where devout Christians worshiped freely in an overwhelmingly Muslim country. That is the spirit we need today.”\textsuperscript{19} Such was the attitude of the Obama administration toward religious freedom: one promoting tolerance and drawing on unity. In his eyes, “[the] richness of religious diversity...[should] be upheld” because it is a natural component of democracy.\textsuperscript{20}

On the federal government level, U.S. engagement with Indonesia began to thrive under Obama. This occurred not only through continued embassy programs and the launch of new interfaith forums, but also through the initiation of a full-fledged Comprehensive Partnership that cemented joint goals such as upholding religious freedom. Addressing the Kennedy School in September 2009, President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono directly responded to Obama’s Cairo declaration by highlighting Indonesia's commitment to being the “bridge between the Islamic and the Western world.”\textsuperscript{21} Against the backdrop of ongoing U.S. and Indonesian efforts to fight terrorism, Yudhoyono explained that his country would “project...moderate Islam throughout the modern world” and serve as “a

\begin{thebibliography}{9}
\bibitem{18} Hannah Beech, “Mixed Feelings for a Favorite Son: As Obama prepares to return to Indonesia, Asians aren’t sure if he’s delivered on his promises,” Time, March 29, 2010.
\bibitem{19} Remarks by the President at Cairo University, 6-04-09,” Obama White House Archives, June 4, 2009.
\bibitem{20} Remarks,” June 4, 2009.
\end{thebibliography}
powerful example that Islam, democracy, and modernity can go hand in hand.”

To follow through on their promises, the two countries held the first Indonesia-U.S. Interfaith Dialogue in January of the next year, called “Building Collaborative Communities: Enhancing Cooperation Among People of Different Faiths.” The three-day event, which encouraged interfaith action to address community needs, brought together delegates from Indonesia, the U.S., and six others throughout the region. Leaders from the private sector and civil society, such as religious leaders, scholars, students, and interfaith activists, joined together to work on projects in areas of poverty eradication, environment, education, and governance. A couple of months later in March 2010, USAID sponsored the “Regional Conference on the Role of Religious Leaders in Advancing Development in Asia” in Dhaka, Bangladesh. This event, co-hosted by the Asia Foundation, brought together 70 religious and community leaders from 14 Asian countries, including Indonesia, and served as an integral aspect of President Obama’s Global Engagement Initiative. This increase in engagement was a great step in the right direction for religious freedom in Indonesia and deepened U.S. commitment, credibility, and communicative power regarding the subject.

These interfaith activities also inspired confidence in the U.S.-Indonesia relationship, and the two countries initiated a Comprehensive Partnership in November 2010. This partnership aimed to “promote peace, freedom, prosperity, rule of law, and tolerance in the region and around the world” by strengthening relations between the governments, civil societies, and people of the U.S. and Indonesia. The Partnership’s Joint Commission Meeting comprised six working groups, one of which specialized in democratic institution building, good governance, and interfaith dialogue. As an extension of the U.S.-Indonesia Interfaith Dialogue Conference earlier that year, the Comprehensive Partnership committed Indonesia to sending two high-level delegations to the U.S., where Indonesians met with American religious leaders to enhance mutual understanding, build communities, and share ideas. Around the same time, the Indonesian Ministry of Foreign Affairs also sent academics, religious figures, and other public figures to speak on the compatibil-

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22 Ibid.
ity of Indonesian democracy with moderate Islam at a handful of U.S. universities.\textsuperscript{29} This exchange bolstered the two countries’ relationship at both the state and local level, where most violations against religious freedom were prosecuted.

In line with the work of the executive branch, American NGOs began contributing more robustly to the U.S.-Indonesia agenda on religious freedoms during Obama’s first term, especially through educational initiatives. The Comprehensive Partnership empowered USINDO to further its work in deepening U.S.-Indonesian relations against a backdrop of mutual respect for religious tolerance.\textsuperscript{30} USINDO, along with the Association of Public and Land Grant Universities, the American Association of Community Colleges, the Institute of International Education, and the East-West Center, founded the U.S.-Indonesia Joint Council on Higher Education in July 2010. The Joint Council, explicitly mentioned by Presidents Obama and Yudhoyono in the Joint Declaration of the U.S.-Indonesia Comprehensive Partnership, indirectly contributed to religious dialogue by supporting educational and cultural exchanges.\textsuperscript{31} Also as a result of the Comprehensive Partnership, the American Indonesian Exchange Foundation (AMINEF), an Indonesian-based organization, received additional funding from the U.S. Department of State’s Bureau of Educational and Cultural Exchange to further the Fulbright program in Indonesia.\textsuperscript{32} Both the U.S. and Indonesia understood that educational programs were essential to interfaith dialogue and invested into them.

Unfortunately, not all NGO involvements during Obama’s first term were fruitful. In 2009, a coalition of NGOs, most of which were Indonesian organizations but included the U.S.-based Becket Fund for Religious Liberty, challenged the constitutionality of Indonesia’s blasphemy law, arguing that it contravened freedoms of expression, conscience, and religion.\textsuperscript{33} After all, the very loose definition of “blasphemy” was most often interpreted to be “insulting a religion,” particularly Islam. Of the 120 people accused of blasphemy between 1998 and 2011, 61 self-identified as Christian, 49 as Muslim, four as adhering to mystical beliefs or other religions, and six were unknown.\textsuperscript{34} After conducting a judicial review, Indonesia’s Constitutional Court ruled in 2010 that the law was valid on grounds of “public order” and “religious values” as established by Article 28J(2) of the Constitution.\textsuperscript{35}

Although the judicial process demonstrated progress in Indonesians’ ability to peacefully

\textsuperscript{34} Crouch, “Law and Religion,” 13.
\textsuperscript{35} “Criminalization of Blasphemy,” Amnesty International, 9.
debate major incidents of violence between religions, in many respects the ruling affirmed the unequal targeting of religious minorities. In addition to precipitating an increase in blasphemy convictions, the Court’s decision provided further justification for radical Islamist groups to engage in vigilante behavior.

By the end of Obama’s first term, the religious climate in Indonesia remained largely unchanged. While members of the six officially recognized religions were able to worship freely, minority groups and nonbelievers continued to face intimidation, discrimination, and violence from religious extremists and terrorist organizations. Religious and societal violence targeting Ahmadiyah Muslims, forced closure and vandalism of religious minorities’ properties, law enforcement against “deviancy” groups, terrorist violence targeting religious minorities, and the implementation of Shari’a law in the province of Aceh persisted as challenges to Indonesia’s religious freedom.


During the second term of the Obama administration, the United States continued to engage with Indonesia on religious freedom issues through various levels of government, a relationship that was furthered by the announcement of the U.S.-Indonesia Strategic Partnership. Ambassadors, chiefs of missions, and embassy staff at the U.S. Embassy in Jakarta, Consulate General in Surabaya, and the American Presence Post in Medan led this engagement by dialoguing with Indonesian government officials, religious leaders, and advocacy groups, discussing religious tolerance and promoting respect for religious diversity. Embassy officials also met with members of minority religious groups who were victims of violent attacks, as well as human rights and Muslim social organizations. High-level dialogues, youth exchanges, and speaking tours organized by the State Department became annual programs to promote religious freedom, in addition to growing print and digital outreach, social media campaigns, and television appearances by embassy and consulate personnel. In 2014, a USCIRF Commission led a delegation to Jakarta and Bogor to further understand the environment of religious freedom in the

36 Under Suharto’s “New Order” regime, religion was not a debatable subject of conversation.
37 Crouch, “Indonesia’s Blasphemy Law.”
38 Christians and other non-Muslims were supposedly exempted from Shari’a law.
Southeast Asian country.\textsuperscript{41}

A turning point in the trajectory of religious freedoms for Indonesia was the presidential election of Joko “Jokowi” Widodo in 2014. With a campaign founded upon “pluralism”—a contrast to his opponent Prabowo Subianto’s “anti-discrimination”—Jokowi was the preferred candidate among religious minorities, especially since he appeared to possess a track record of religious tolerance when serving as the governor of Jakarta.\textsuperscript{42} Subianto, on the other hand, not only received endorsements from hardline Islamist organizations such as the Islamic Defenders Front (FPI), but also represented a party whose manifesto declared that “the state is also expected to guarantee the purity of religious teachings … from all forms of heresy and deviation.”\textsuperscript{43} Joko Widodo's victory represented an affirmation by the Indonesian people of the country’s growing democratic values: human rights, justice, plurality, and peace. When President Obama met him for the first time on November 10, 2014 in Beijing, China, he called the recent election “a model for the kind of tolerance and pluralism that we want to see all around the world.”\textsuperscript{44}

Perhaps encouraged by Indonesia’s growing enthusiasm for democratic partnership, the State Department began to especially prioritize engagement with the Indonesian people. In July 2014, embassy staff hosted a three-day Bhinneka Tunggal Ika-E Pluribus Unum Camp and blogging competition for students representing major religions and various university organizations to promote religious tolerance.\textsuperscript{45} In 2014 and 2015, Ambassador Robert O. Blake, Jr. carried messages of religious tolerance to 39 million viewers by appearing on a popular television soap opera.\textsuperscript{46} The month-long Muslim celebration of Ramadan also presented an annual opportunity for discussions between Muslim American staff members and Indonesian high school students about diversity and religious tolerance at various schools, universities, and religious youth organizations throughout the country.\textsuperscript{47} These efforts demonstrated to Indonesians that the U.S. was serious about its relationship with Indonesia and its commitment to advancing the shared value of religious tolerance. The increase in religious programming firmly established religious diplomacy as a key component of U.S. policy toward Indonesia.

In October 2015, President Widodo visited President Obama in Washington, and the two elevated their countries’ bilateral relationship to the U.S.-Indonesia Strategic Partnership, “firmly based on shared principles of democracy and good governance, respect


\textsuperscript{42} Sam Bollier, “Religion the dark horse in Indonesia election,” Al Jazeera, July 8, 2014.

\textsuperscript{43} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{44} “President Obama Meets with the President of Indonesia,” Obama White House Archives, November 10, 2014.

\textsuperscript{45} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{46} “Indonesia 2015 Report,” U.S. Department of State.

for human rights, and the promotion of peace, stability, and economic well-being.”

Given the success of the Comprehensive Partnership established just five years prior, the Strategic Partnership acknowledged the demonstrated strength of the U.S.-Indonesia relationship and opened even more doors for cooperation. With long-term goals in mind, the new Partnership reinforced the shared values and strategic interests of two of the world’s most diverse nations.

This advancement of U.S.-Indonesia relations inspired further activity by NGOs. In August 2016, USINDO announced the formation of an Indonesia-U.S. Council on Religion and Pluralism. The Council is an “innovative bi-national, independent, non-governmental body” that aims to provide religious leaders, civil society organizations, scholars, and media leaders “a mechanism to jointly examine, address, and agree on ways the societies of [both countries] can cooperate on activities and programs to share and promote the values of pluralism, diversity, and tolerance.”

Council members include senior representatives from various NGOs and faith-based institutions, academics, and media leaders from both the U.S. and Indonesia who have vast experience working on issues relating to religion and pluralism. Endorsed by President Obama and President Wikodo in their joint statement announcing the Strategic Partnership, this new council established three working groups: 1) Increasing Religious Understanding, Mutual Respect, and Collaboration, 2) Identifying and Fostering Positive Civic and Religious Education Models that Promote Analytical Thinking and Respect, and 3) Empowering Civil Society to Deter Violent Extremism. Only two months after its creation, the Council on Religion and Pluralism hosted a meeting with the Indonesian Minister of Religious Affairs and participated in a teleconference with leaders of Indonesian pesantrens, or Islamic boarding schools, during their visit to the U.S.

The Council successfully provided a platform on which leading voices in both the U.S. and Indonesia could build a common understanding of religious freedom, which could then be disseminated in their classrooms, congregations, communities, and media.

Further NGO programming continued to build upon U.S. religious diplomacy. In addition to establishing its second council, USINDO ran the bi-annual Legislative Partnership Program in 2014 and 2016, inviting members of Indonesia’s Parliament to the U.S. for a week-long program of policy-oriented skills development. This program offered Indonesian lawmakers a chance to experience the United States’s multicultural and multi-religious society first-hand.

In March 2016, AMINEF hosted 58 U.S. Fulbright scholars.

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at a two-day US-ASEAN Conference in Jakarta, which included panels on topics such as education, history, and religion and rights. Fulbright educational programs continued, fostering authentic exchanges of ideas and experiences.

Unfortunately, though these efforts were helpful, they were not enough to immediately curb sustained religious intolerance in Indonesia. In fact, the Setara Institute calculated a 33 percent increase in incidents of religiously-motivated violence throughout 2015. Local governments continued to restrict religious practices not approved by the government; Ahmadies, Shi'a Muslims, and Baha’is continued to be viewed as “deviant” and “heretical.” Christian churches in the provinces of Aceh and West Java were particular targets of mob violence and forced closure. Furthermore, in June 2015, the Constitutional Court ruled against the legalization of interfaith marriages and courts began trying blasphemy cases under criminal defamation laws. Terrorism did not subside: in January 2016, terrorists affiliated with the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) detonated bombs in Jakarta, killing eight people.


Additional EU legislation governs the rights of migrant workers within EU borders. In contrast to his predecessor Barack Obama, who considered religious freedom to be a factor of but not the driver of democracy, President Donald Trump and his administration approached foreign policy with a reinvigorated emphasis on religion. With a strong evangelical Christian base, the president and his team positioned themselves as champions for religious freedom. From Pence’s 2017 proclamation that “[p]rotecting and promoting religious freedom is a foreign policy priority of the Trump administration,” to Trump’s 2020 signing of an Executive Order on Advancing International Religious Freedom, the administration sought to insert a religious angle into many of its policies, both domestic and foreign. In his executive order, Trump claimed that America’s founders believed religious freedom to be “a gift of God” and appeared to even prioritize religious freedom over other human rights. This rhetoric carried over to his foreign policy: the administration preferred the phrase “radical Islamic terrorism,” attributing terrorism to the religion, a departure from Obama’s use of “radical Islamist terrorism,” a more neutral...
Nonetheless, the renewed focus on religious freedom heavily influenced the U.S. relationship with Indonesia under Trump. During one of his first trips as vice president in April 2017, Mike Pence visited Jakarta, where he called “Indonesia’s tradition of moderate Islam” an “inspiration to the world.” Later that day, he demonstrated the American commitment to advancing religious freedom by participating in an interfaith dialogue with leaders of Islam, Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, and Confucianism at the Istiqlal Mosque. At a subsequent meeting with U.S. and Indonesian business leaders, the vice president repeated his praise of Indonesia’s religious tolerance, emphasizing again that “religion unifies, not divides.”

Encouraged by the White House, the State Department’s engagement to promote religious tolerance and freedom reached new heights during this time. The Embassy and Consulates built upon programs such as regular academic and religious exchanges, community events, print and digital campaigns, television appearances, and Ramadan celebrations by expanding audience reach, increasing their frequency, and sharpening their focus. Specific events included a discussion for high school students on Religious Freedom Day in January 2017, an interfaith event for religious communities of Surabaya in 2018, and periodic meetings between the Ambassador and leaders of Indonesia’s largest Muslim organizations, Muhammadiyah and Nahdlatul Ulama, in 2019. New activities consisted of a visit by the U.S. Ambassador to the Aceh province in April 2017, a year-long film festival highlighting themes of religious diversity in 2018, and an exchange program in 2019 for emerging Islamic leaders to understand religious freedom and pluralism in the United States. A USCIRF delegation once again traveled to Indonesia in 2018 to meet with government officials, civil society leaders, and religious representatives, this time visiting Jakarta, Surabaya, and Medan. Building upon the foundation of programming established during the Obama era, these events marked the most engagement on religious freedom issues ever experienced between the two countries.

At the NGO level, interactions between the U.S. Ambassador and USINDO’s U.S.-Indonesia Council on Religion and Pluralism also increased. In 2018 alone, the Council met with the State Department Coordinator for Counterterrorism, the U.S. Ambassador to Indonesia, and then-Acting Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and

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60 “Remarks by the Vice President and Indonesian President Widodo to the Press,” Trump White House Archives, April 20, 2017.
Pacific Affairs. In addition to sponsoring events of the Council, USINDO also supported dialogues between American and Indonesian scholars. In July 2017, the USINDO office in Washington, D.C. hosted an open forum entitled “The Interplay of Religion and Politics in Indonesia: What Does Jakarta’s Gubernatorial Election Signify?” Two years later in May 2019, USINDO collaborated with the Fulbright Foundation and the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) for a panel discussion on “Politics and Religion in Indonesia” at the CSIS Auditorium in Jakarta. Two months later, USINDO’s Jakarta office joined with CSIS in Indonesia once more to host a public policy form, called “The Role of Religion in Politics: Comparing Recent Trends in Indonesia and the United States.” Each of these events featured panels of prominent professors and researchers. USINDO also hosted its third Legislative Partnership Program in 2018.

A hallmark of U.S. Indonesian policy during the Trump administration was the successful launch of Harmoni: Towards Inclusion and Resilience, a four-year, $20 million project funded by USAID that aimed to “engage key Indonesian government, civil society, and education stakeholders to mitigate the risk of recruitment into violent extremist organizations and reintegrate reformed extremists into society.” In partnership with consulting firm Management Systems International (MSI) and NGOs Love Frankie and Search for Common Ground, the program, initiated in late 2018, sought to support “communities, migrants, and key institutions to increase their awareness of related risks and to develop more effective tools and systems to bolster tolerance and counter the appeal of [violent extremism] organizations (VEOs), reintegrate former VEO members and supporters, and support migrants.” By targeting efforts toward families, schools, universities, and other community groups, Harmoni contributed to anti-extremism and norms of tolerance and inclusion by working at the grassroots level.

During his last visit to Indonesia in October 2020, Secretary of State Mike Pompeo once again lauded the U.S.-Indonesia relationship. “Our deeper, longer-term bonds unite us as friends,” he said. “We are vibrant, diverse democracies, and we honor religious freedom.” This time, however, he could say so with confidence: for the first time in recent history, incidents of religious violence in Indonesia declined during the Trump admin-

administration. The Setara Institute recorded fewer cases of religious intolerance and religious freedom violations in 2018 than in the previous two years. Incidents rose slightly in 2019 but stagnated in 2020. Although correlation does not necessarily indicate causation, it is likely that a combination of factors—President Wikodo’s promotion of a moderate Islam, the efforts of both Indonesia- and U.S.-based NGOs, as well as enhanced U.S. diplomatic activity over the last couple of decades—contributed to this gradual improvement not previously seen during other administrations. Nevertheless, the same challenges facing religious minorities remained, albeit at a lesser degree: legal charges of blasphemy, restrictions against the construction of houses of worship, discrimination against “deviant” groups, the enactment of Shari’a law in Aceh, and acts of terrorism. This intolerance disproportionately affected followers of religions not recognized by the government. Despite the decrease in documented cases of religious freedom violations, USCIRF’s 2021 Annual Report once again recommended that the State Department place Indonesia on its Special Watch List, a listing that had never been removed since 2002.

One significant victory for religious freedom arose in November 2017, when the Constitutional Court ruled that forcing Indonesians who follow indigenous faiths to identify as one of the six recognized religions on their national identification cards, Kartu Tanda Penduduk (KTP), was unconstitutional. Instead, the Court proposed the addition of a seventh category: “Believers of the Faith.” Previously, the law required individuals of native faiths (or anyone who followed a religion not recognized by the government, including atheists) to leave the religion field blank, which often presented challenges when obtaining licenses and permits, accessing education and employment, and completing financial transactions. Consequently, many followers of indigenous religions falsified their religious beliefs to avoid discrimination. While the 2017 ruling was celebrated by religious freedom activists, including the Setara Institute, the decision did not necessarily apply to followers of Judaism, animism, and others, nor to Ahmadiyah and Shi’a communities who are subject to sustained prejudice. It was also deeply criticized by the MUI, the top Muslim clerical body, which feared such a decision equated indigenous faiths with Islam.

5. Conclusion: How Biden Can Promote Religious Freedom Moving Forward

Despite Indonesia’s rocky history with incidents of religious violence, U.S. foreign policy to promote religious freedom in Indonesia can be considered a moderate success.
After the September 11 attacks, when radical Islam was on the rise, many feared that Indonesia would become the next hub for terrorism due to its majority-Muslim population. In the last twelve years, however, a slow and steady trajectory toward tolerance has proven otherwise. During the first term of President Obama, who prided himself on his personal ties to Indonesia, the U.S. began laying the groundwork for future religious diplomacy. Aided by the efforts of NGOs, the two countries participated in interfaith forums, initiated educational exchanges, and launched the Comprehensive Partnership. Religious diplomacy during Obama’s second term built upon this foundation to increase embassy and consulate engagement, especially with the Indonesian and American people, establish a Council on Religion and Pluralism, and announce the Strategic Partnership, among other programs. By the time Donald Trump took office in January 2017, these programs were on track for success, and, with its heightened focus on religious freedoms, the Trump administration implemented the highest level of engagement in history between the U.S. and Indonesia on religious freedom issues. Although violence and discrimination against followers of minority religions endured throughout this time, even increasing in some years, the later decline in such incidents, as well as an encouraging ruling by the Constitutional Court in 2017, demonstrates that U.S. efforts were not completely in vain.

Foreign Service Officer Kevin Price, who works on religious freedom issues at the U.S. Department of State’s Indonesia desk, agrees with this sentiment. Pointing to the decrease in sectarian violence over the last 20 years, he believes that “the long-term trends are positive.” Price further asserts that the Indonesian government has done a good job of protecting the rights of minorities, lowering the administrative burdens on minority religions, promoting a moderate Islam, and curtailing extremism. However, he acknowledges that the work for U.S. diplomacy is not done, and Indonesia still has a ways to go before it achieves an environment of religious freedom.

Therefore, as the Biden administration takes the baton, there are three main considerations it must keep in mind for the future. First, the religious climate in Indonesia continues to face challenges, especially for minority Muslim communities. Ahmadiyah, Gafatar, and Shi’a Muslims remain vulnerable despite a December 2020 promise by Religious Affairs Minister Yaqut Cholil Qoumas to prevent their persecution. Further problems in the Aceh province, where Shari’a law is legal, have sparked human rights concerns over gender inequality and the sentencing of corporal punishment due to adultery and homosexual activity. As the Biden administration seeks to cooperate with Indonesia on the bilateral democratic partnership, it must continue to keep religious freedom at the forefront of these discussions. Even though religious freedom concerns do not ignite the

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76 Kevin Price (U.S. Foreign Service Officer) in discussion with the author, March 12, 2021.
same kinds of conflict in the United States, discrimination continues to be an everyday concern for religious minorities in Indonesia. The Trump administration achieved moderate success in promoting religious freedom, but there is no guarantee that such trends will continue. The State Department, led by Biden and his new team, should actively prioritize interfaith dialogues and programming related to religious freedom in its overall foreign policy objectives in Indonesia.

Second, as U.S. religious diplomacy enters its fourth presidential term under an elevated partnership with Indonesia, it must begin to distinguish between religious tolerance and religious freedom. While religious tolerance in Indonesia has improved over the last few decades, such progress has applied mostly to the government-recognized religions of (Sunni) Islam, Christianity, Protestantism, Buddhism, Hinduism, and Confucianism. The more democratic goal of securing religious freedom for all—including minority Muslims, Jews, indigenous religion followers, and atheists—has yet to be achieved. Until Indonesia becomes a society that universally acknowledges the freedom of worship and meets the ideals of its constitution, an environment of “tolerance” will only serve to further alienate minority religious communities. Therefore, as the Biden administration builds upon its predecessor’s endeavors, it should pivot the interfaith conversation from one of tolerance to one of unobstructed freedom.

Third, if Biden hopes to achieve diplomatic success in Southeast Asia, especially in countering Chinese power in the region, his administration must recognize religious diplomacy as a key opportunity to further its democratic partnership with Indonesia. The new president can easily build upon the momentum that Bush, Obama, and Trump generated over the last 20 years by not only continuing the work of both the federal government and NGOs, but also optimizing social media and emerging technologies. Issues of religious tolerance and freedom are among the predominant threats to Indonesian democracy, and, from a strategic standpoint, the U.S. needs Indonesia as a strong democratic partner now more than ever before. As China increases its influence over Southeast Asia, the U.S. must leverage its partnership with Indonesia, the leader of ASEAN, to encourage its democracy to flourish. While the pandemic presents new challenges to such efforts in the immediate future, history demonstrates that the trend toward religious freedom in Indonesia is a slow and steady race, albeit on track to crossing the finish line.
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Slow and Steady Wins the Race


“Stabilize, Liberalize, Privatize,” The Failures of the 
Washington Consensus: 
Could a Human Rights-Based Approach have been more Effective? 
A Closer Look at the Andean Ridge 
Claire Knox

International development practitioners have long sought to understand the best practices for improving a country’s economic strength while decreasing poverty rates. Historically, neoliberal reforms, colloquially known as the Washington Consensus, were lauded for their ability to privatize failing government institutions and increase net returns on investment. However, these reforms dramatically increased inequality and poverty, dampening the magnitude of any economic improvements. In this paper, I assert that a human rights-based approach would have been more effective in both the short and long run at improving the economic situation in several Andean Ridge countries. Contrary to the notions of privatization and liberalization espoused by the Washington Consensus, a rights-based approach aims to address how denial of human rights dooms individuals to poverty. By addressing the root causes of economic despair, both individuals and governments will be able to sustainably move toward prosperity.

1. Introduction

In 1989, many developing countries were embroiled in a massive debt crisis, particularly in Latin America. Currencies had plummeted and the possibility of regaining economic stability was slim. Western leaders, particularly within the United States, had decided that they must lead the charge toward economic growth, using the World Bank and International Monetary Fund to implement key policies. In this paper, I will explain the Washington Consensus policies that grew out of this debt crisis and their impact on five countries within the Andean Ridge: Argentina, Chile, Ecuador, Bolivia, and Peru. Although these five countries did not all implement the Washington Consensus recommendations in the same way; the impacts of neoliberal programming in each country were remarkably similar. The neoliberal paradigm of the Washington Consensus led to increased poverty and inequality, contrasting greatly with the human rights-based approach, a more recent and nuanced approach to poverty reduction policy.1 This paper aims to identify what is needed to effectively implement a rights-based approach and ultimately hypothesizes about what could have happened in the Andean Ridge region had this ap-

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proach been adopted.

2. The Washington Consensus and Neoliberalism

The Washington Consensus is an emphatic theory, espousing neoliberal economic views that promise a strong and improved future for developing countries that only free markets would achieve. In the 1980s, Latin America and Sub-Saharan Africa were embroiled in a massive debt crisis, threatening any economic progress. Western countries, desperate to fill the power vacuum and prevent socialist systems from developing, quickly stepped in and issued a series of economic policy recommendations for developing countries. The works of Milton Friedman and Friedrich Hayek from the 1960s and 1970s became guidelines for action; neoliberal policy tools became the norm. Through the International Monetary Fund (IMF), World Bank, and International Development Bank, the neoliberal approach sought to retrench the state's role in economic affairs, privatize once-public programs, and create cuts in public expenditures. This view placed the onus of underdevelopment and instability on government involvement.² John Williamson’s list of ten reforms published in 1989, known as the “Washington Consensus,” were suggestions that embodied various neoliberal views. He suggested that governments should embrace the notion of fiscal discipline, restructure public spending, reform taxes, liberalize interest rates, foster competitive exchange rates, open trade, liberalize foreign direct investment, privatize firms, reduce market regulation, and finally, increase property rights.³ This set of guiding points evolved into a neoliberal paradigm that transferred power away from governments and placed it into the hands of private firms, building on the notion of laissez-faire governance.⁴ The idea that maximizing market freedom best-served society captivated the Western world, with many believing the government’s role should be limited to the functions necessary to allow these markets to operate. Neoliberalism transformed into a restructuring ethos, in which dialogue about political action was replaced with economic norms and principles that favored political inaction.⁵ In theory, neoliberal thought worked to depoliticize and decollectivize society by emphasizing the autonomy of individuals.

Critics of neoliberal thought and the Washington Consensus saw the emphasis on individualism as a framework in which existing class structures would be further engrained and opportunities for vertical mobility would be constrained. Business elites and international institutions were the driving force behind the movement toward neoliberalism; the few who were able to voice concerns about the inequity of neoliberal policies

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⁴ Undurraga, 14.
⁵ Ibid, 15.
simply did not have the power to stop the freight train of deregulation that characterized the late twentieth century. The Washington Consensus insinuated that ‘natural’ competition would solve the distributional issues plaguing developing countries, many of which were reconfiguring government systems after failed authoritarian regimes. Neoliberalism provided a solution to the disenchantment of strong, centralized governments for many, while some viewed it as a reactionary force toward past abuses of power and financial crashes in the early 1980s. In Western countries, neoliberalism was also interpreted as the solution to development. It espoused confidence in free markets to bring economic growth and sustained human progress. This narrative defined the American and Westernized view of development in the late twentieth century and was quickly applied to their interactions with developing countries.

Following a massive debt crisis in several Latin American countries, their governments were catapulted into an era of privatization, deregulation, and trade liberalization. The World Bank and IMF used the practice of conditional aid, specifically stabilization and structural adjustment programs, to implement the policies that the Washington Consensus recommended. These contingencies mandated macroeconomic policy changes in order for countries to receive much-needed aid, placing contingencies on conditions such as reduced budget deficits, devaluation, reduced trade barriers, and privatization of state systems. Broadly, structural adjustment programs promised increased output and economic growth within the formal sector, consisting of businesses and firms recognized by the government. However, this sector is usually operated by members of higher socioeconomic classes and rarely presented opportunities to impoverished people in developing countries in the late twentieth century. Therefore, although these policies could potentially create economic opportunities, growth would be inherently skewed toward higher socioeconomic groups.

3. Applications of the Washington Consensus

The implementation of the neoliberal policies outlined by the Washington Consensus brought hope to many, primarily to those in the upper socioeconomic bracket. It promised growth, freedom, and an opportunity for change. However, these dreams did not often materialize. Much of Latin America experienced economic hardship and declines in equality; the negative impacts of neoliberal restructuring weighed heaviest on

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6 Ibid, 15.
10 Easterly, 378.
those living in poverty and those vulnerable to slipping into poverty. In this section, I will outline the stories of the Washington Consensus in the Andean ridge, specifically in Argentina, Chile, Ecuador, Bolivia, and Peru, which share similar characteristics but diverge due to differing historical policies. It is ultimately clear that Washington Consensus era reforms were not able to reduce poverty and promote development as intended.

A. Argentina

In the 1990s, the Argentinian government wholeheartedly committed to implementing the recommendations of the Washington Consensus by executing all of the directives tied to the Consensus and the conditional aid it received from the IMF. Before shifting its macroeconomic policies, Argentina had been reluctant to accept short-term investment as it tends to be unpredictable, resulting in unsustainable growth. Its markets were fairly closed, minimizing the risk of possible foreign market variation. However, this changed abruptly with the imposition of the Washington Consensus. Argentina opened its financial markets and became incredibly vulnerable to the volatility of the global economy.\(^{11}\) Independently, expansion and connection are not necessarily harmful; however, the pressure on Argentina to implement the Washington Consensus contributed to the mass exploitation of low-skilled workers. The Argentinian government encouraged privatization of once public enterprises, which strengthened the economic elite’s position in Argentinian society by increasing their wealth and political influence significantly.\(^{12}\) This came at the cost of laborers’ social and physical safety. Gone were permanent employment contracts, replaced with atypical, flexible employment options that waived social security mandates and created a particularly vulnerable labor force.\(^{13}\) The Argentinian government further increased the vulnerability of laborers by making it impossible for workers to sue employers for work-related accidents.\(^{14}\) While neoliberal policies did slightly increase levels of middle-class consumption, they also dramatically increased unemployment, peaking at nineteen percent in 1995. The portion of the population vulnerable to poverty grew.\(^{15}\) The failures of neoliberal policies reached a breaking point in 2001 with a massive economic collapse. High unemployment, astronomical inequality, and unsustainable policies crescendoed and crushed any hopes of growth that the Washington Consensus had

\(^{11}\) Undurraga, 24.

\(^{12}\) Ibid, 24.


\(^{14}\) Ibid, 241.

\(^{15}\) Undurraga, 24.
promised.

**B. Chile**

Neighboring Chile was more selective in implementing recommended policies, but the Washington Consensus brought a similar fate to the country. Prior to the Washington Consensus, the Chilean government implemented “extremely orthodox neoliberal” policies and experienced aggregate economic growth; however, this growth can be attributed to a coincidental massive inflow of credit from private investors. In 1982, a sudden withdrawal of external credit and increased debt in the private sector caused a large bank run and subsequent collapse of the Chilean financial system. In an attempt to recover, the Chilean government leaned into the advice of the Washington Consensus and a variation of past policies known as “pragmatic” neoliberalism, in which the government selectively implemented Washington Consensus policies while also increasing social spending from the initial neoliberal level. Throughout this period, Chile experienced increased economic hardship. GDP fell by 13.6 percent and unemployment rose by twenty-five percent, with job loss largely concentrated in lower socioeconomic classes. The economic changes occurring in Chile during this time simultaneously benefitted upper socioeconomic classes, at the expense of lower classes. However, the effects of neoliberal policies in Chile were tempered by a progressive income tax and a tenfold increase in government healthcare spending in 1990, created to counter the impediments stemming from the pragmatic neoliberal approach. Had the Chilean government not imposed these stopgap measures, it is possible that the Chilean economy could have followed Argentina into another economic collapse in the early 2000s.

**C. Ecuador**

Ecuador closely adhered to neoliberal ideology beginning in the mid-1980s, implementing austere structural adjustment programs. Spending on social services declined by roughly eight percent from 1980 to 1985; government subsidies for food, fuel, and social programming were also cut. The effects these policies had on the people of Ecuador were twofold. Initially, economic and social growth increased, but many of these

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17 Ibid, 83.
18 Ibid, 84.
19 Undurraga, 22.
20 Davis-Hamel, 85.
22 Ibid, 29.
changes were unsustainable. In the first half of the 1990s, poverty fell by six percent. By the end of the millennium, however, it skyrocketed with a thirty percent increase, resulting in seventy percent of the population living below the poverty line.\textsuperscript{23} Underemployment also grew throughout the decade, which tends to indicate an increase in unemployment among middle and lower socioeconomic classes.\textsuperscript{24} However, the national GDP increase implies that economic expansion had occurred. In regard to social indicators, moreover, literacy rates had also increased during this era of neoliberal policies. However, some attribute this to the near-universal primary schooling instilled in the prior governance era. This growth, while a step in the right direction, has still not been perfect as an urban-rural divide in literacy remains.\textsuperscript{25} This is an important idea to consider when evaluating development policy: To what extent has growth been equitable? Similarly, does overall GDP growth mask increases in poverty and inequality? In Ecuador’s case, the answer is yes. The neoliberal policies did not result in the development that the Washington Consensus took credit for; rather, it seems that the growth that had occurred resulted from the positive effects of government investment in the people.

\textbf{D. Bolivia}

Bolivia’s transition to neoliberalism was marred with problems, as its geographic situation impeded its connection to global trade routes. Economic expansion was limited by borders, yet despite the physical impediments, the Bolivian government proceeded with neoliberal policies. Prior to the implementation of the Washington Consensus recommendations, Bolivia was characterized by high inequality; resources were largely concentrated in the richest ten percent of the population, and the corporate government prevented the creation of new private businesses.\textsuperscript{26} This ideology was replaced with one that reduced state power, shifting its responsibility to ensuring economic stability and bowing down to the desires of private firms.\textsuperscript{27} Although many had high hopes, the new policies fell flat. During the era of neoliberal restructuring, unemployment grew, and the government was unable to support established unemployment support programs as it had cut taxes and expenditure.\textsuperscript{28} It must be noted that the number of private firms did rise, resulting in a net increase in national output within Bolivia. Ultimately, however, the firms eliminated more jobs than they expanded. Only twenty-five percent of the newly unemployed were able to find skilled jobs; fifty percent were forced to shift to the informal

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{23} Ibid, 47.
\item \textsuperscript{24} Ibid, 47.
\item \textsuperscript{25} Ibid, 50.
\item \textsuperscript{26} Benjamin Kohl, “Stabilizing neoliberalism in Bolivia: Popular participation and privatization,” 453.
\item \textsuperscript{27} Ibid, 454.
\item \textsuperscript{28} Ibid, 459.
\end{itemize}
\end{footnotesize}
This demonstrates that the negative effects of neoliberal policies were most heavily concentrated in lower-income individuals who already were either living in poverty or were fighting to stay above the line. Cuts in government-funded support programs, resulting from Washington Consensus-inspired structural changes, prevented many from escaping the cycle of poverty and further pushed them into a life of poverty. As an equitable development initiative, the Washington Consensus failed in Bolivia.

E. Peru

Peru began its shift to neoliberal policies under the rule of President Alberto Fujimori, who clung to neoliberal ideals. In 1985, before Fujimori’s presidency and this era of neoliberalism, thirty-eight percent of the Peruvian population lived below the poverty line. In 1997, after nearly a decade of Washington Consensus policies, half of the population lived below the poverty line, with 4.5 million people living in extreme poverty and lacking sanitation, water, electricity, or gas. The healthcare system was dramatically changed by Washington Consensus principles, in which a once government-run system became dominated by private firms. Fee-based care and private insurance replaced state insurance and doctors. There were hopes that this system would allow for healthcare to better reach prospective patients within the country, as the public system had been limited in scope and scale. Although aligned with the macroeconomic goals of the era, at the individual level, this change forced the poor to choose between healthcare and other needs, such as food, education, or living expenses. Efficiency and market competition were prioritized above equity, manifesting in an increase in inequality. Much of the middle class fell to a lower socioeconomic bracket, and the poor became even further entrenched in poverty.

Peru’s story echoes the experiences of its neighbors and characterizes the extent to which the Washington Consensus had greatly damaged the economic reality of individuals.

The Washington Consensus doomed Latin America to a future of instability, as the United States and other Western countries responded to the Latin American debt crisis of the 1980s by implementing policies that did not consider the realities of the indebted countries. As countries worked to recover from the debt crisis, massive distributional problems arose that were closely related to the pressure to repay loans granted by the IMF, World Bank, and Western countries. This pressure made it necessary to reduce the real income of wage-earners and, more often, resulted in skyrocketing inflation which affected

29 Ibid, 460.
31 Ibid.
33 Ibid, 1.
the poor more strongly than those with large amounts of disposable income. Financial 
crises in the latter half of the 1990s left millions of individuals worse off, as implemented 
liberalization policies would not permit governments to protect their citizens during 
economic downturns. Although we cannot undo the disastrous effects of the economic 
policies and conditional aid recommended by the Washington Consensus, it is not too late 
to implement a rights-based approach in the Andean Ridge region. This approach would 
begin with a careful and thorough analysis of the status of each country and where current 
economic instruments are failing to achieve growth for all citizens. Neoliberal policies 
glossed over inadequate financial structures; a rights-based approach must not make the 
same mistake.

4. Rights-based Approach

What could have been a viable alternative? Is there a way to repair the damage caused 
by the Washington Consensus and neoliberal reforms? To answer that question, I turn to 
the human rights-based approach to poverty alleviation. The relationship between poverty 
and human rights is quite clear: The conditions in which poor people live often violate 
their human rights, and moreover, the realization of human rights would reduce poverty. This paradigm is based on the notion that poverty denies a person's rights to basic capabilities, a concept developed by Amartya Sen, a notable development economist. This view moves beyond poverty as a solely monetary concept, defined by a person's income relative to an arbitrary line. Rather, it considers the multidimensional nature of poverty that may manifest in subpar education, nutrition, housing, and other basic forms of human rights and freedoms. This approach recognizes that poverty impedes a person's ability to access their social, economic, civil, and political rights; as a result, poverty indicates the denial of human rights. This approach was recognized and supported by the United Nations in 2002 and has strong ties to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, International Covenant on Economic and Social Rights, the Vienna Declaration and Program of Action of 1993, and the Millennium Declaration of 2000. Although poverty is not explicitly mentioned in most of the above documents, their tenets and application often work in similar ways as a rights-based approach. A rights-based framework calls for all policies and institutions relating to poverty reduction in some capacity to be grounded

37 Ibid, 4.
in international human rights law; the framework is built around codified agreements and documents which provide a checklist of sorts to governing bodies.\textsuperscript{38}

Unlike the Washington Consensus, the human rights approach is largely a political framework. It places great importance on the process of achieving development, emphasizing the need for equitable policies that empower the poor.\textsuperscript{39} Rights-based policies are grounded in the contextual reality of state and regional dynamics, which allows policymakers themselves to design programs that best suit their constituents. The Washington Consensus approached development through a one-size-fits-all approach and handed states a list of recommendations of top ten priorities. It tried to achieve policy goals through structural adjustment programs that aimed to shift how the government interacted with the economy, contrasting greatly with the micro, individual-level goals of the rights-based approach. Neoliberalism counted on market forces to “lift all boats” out of poverty and into the globalized age of consumerism; a rights-based approach sees poverty as an outcome of social exclusion and works to correct power differentials within society.\textsuperscript{40} While both paradigms emphasize the importance of holding policymakers accountable for elevating prosperity levels, they have different standards and definitions of prosperity. A rights-based approach calls upon state legislatures to amplify marginalized voices and accounts for sociocultural factors, a more individualized view of accountability than the one espoused by the neoliberal perspective.

A key example of a rights-based approach to poverty alleviation is the 1997 Progresa/Oportunidades scheme directed by the Mexican federal government. This program directed cash transfers to eligible poor and vulnerable households, under conditions that the funds would be used for child education, family health, and nutrition.\textsuperscript{41} This service recognized the multidimensional nature of poverty and the way it manifests in access to education and healthcare. The Mexican government used these conditional cash transfers to grant families their right to health and education. By 2011, the program helped more than 5.8 million families, consumption via food intake increased by twenty-two percent, malnourishment decreased by 17.2 percent, and enrollment in secondary school increased by roughly ten percent.\textsuperscript{42} Progresa/Oportunidades was designed to fix equity gaps in pursuit of human rights, specifically the rights to food, to health, and to public education. Economic studies of the Progresa/Oportunidades programming have revealed that the

\textsuperscript{38} Ibid, 5.
\textsuperscript{39} Ibid, 4.
\textsuperscript{42} Ibid, 1.
probability of working a salaried, stable job increased for recipients of the cash transfers, which suggests that this program increased the economic capabilities of vulnerable individuals. Data has also revealed that Progresa/Oportunidades had a significant impact on poverty reduction. The headcount poverty ratio decreased by about eleven percent, and the severity of poverty measure, which places greater emphasis on the poorest, declined by fifty-five percent during the first two years of implementation. Calculated using the Foster, Greer, and Thorbecke poverty index, this datapoint conveys the depth of inequality and poverty in a country; a decline of fifty-five percent shows that not only are fewer people below the poverty line, but also those below the poverty line are not nearly as impoverished as before.

This programming focused on developing and empowering individuals, which is the key to a successful paradigm. Unfortunately, the program was discontinued in 2019 for several reasons. While the discontinuation can be attributed to the fact that those voting on the program’s future were not those benefiting from it, it must be noted that the program’s design was flawed. It was reported that in 2016, fifty-five percent of the eligible population did not receive cash transfers. Critics also noted that Progresa’s use of sanctions against families who could not comply with the specified conditions unfairly targeted Mexico’s indigenous and marginalized populations. It is fundamental to thoroughly evaluate the possible negative effects of social programming before implementing rights-based approaches.

Integrating a rights-based focus into development projects and a country’s national policy is challenging, but the work of the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency, Sida, alongside the Kenyan federal government, provides a good example. In 2002, Sida worked alongside the Kenyan government to design a new national strategy that focused on equality, participation, and good governance in order to fulfill human rights obligations and reduce poverty. This strategy was built around three pillars: Justice reform, national dialogue about discrimination, and the integration of a rights-based approach in urban development and access to resources. Sida launched the Mainstreaming in Action Project (MANIAC), which aimed to emphasize a rights perspective in all sectors it supported in Kenya. MANIAC focused on the identification

44 Ibid, 22.
46 Ibid.
and implementation of human rights dialogues and worked to create networks of local resource persons working in the human rights-based approach.\footnote{World Bank and Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, 204-205.} In 2008, a study conducted by Sida evaluated the extent to which the rights-based approach had been accepted in Kenya. They found evidence of rights-oriented policies permeating not only the top level of government but also into small and local networks. The study revealed that road and infrastructure development followed a rights-based approach, as it was fully oriented around local participation. The same was true for water and agricultural policies, in which rights-based policies amplified the voices of marginalized groups.\footnote{Ibid, 205.} These changes, while not directly focused on economic status, greatly contributed to the fall in poverty in Kenya during this time.

5. What’s Needed

How can we implement a rights-based approach? How can we increase the capabilities of those currently in poverty? How can we ensure that policies consider their implications on human rights so as to not reaffirm existing deprivations? The answer is complicated, but there are various ways in which we can work toward a restructuring of the neoliberal system.

Historically, the human rights perspective has insufficiently addressed poverty and pro-poor policy issues, as legal assistance to impoverished groups has tended to be top-down.\footnote{Meena Jagannath, Nicole Phillips, and Jeena Shah, “A Rights-Based Approach to Lawyering: Legal Empowerment as an Alternative to Legal Aid in Post-Disaster Haiti,” Northwestern Journal of International Human Rights 10(1), Fall 2011, 8} These policies, while seemingly altruistic, have often failed to attach legal obligations to poverty reduction; it is legal obligations that empower the poor to hold the state accountable for respecting and ensuring their rights.\footnote{Danwood M. Chirwa, Margret Vidar, and Sisay Yeshanew, “The role of law in the reduction of rural poverty: Towards leveraging legal frameworks,” FAO Legal Papers, no. 105, 2020, 8.} Scholars point to many advantages of legal obligations over political commitments, stating that binding obligations are far more durable than commitments, which tend to shift as the political landscape changes.\footnote{Ibid, 8.} Binding legislation requires states to refrain from interfering with the attainment of rights, to protect individuals from violations of rights that have been committed by outside actors, and provides states with avenues to correct the situation.\footnote{Ibid, 9.} Many poverty alleviation programs have been able to achieve short-term success, but I argue that without legal accountability and reform, their efforts will be fraught. However, much of the world still exists within the neoliberal paradigm in which free-market policies will clash with binding law that protects the poor. It is important to recognize current political circumstances,
to continue to advocate for special legal protections for marginalized groups, and to co-coordinate institutional methods for poverty reduction measures. Shifts in the legal system may take time; it is important to consider other ways in which the rights-based approach can be implemented.

Some argue that the world needs to accept a new definition of poverty to adequately address the ways in which it inhibits one’s right to life. The European Union’s 1985 definition of poverty as “Persons, families, and groups of persons whose resources (material, cultural, and social) are so limited as to exclude them from the minimum acceptable way of life in the Member State to which they belong.”55 This definition has since been updated to recognize the multidimensional nature of poverty and marginalization that accompanies it.56 However, these definitions remain problematic, as they allow member states to define the ‘acceptable’ level of deprivation with perhaps arbitrary poverty lines. In this sense, poverty can be ignored, and responsibility for overcoming poverty is placed on individuals rather than on the state and other organizations. A rights-based approach requires the acceptance of a different definition of poverty: One that recognizes the multidimensional ways in which poverty manifests itself, that poverty is the result of social deprivations, and that pro-poor policies must place an obligation on the state but also welcome community-driven policies. A global, long-term commitment to working with impoverished communities and strengthening their capacity to work with state governments is necessary for the implementation of a rights-based approach. A shift in dialogue must be followed by action.

An important aspect of the rights-based approach is the empowerment of local communities. While the idea of human rights has commonly been structured around the idea of universality, this does not minimize the fact that all rights are rooted in specific contexts, hence the importance of local knowledge. The concept of localization runs parallel to a rights-based approach, in that both aim to improve an individual’s quality of life through policy that is grounded within a given context. I believe that the rights-based approach must adopt key tenets of the localization paradigm. While practices must be grounded in a local reality, it is also important to ground and particularize the concept of human rights in the given local reality. This concept of localizing human rights redefines ‘universal’ human rights to mean that every human has the same essential worth, rather than one model of a desirable citizen. In terms of development and poverty alleviation, this means that a rights-based approach must consider what individual communities value and deem important, whether this be access to free markets, freedom for spiritual practice, or access to education. Active and informed citizenship is needed in order to

ground policies in local knowledge. This interpretation of a rights-based approach calls for bottom-up action, an action that understands that poverty is multidimensional and intersectional, and that local needs must be prioritized.

For a rights-based approach to be useful, governments must utilize certain policy tools even while maintaining a localized mindset. One useful tool for rights-based poverty reduction is international labor standards (ILS) established by the International Labor Office (ILO) of the UN, as these standards can help guarantee that employment opportunities are accompanied by an increase in an individual's capacity to sustain their livelihood. While ILSs alone cannot alleviate poverty, they do serve as important codified documents that protect human rights during the poverty reduction process. They provide framework conditions for sustainable job creation, enhance individual capabilities, and prevent declines in labor rights and working conditions that would increase poverty, while also working to counteract discrimination and distributional issues. ILSs are negotiated by member states of the ILO but must be implemented by countries individually. Currently, the lack of universal acceptance of ILSs remains the largest barrier to effectively applying the ILS directives; without universal implementation, this important step toward a human rights approach to poverty alleviation cannot be taken.

Impact assessments can also be a fundamental tool for implementing a rights-based approach and can help affirm the localized nature of policies. Human rights impact assessments attempt to predict the consequences, both positive and negative, on a person's ability to fully access their capabilities. With an impact assessment, governments and other stakeholders can pause, evaluate, and adapt if a proposed poverty reduction policy would result in the violation of human rights. Impact assessments are standard practice for projects that may have negative environmental consequences; it is vital that they are also used to understand, predict, and prevent possible social repercussions. When an impact assessment is seen as integral to the policymaking process, it may be possible to prevent human rights violations and add value to a program. Impact assessments can also serve as a guide or checklist for poverty alleviation programming, allowing for the future replications of successful rights-based poverty reduction strategies.

The final step toward a rights-based approach regards the justice system. Power dynamics have been skewed in favor of the elite, at the expense of the marginalized. It is imperative that justice systems are reframed to increase accountability, permitting the realization of human rights for all citizens. The phrase “legal empowerment” has been used to describe what is needed from the legal structure of a country, in which legal

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58 Silvander, 121.
59 Hunt and MacNaughton, 8.
60 Ibid, 9.
representation is combined with community empowerment, community organization, and the creation of political spaces for disenfranchised groups.\textsuperscript{61} This, however, is not enough to enable the actualization of a rights-based approach. The poor often lack access to justice, steep court fees and stigmatization act as barriers to entry. Human rights violations often push people into poverty; because of their socioeconomic status, they are unable to challenge the violation in court and are doomed to the vicious cycle of poverty. It is fundamental that justice systems are truly accessible for all and can provide fair rulings. A rights-based approach requires an individual to be capable of enforcing the responsibilities of the duty-bearer, meaning that an individual must have access to public authorities and a well-functioning judiciary as preconditions for rights-based poverty alleviation.\textsuperscript{62}

6. Analysis of the Andean Ridge

If the rights-based approach to poverty alleviation had been considered during the era of neoliberal reforms, it is possible that the lives of many in the Andean ridge countries would be quite different. While the rights-based approach calls for increased government regulation, it is likely that if human rights protection were prioritized in the Washington Consensus recommendations, a more equitable approach to growth would have been achieved. Perhaps the transition to free-market policies would have occurred more gradually, allowing for the implementation of ILS and the protection of workers. This would have protected many from shocks of unemployment and the exploitation that accompanied quick integration into the global market.

A rights-based approach would have also slowed the transition to free-market economic policies and the elimination of social programs. For countries like Peru, this would have stopped many individuals from being forced to choose between healthcare and other necessary expenses.\textsuperscript{63} While the neoliberal perspective painted government spending as ineffective and part of the reason for development stagnation, a rights-based approach sees social support programs as vital measures to address inequity and slowed economic progress. A need for so-called efficiency cut down the bureaucratic red tape for businesses, but unfortunately, that red tape served as a safety net for many vulnerable to poverty. The story is similar in Ecuador; spending on social services declined greatly and rising poverty rates followed closely behind.\textsuperscript{64} Had social support programs been funded

\textsuperscript{61} Jagannath et. al, 8.
\textsuperscript{63} Vitarana, 2.
\textsuperscript{64} Gamos, 44.
and advocated for in the rights-based approach, it is possible that economic growth could have occurred alongside improvements in quality of life for the poor.

The rights-based approach also places great value in an accountable and active government that effectively advocates for the needs of its citizens. In both Chile and Argentina, corruption and inefficiency defined the government, and the depoliticizing techniques of neoliberalism only allowed elites to further take advantage of the power vacuum created once social programs were dissolved. Had reforms been taken to change the government in a productive way rather than simply reduce its already limited capacity, it is possible that many would not have fallen below the poverty line. The economic elite in both Chile and Argentina often increased their wealth at the expense of workers’ safety, security, and health. An effective government, a foundational part of the rights-based approach, may have been able to protect workers from the increased exploitation that accompanied globalization through labor standards and other policy instruments.

The case of Bolivia is interesting: The government released control of oil and gas production to allow for privatization, yet the revenues from new corporations were unable to make the same profits as government-run firms. As a result, there was a net loss in government revenue, and the results of this decline weighed most heavily on the poor. As government revenue declined, the few remaining social support programs in Bolivia quickly ran out of funding, leaving those who relied on government support without the means to continue. A rights-based approach would have avoided this situation entirely, prioritizing the growth of the economy through social development and the realization of rights. Now, the implementation of a rights-based approach would generate programs targeted at helping the unemployed and underemployed to reduce the high social costs of the Washington Consensus-era. Reframing the dialogue and definition of poverty and development is crucial for Bolivia’s future, as the root causes of poverty need to be formally addressed. It is therefore important to work backward and consider issues that the Washington Consensus overlooked and exacerbated.

7. Conclusion

Since the era of the conquistadors, Latin American countries have faced insurmountable pressure from Western countries. This same pressure forced them toward the neoliberal policies popular during the Washington Consensus era, policies that were in no way based around the regional and local realities of each country. These policies ignored individual contexts, resulting in detrimental consequences for each country’s most vulnerable. It is time to adopt policies that are grounded in reality and context, and that

65 Undurraga, 13.
67 Kohl, 456.
prioritize uplifting those of lower socioeconomic status to uplift a country as a whole. As the Mexican government focused on rights improvements as a means to decrease poverty, looking toward Mexico as a model for attainable policy and progress can provide an outline for intervention.

While it is too late to avoid the Washington Consensus, it is not too late to encourage acceptance and implementation of the rights-based approach. Many, if not most, countries have yet to prioritize addressing human rights deprivations in their economic policy - especially if doing so seems to work against their broader, macroeconomic goals. However, this presumption that human rights deprivations do not correspond with broad economic growth is misinformed. I question governments’ hesitancy, as improving the quality of life, thus economic potential, of all citizens must in return bolster a country’s economy. Meeting basic human needs will allow for sustainable development, growth, and poverty reduction, whereas neoliberal policies may continue to perpetuate inequality and an unstable foundation for growth. Looking forward, I urge governments to adopt a rights-based perspective in all future policy in order to avoid a repeat of Washington Consensus-era programming.
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Control and Chaos:
A Comparison of Russia and Chinese Disinformation Campaigns and How China Could Learn from Russia’s Playbook
Sarah Chen

China and Russia are two of the largest state actors for the creation and dissemination of disinformation, misinformation, and propaganda campaigns globally. As recent political events such as democratic elections, the coronavirus crisis, foreign elections, and the Uighur internment raise domestic and international tensions, China and Russia have utilized disinformation techniques to control and manipulate the narrative of these events to their benefit.

This essay will compare the two state-sponsored disinformation strategies as they differ in regards to purpose, target, and tactics. Beijing focuses on pro-CCP material combined with censorship, while Moscow generally operates with a more flexible, more chaotic methodology that muddles the narrative. This essay will begin with covering China’s state-sponsored campaigns tactics and identify potential flaws, and then it will move onto Russia’s campaigns and disinformation warfare strengths. The paper will show how Moscow holds the upper hand in ideology, technique, and technology, and how China could adopt pages out of Russia’s playbook to create stronger hybrid foreign disinformation campaigns. It will present several hypotheticals on the future of Chinese information warfare, raise examples of how China has taken steps towards more Russian-associated initiatives, and end with suggestions for how states can counter disinformation influence in the future.

1. Chinese State-Sponsored Disinformation Campaigns

Complementary Campaigns: Control and Repress the Narrative

Chinese disinformation campaigns are traditionally targeted, focused efforts with a specific purpose to control a narrative and spin it into a pro-China angle. China tends to be “more risk-averse in its approach to information manipulation, opting to suppress content that is critical of Beijing, rather than drown it out with content that is conspiratorial, false, and undermines the notion of an objective truth.”

China has been running a heavy disinformation and influence campaign in Hong Kong for the last several years. In 2019, Twitter disclosed that it had discovered 936 accounts that were “deliberately and specifically attempting to sow political discord in Hong Kong” with “reliable evidence to support that this was a coordinated state-backed operation” from the People’s Republic of China, alongside about 200,000 accounts meant

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to spam-boost said content.\textsuperscript{2} On the same day, Facebook also “removed seven Pages, three Groups and five Facebook accounts involved in coordinated inauthentic behavior as part of a small network that originated in China and focused on Hong Kong,” based on a tip-off from Twitter.\textsuperscript{3} Within the same month, evidence emerged that Chinese state media had bought advertisements on Twitter characterizing the pro-democracy movement as violent, denying police brutality, and representing protestors as “prepared to go extreme.”\textsuperscript{4}

In June 2020, during the Hong Kong protests, Twitter announced on June 12 that it had removed another 23,750 Chinese-backed propaganda accounts, which made up the core disinformation campaigns and contributed collectively 348,608 tweets before removal. While the majority of the content criticized Hong Kong pro-democracy protests, a good portion also focused on three other pro-Chinese narratives: complimenting China’s response to COVID-19, condemning Guo Wengui (an exiled Chinese billionaire) and Taiwan unity or discreditation of Wang Liqiang (an alleged former Chinese spy).\textsuperscript{5} With the Hong Kong protests, the three most used hashtags corresponded to characterizing Hong Kong protestors as thugs (#暴徒), emphasizing the violence used (#暴力), and calling to guard Hong Kong (#守護香港) (against the protestors).\textsuperscript{6} Beijing’s narrative for critics of China is villainization by manipulating what information can be shared on social media.

China’s tactic of repression combined with pro-China praise is evident in the case of Uighurs in Xinjiang. China actively censors information regarding the condition of the Uighur education camps and most of the previous state reports and evidence found during the initial reporting on the camps has been scrubbed from the internet.\textsuperscript{7} China denies any claims of genocide and frames the Uighur program as “vocational educational and employment training centers” where “they can leave freely. They can visit their relatives. It is not a prison. It is not a camp.”\textsuperscript{8} China has also engaged in a heavy campaign to “tell the story of Xinjiang in a multi-level, all-round, and three-dimensional manner, and confidently propagate the excellent social stability of Xinjiang,” resulting in domestic and foreign propaganda showcasing ‘happy and reformed graduates’ of the program.\textsuperscript{9} In March 2021, China released “The Wings of Songs,” a musical that depicts Uyghur Muslims

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\bibitem{5} Carly Miller et al., “Sockpuppets Spin COVID Yarns: An Analysis of the PRC-Attributed June 2020 Twitter Takedown” (Stanford Internet Observatory Cyber Policy Center, June 17, 2020).
\bibitem{6} Miller et al., 14.
\bibitem{7} James Griffiths, “From Cover-up to Propaganda Blitz: China’s Attempts to Control the Narrative on Xinjiang,” CNN, April 17, 2021.
\bibitem{8} Griffiths.
\bibitem{9} Issac Yee and James Griffiths, “China’s President Xi Says Xinjiang Policies ‘completely Correct’ amid Growing International Criticism,” CNN, September 27, 2020.
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and Han Chinese living together in peaceful harmony.\textsuperscript{10} One month later, Facebook internal employees raised concerns regarding China’s purchase of sponsored posts showing Xinjiang residents on video praising the improvement of their lives and accusing critics of pushing Western destabilization of China.\textsuperscript{11} Chinese embassies also have been posting videos of Xinjiang citizens on social media.\textsuperscript{12}

\textit{Technology Usage and Channels of Dissemination}

China uses standard information technologies with a heavy reliance on overt state media and fake social media accounts. Notably, their social media presence tends to lean wider than deeper. In the Stanford Cyber Policy Center analysis of PRC 2020 Twitter accounts, researchers found that “similar to the accounts taken down in the 2019 data set, accounts in this dataset had relatively primitive personas and did not demonstrate any indicators that their operators had attempted to develop convincing backstories or to establish relationships with authentic influences.”\textsuperscript{13} Names were often repeated, and most had no biographies and less than 10 followers.\textsuperscript{14}

Graphika, a social network analysis company, also discovered a cross-platform campaign nicknamed “Spamouflage Dragon” that attempted to bypass detection algorithms by posting high quantities of spam videos on miscellaneous subjects, with interjections of political content.\textsuperscript{15} The network itself has been active since at least 2017, but Spamouflage Dragon has peaked in recent years. In 2019, the narrative focus was on anti-Hong Kong Protestors and pro-China. In 2020, praise for China’s reaction to the coronavirus was added. However, the campaign itself is shoddily put-together, without much engagement and with broken links; it has been exposed multiple times and had several accounts taken down.\textsuperscript{16} Researchers said that the campaign itself “prioritized the quick acquisition of assets over credible appearance.”\textsuperscript{17}

China also utilizes a ‘50-cent army,’ which is a publicly acknowledged program where government employees post positive statements regarding the Chinese government


\textsuperscript{12} Chinese Emb Pakistan, “#Xinjiang Stories: The Owner of Night Market Nurbiya Memet Watch Video Https://T. Co/7T770uKUHM Https://T.Co/0YXIrwoRRy,” Tweet, @CathayPak (blog), August 17, 2020.

\textsuperscript{13} Miller et al., “Sockpuppets Spin COVID Yarns: An Analysis of the PRC-Attributed June 2020 Twitter Takedown,” 5.

\textsuperscript{14} Miller et al., “Sockpuppets Spin COVID Yarns: An Analysis of the PRC-Attributed June 2020 Twitter Takedown.”

\textsuperscript{15} Ben Ninmo, C. Shawn Eib, and L. Tamora, “Cross-Platform Spam Network Targeted Hong Kong Protesters” (Graphika, September 2019).

\textsuperscript{16} Ninno, Eib, and Tamora.

\textsuperscript{17} Ibid.
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in their overtime—its name comes from the per-post pay of about 50 cents.\(^\text{18}\) In a Harvard study, posts were found to be non-combative or controversial, “almost none of the Chinese government’s 50c party posts engage in debate or argument of any kind.”\(^\text{19}\) The goal of these posts is not to cause discord or incite division, but instead to distract and drown out other topics, a way of flooding the feeds of citizens, particularly during anniversaries or other times of heightened political activity.\(^\text{20}\) However, another study conducted by Rongbin Han found that the 50-cent army actually, “due to a lack of proper motivation and the persistence of old propaganda logic… has proven ineffective or even counterproductive: It not only decreases netizens’ trust in the state but also, ironically, suppresses the voices of regime supporters.”\(^\text{21}\) China’s propaganda techniques have remained relatively old-school or poorly translated into the new era of digital disinformation, with a lack of engagement on social media and continued reliance on mass human labor for content posting.

2. Russian State-Sponsored Disinformation Campaigns

Discord and Chaos: Muddle and Exploit the Narrative

While Russia and China both rely on disinformation and repression for domestic power over the population, Russia takes a different approach to foreign disinformation, where the goal is more general chaos and confusion rather than targeted pro-Russian narratives. As Peter Pomerantsev puts it in “This is Not Propaganda: Adventures in the War Against Reality,” Russia uses conspiracy as a form of control: Russia is unable to create and stick with a single ideology because it requires the flexibility to send different messages to different people, and so “the idea that one lives in a world full of conspiracies becomes the world view itself. Conspiracy does not support the ideology; it replaces it.”\(^\text{22}\) Russia’s disinformation framework is arguably one of the most advanced and aggressive in the world, nicknamed the “Firehose of Falsehood” Propaganda Model; Christopher Paul and Miriam Matthews at the Rand Corporation identify four distinctive characteristics of Russian disinformation:

(1) High-volume and multi-channel: Russia floods its news and social media networks with a 24/7 stream of information.\(^\text{23}\)

(2) Willingness to deviate from the truth: Propaganda machines misconstrue statements,


\(^{20}\) King, Pan, and Roberts.

\(^{21}\) Han, “Manufacturing Consent in Cyberspace.”

\(^{22}\) Peter Pomerantsev, This Is Not Propaganda: Adventures in the War Against Reality (PublicAffairs, 2019), 70.

fake sources, and doctor media evidence to create a false impression of credibility.\textsuperscript{24} (3) Rapid, Continuous, and Repetitive: Unlike traditional news sources with a commitment to the truth, Russian media does not need to wait to fact-check, which means they can offer the first ‘take’ on developing news.\textsuperscript{25} By laying down the ground as the first impression and then constantly repeating the message, Russia can rely on psychological tendencies like the “illusory truth effect,” where encountering a repetition of a previous message increases the likelihood of acceptance. (4) No Consistency:\textsuperscript{26} In an echo of Pomerantsev’s impression of Russia’s conspiracism, Russia does not need to have a dedicated story, which grants them greater flexibility, similar to the flexibility of not sticking to the truth. If the first alternative story flops, Moscow can simply discard it and move on, allowing for greater—and often simultaneous—experimentation of what resonates most with the target audience.

When it comes to foreign relations, Bandeira characterizes “Russia’s external strategy [as] less projection of a positive image of the country in favor of sowing discord and chaos in the target country; this approach falls under a general ethos that, if its adversaries are weakened, Russia’s relative power, influence, and standing will increase.”\textsuperscript{27} This allows Russia to be more organic, flexible, and faster than China with disinformation campaigns because there is no overarching set narrative; it can instead take advantage of opportunities and experiment. As Camille Francois puts it, “The Russian playbook is akin to a Russian salad: not very Russian, and with different ingredients every time.”\textsuperscript{28} The Russian playbook is less a structured instructional manual and more a diverse, adaptable toolkit. This mentality also contributes to Russia’s more active and diverse campaigns globally, as it reaches into the domestic politics of Western, European, Baltic, and African states.

One of the largest campaigns was run by the Russian Internet Research Agency (IRA). The IRA is a well-known Kremlin-tied troll farm that played a prominent role in the disinformation campaign and confusion during the United States 2016 election cycle.\textsuperscript{29} The farm, operating with less than one hundred people, was able to churn out over a thousand pieces of content each week.\textsuperscript{30} However, the RBC, a journalist investigation platform, found that the IRA was not explicitly tasked with supporting President Donald Trump.

\begin{thebibliography}{99}
\bibitem{24} Paul and Matthews.
\bibitem{25} Ibid.
\bibitem{26} Ibid.
\bibitem{28} Camille Francois, “Moving Beyond Fears of the ‘Russian Playbook,” Lawfare, September 15, 2020.
\bibitem{30} RBC, “Расследование РБК: Как «фабрика Троллей» Поработала На Выборах в США,” Журнал РБК (RBC), October 17, 2017.
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the goal was to deepen political divides and engage people (although this objective coincided with being more critical of candidate Hilary Clinton and more supportive of Trump’s campaign). The IRA’s strength was in their network of fake accounts that appeared genuine: “right-nationalist, gun-loving Americans who supported the election of Donald Trump; black civil rights campaigners who promoted the idea that his rivals weren’t worth voting for…. As the farm tried to make Americans hate each other more.” Its content was seen and shared by over 30 million Americans. While the 2016 election is the most prominent version of disinformation interference within the Western states because of its publicity, Moscow also runs covert campaigns around the world that focus on inciting divisions.

Moscow has an understanding of how to play on the emotions of its target audience. Russian ‘memes’ are very culturally targeted. For instance, one example of Russian-generated content produced for the United States was of Yosemite Sam and the Confederate flag. In a text-data analysis of Russian-connected tweets during the 2016 election, Miller noted an increase in “fearful and angry language…to heighten existing tensions through topically heterogeneous propaganda.” Russian-sponsored media fell across divisive topics like gun rights, police brutality, immigration, race, and nationalist fervor. A more recent 2020 study found that “Russian content is particularly effective at achieving its goal of generating strong reactions along partisan lines, engendering stronger emotional responses than those brought on by real or false news and creating a starker partisan divide.”

In the Western Balkans, Russia has utilized historical racial and ethnic conflict and state competition to push states further away from the United States and the European Union. Russian state-media in the region promote narratives that the EU and NATO are too aggressive and hegemonic but simultaneously weak and undefined. It aims to create an “alternative reality for its Serbian and Slavic audiences… that focuses on instability and corruption and shows that the Balkans risk falling into ethnic-nationalist war due

31 Ibid.
32 Pomerantsev, This Is Not Propaganda: Adventures in the War Against Reality.
to harmful American and EU initiatives.” Russian media creates sensationalist, fear-mongering headlines on topics like religious extremism and immigration, which exacerbate citizen fears and the existing environment of disinformation (the Balkan states are a hotspot not only as victims of foreign influence, but also for domestic fake news campaigns, bot networks, and political push-pull fights over journalistic freedom).

During the COVID-19 pandemic, Russia’s initial response was not a coordinated state effort, but a network of individuals and organizations instead ran a series of, sometimes contradicting, conspiracy theories to see what would catch on. Igor Nikulin, a public figure with a history of spreading conspiracy theories in Russia, claimed that the virus was meant to sabotage China and that American corporations stand to benefit. It also actively amplified rumors that the virus was a bio-weapon. This method of running various stories and seeing what sticks muddled the information around the pandemic, increased suspicion of legitimate sources, and incited various waves of panic.

Technologically Savvy and Opportunistic

Russia takes its role as an amplifier of disinformation in opportune moments as seriously as its role as a propaganda creator. With the coronavirus pandemic, Russia sowed discord in foreign countries like the United States by boosting conspiracy theories popular with other domestic audiences through the use of social media. Beijing and the United States both had a viral conspiracy that the virus was a bio-weapon. While Russia retweeted these theories from US-centric accounts, the theory itself was rarely represented in Russian-language media in an analysis of January 1 to April 17, 2020. A study on the Balkan states found that, while Russia did have a hand in creating content, the lines blurred between what was initiated by Russia and what developed organically but was exacerbated by Russian media.

Moscow also operates on the cutting-edge of disinformation tactics, forcing the rest of the world on the defensive to catch up. As artificial intelligence and technology

39 Duffy and Green, “Organised Chaos: Russian Influence and the State of Disinformation in the Western Balkans.”
42 Perlroth.
45 Duffy and Green, “Organised Chaos: Russian Influence and the State of Disinformation in the Western Balkans.”
advance, reports warn that Russia will likely utilize deepfakes, synthetically generated fake media, to further their disinformation efforts. Automation, bot networks, and generative adversarial network created content all hold the promise to speed up and cheapen fake content. Renne DiResta, researcher at the Stanford Internet Observatory, noted that “Russia is, at the moment, kind of best in class at information operations. They spend a fraction of the budget that China does.” Moscow has built these massive networks of journalists that do not exist, with procedurally generated faces and profiles that can write Russian sympathetic opinion pieces for Western publications, without too much hands-on human effort.

Russia also understands the value of experimentation with disinformation. On September 11, 2014, the IRA ran a campaign that faked the explosion of the Columbian Chemicals plant in Centerville, Louisiana. The crisis went viral, with Twitter users concerned that the explosion was the result of a terrorist attack. The IRA spent extensive time creating elaborate doctored photos of the explosion, a fake CNN news report, and a video clip of ISIS taking responsibility. They also were able to ping users’ phone numbers with fake warnings. The next year, the IRA experimented to see if they could organize a real, live event in the United States using disinformation tactics. The IRA promoted a free hot dog event on Facebook in New York which succeeded in gathering citizens to check it out, only to be disappointed as there were no actual hot dogs. However, the IRA was able to observe their movements using city street cameras. Graphika believes these playtests set the stage for the IRA to interfere in the 2016 election and the Black Lives Matter movement. The IRA was able to experiment with and understand not only the power of social media disinformation to emotionally impact users, but also to manifest in real-world events.

Moscow is also playing around with gaming the social media detection systems in Africa. In 2020 the Africa Center for Strategic Studies interviewed Dr. Shelby Grossman on a disinformation campaign in Africa on Facebook, with coordinated accounts and pages targeting Cameroon, the Central African Republic, Côte d’Ivoire, the Democratic

51 Chen.
52 RBC, “Расследование РБК.”
53 Francois, “Moving Beyond Fears of the ‘Russian Playbook.’”
Republic of the Congo, Libya, Madagascar, Mozambique, and Sudan. The pages had connections to a firm that was linked to Yevgeny Prigozhin, a Russian businessman closely associated with President Vladimir Putin, which Grossman discovered through a Dossier Center report and in cooperation with Facebook, which was looking into other pages that also had similar connections to Prigozhin. The Facebook pages had over 9.7 million interactions, were liked by over 1.7 million accounts, and posts were relatively well-received, but did draw criticism for specific stories or political support.

Grossman theorizes that Priogzhin is experimenting with a “franchising” strategy to incorporate local actors for content creation, which boosts the quality of the actual content and makes it look more organic, but also makes it much harder to recognize as disinformation. Grossman’s team ran a ‘blind’ analysis after the initial investigation and tried to detect which pages were part of the Russian campaign without relying on external reports. They were unable to pick out which pages were under Russian influence and which were not. For instance, the Sudan pages did not even publish any fake or heavily biased news, which Grossman predicts is a long-term play to establish credibility. Even the Facebook Transparency page, a tool that tells users information like when the page was created, the primary country locations of management, any name changes, business ownership, state-controlled media ownership, etc. is not as helpful anymore for identifying foreign influence because Russia is pulling in local actors to run it. Libya’s pages were managed in Egypt, the Central African Republic administrators were in both the country and Madagascar, and the Sudan pages had Sudanese, Russian, and German managers.

3. The Russian Upper Hand: Comparing Ideology, Technique, and Technology

**Ideology:**

Russia operates under a more destructive version of disinformation compared to China, which is bound by more focused strategic priorities and concern about its moral international standing. Cook characterizes China as having four specific goals: domestic control of power (which is threatened by free information and criticism), economic interest (China must be seen as an alternative to the West and an attractive investor), censorship (suppression of domestic and foreign critics), and offensive attacks (as China is testing election interference in places of interest like Taiwan). Beijing operates a much more tightly controlled and planned system, where “everything is about making sure the CCP’s narrative about China is perfectly orchestrated.”

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56 Grossman, “Russian Disinformation Campaigns Target Africa.”
that China chooses not to be. As Rob Joyce, the U.S. National Security Agency senior advisor, puts it, “I kind of look at Russia as the hurricane. It comes in fast and hard. China, on the other hand, is climate change: long, slow, pervasive.” Russia’s goal of subversion may stem from its international standing as “a rogue, not a peer,” which, although it is overall weaker on the international playing field, also grants it a wider ‘winset’ than China when it comes to information warfare. China wants to shape the current world order because it stands to benefit from it, while Russia wants to break it.

Control Versus Chaos:
Compared to Russia, China focuses much more on controlling the narrative for certain events of interest and its own public impression. This sometimes renders its disinformation campaigns more transparent and discernable, particularly when Beijing clearly stands to gain. Beijing repressed information and vilified democracy protests in Hong Kong and Taiwan, censored and created a new narrative for Xinjiang, and attacked critics with the claim that China can do no wrong. However, Russia has a much broader geographical spectrum and can ‘throw everything at the wall to see what sticks’ because it does not have any specific target storyline in mind. Moscow is more responsive, more flexible and capable of exacerbating pre-existing political divides with its greater understanding of emotional manipulation. Moscow also has an easier target goal than China because inciting anger or fear is a simpler task, particularly in foreign countries with pre-existing issues.

Technology:
Russia is more sophisticated in its understanding of media platforms, particularly foreign platforms. This is likely due to China’s limited experience compared to Russia’s; China only began covert disinformation operations in about 2017, which remained relatively small-scale until 2019, while Russia has been operating in the space since at least 2014. China also falls short compared to Russia’s social media authenticity and avoidance of social media bans. During a six-month period in 2020, Chinese diplomats often interacted with blatantly inauthentic accounts; 566 accounts they retweeted were eventually suspended, ten of which were in their top 100 most frequently retweeted accounts.

61 Cook and Liu, “China’s Emergence as a Disinformation Force”; Ninmo, Eib, and Tamora, “Cross-Platform Spam Network Targeted Hong Kong Protests”; Griffiths, “From Cover-up to Propaganda Blitz.”
62 Cook and Liu, “China’s Emergence as a Disinformation Force.”
63 Schafer and Brandt, “How China’s ‘Wolf Warrior’ Diplomats Use and Abuse Twitter.”
On the other hand, Brandt and Schafer note that none of the 131 suspended accounts retweeted by Russian diplomats fell within their top 200 most retweeted accounts.64 Russian technology usage exceeds China with their experimentation with GAN, deepfakes, and troll farms. China’s bots are also no match for Russia’s extensive bot networks, with DiResta noting that Beijing’s initiatives on Twitter are “shockingly poor.”65

4. China’s Future in Disinformation

Lessons from Russia – A Hybrid Model of Disinformation Hypotheticals and Opportunities

(1) A Change in Ideology: Control and Chaos

While China can hold onto its pro-CCP messaging, it should also recognize the benefit of sowing conflict within foreign countries for political and economic reasons. Interfering in larger, more influential states that have an economic lock on Beijing, such as the United States, may be riskier due to the financial fallout. For instance, the Biden administration signaled that more sanctions were on the table if Russia continued its hybrid-cyberwarfare and interference in April 2021, and China could risk another trade war similar to the one conducted under the Trump administration if any covert influence operations were discovered.66 However, destabilizing operations in the United States or the European Union that remain covert could reduce their international standing, and therefore boost China’s comparatively. Another option is political operations in smaller countries that could leave them more open to Chinese foreign investments and debt traps as they struggle to deal with internal politics. If Beijing’s mission expanded to incorporate chaos alongside control, it could create opportunities to sway destabilized countries away from Western influence or look more stable in comparison.

(2) Quantity and Quality

Chinese disinformation efforts have relied on ‘spammy’ posts that, even when written by a human, come off as brief and inauthentic. In Han’s study, he noted that the 50 cent army’s low pay meant that comments were generally short comments of one word like “‘good’ (好, hao), ‘upvote’ (顶, ding) or ‘support’ (支持, zhichi).”67 On the other hand, Moscow employs a mixture of automation, content churn, and flooding, alongside more quality targeted campaigns. While spamming timelines and manufacturing false con-

64 Schafer and Brandt.
65 DiResta, “The Supply of Disinformation Will Soon Be Infinite.”
67 Han, “Manufacturing Consent in Cyberspace.”
sensus and praise for the state are legitimate tactics, China could adopt a more nuanced method of narrative creation and dissemination. For instance, Beijing could create more emotionally structured campaigns that play on internal domestic fears, similar to Russia’s targeted initiatives in the United States or the Balkans, and showcase China as a caring, benevolent alternative to the West. Chinese propaganda efforts are often transparently pro-China, and if China took on a dual strategy of control and chaos, it could accomplish the former through the latter by exploiting the emotional and cultural environment of target countries. In other words, a move away from blind praise of China would increase China’s international influence by creating cracks for it to slip into. An improvement of foreign content does not have to mean a subsequent decrease in quantity, but China should rely more on automation for quantity rather than using human labor, which could be put to better use analyzing content or creating more compelling content. Automate quantity, invest in quality.

(3) Better Technology and Understanding of Platforms

One obstacle to adopting a quantity and quality mentality is that China is hindered by its lack of understanding of how bot detection and algorithms work on banned platforms like Facebook and Twitter. To combat this, it could consider running covert experimentation, like how Russia did in the 2014-15 era, in countries with less social media scrutiny, such as southeast Asia or African countries to determine which methods of influence operations work best. China should also take advantage of developing technologies such as bot networks or generative adversarial networks, for which some research is publicly available or can be cheaply purchased. Beijing needs to research not only how foreign platforms utilize algorithms to promote certain narratives, but also gain a greater understanding of how to avoid being flagged as spam or state-controlled accounts. Russia has figured out how to go unnoticed by culturally blending in as a foreign citizen and a human user, while also managing to run viral campaigns.

(4) Leverage Economic Power

As previously touched upon, China has an advantage that Russia does not: economic incentive. While Russia may be more sophisticated in executing covert operations and more flexible in having a wider disinformation objective, China can wield a stronger hammer of overt narrative control through financial investments and physical technology. For instance, when China enters into a smaller state via investment infrastructure or support, “they are basically given the ability to replicate their own totalitarian regime. The CCP gets TV licenses, radio licenses, and all kinds of media operations in their language.” Cook points to African and Asian states, such as Cambodia and Pakistan,

69 Cook and Liu, “China’s Emergence as a Disinformation Force.”
which have accepted Chinese digital infrastructure because it is offered at cheaper rates, but CCP media content comes along with those contracts.  

China also surpasses Russia in regards to hardware development, particularly in the 5G domain. The United States and China are currently racing to build the first integrated 5G network and contract to build other countries’ networks but China’s main 5G provider, Huawei, also offers low-interest to no-interest loans for partnerships. While a common concern with allowing China to build 5G is potential espionage, China will also be able to censor information flow on its 5G network—even the ones in foreign countries. 5G networks are also a lock-in for foreign influence for either China or the United States, as the cost and effort of building 5G infrastructure make it very difficult for a country to switch companies after its implementation. China could pursue this opportunity to create a divided, “Balkanised” internet, where it is free to control the narrative in its half.

A Growing Imitation of Russian Tactics

China does seem to be slowly adopting more Russian-style disinformation strategies, such as alternating stories, more realistic fake personas, foreign influence, and more provocative media. The coronavirus marked a deviation from China’s traditional focus on narrative control to deliberate muddling. Laura Rosenberg, director of the Alliance for Securing Democracy, pointed out the various conspiracy theories pushed by the state on where the coronavirus could have originated. In March 2020, Foreign Ministry spokesman Zhao Lijian posted a conspiracy theory to his 300,000 followers on Twitter that “CDC was caught on the spot…It might be the US army who brought the epidemic to Wuhan…US owe[s] us an explanation!” His tweets on COVID conspiracies, including a segment speculating on the virus being a bioweapon, reached a global audience with almost 50,000 retweets and quotes in over fifty different languages and over 80,000 likes. Global Times, a China state-affiliated media company, wrote an article proposing that the coronavirus could have appeared in Italy before it hit China. While the article did not claim that Italy was the origin of the pandemic, a Beijing-based immunologist that remained anonymous said that “without sufficient evidence, it is too early yet to jump to the conclusion that Wuhan caused the COVID-19 epidemic” or that Chinese animals were the cause.

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70 Cook and Liu.
72 Sanger and Barbaro.
73 Jodi Xu Klein, “China’s 5G Dominance Could Lead to a ‘Dangerous’ Internet Split with the US, Donald Trump’s FCC Chief Warns,” South China Morning Post, November 5, 2019.
While the main focus of China still is pushing a pro-CCP attitude, it is also expanding outside of its domestic audience to “the Chinese-speaking diaspora, and... people who speak third languages, such as in countries who receive money through China’s One Belt One Road (OBOR) initiative.” Its foreign influence potential has increased alongside its foreign investments, although it remains to be seen whether it utilizes this opportunity. China is also picking up technological innovation tactics mirroring Russian’s style of social media engagement.

In Graphika’s 2021 fourth report on Spamouflage, the analysts found four key differences that distinguish its growth from previous years. Spamouflage’s engagement is rising, reaching greater domestic audiences and foreign officials, such as the Venezuelan Foreign Minister and a Pakistani politician. While it still uses paper-thin bot accounts, it is also adopting more realistic accounts with developed personalities and human posting habits, which has likely also resulted in its increase of engagement, as it imitates both people that exist in real life (like Chinese mainland commentators) and falsified personalities (young women interested in geopolitics is a favorite of Spamouflage). It also is increasingly integrated with Chinese state official narratives and promoted by Chinese diplomats; “Spamouflage increasingly resembles a state-aligned propaganda network that boosts, and is boosted by, the Chinese government.” This is a reversal of previous 2019 analysis that suggested the campaign was not directly tied to Beijing, however, Graphika now defines Spamouflage as “a cheerleader for Chinese state narratives of China’s rise and America’s fall.” This includes a strong anti-U.S. sentiment that characterizes the United States as a country tearing itself apart and failing at addressing COVID-19.

In the last year, China has also adopted ‘wolf warrior’ diplomacy, a deviation from having little to no Twitter presence in 2019. Over 150 Chinese diplomats are “taking a cue from their Russian counterparts, China’s most effective messengers on Twitter have proven skillful at capturing audience share through viral content, mixing Beijing-friendly messaging with clickbait content meant to attract followers, from viral memes to panda videos,” with an understanding that “Twitter engagement is driven by provocation, not diplomacy.” Diplomatic accounts on Twitter have almost doubled in their follower counts. This follows the suggestion of ‘quantity and quality’ where high-profile Chinese accounts can reach a mass amount of engagement with targeted, inflammatory content alongside the operatives of the 50 cent army.

5. Counter-Disinformation in the Future

77 Cook and Liu, “China’s Emergence as a Disinformation Force.”
78 Ben Ninmo, Ira Hubert, and Yang Cheng, “Spamouflage Breakout” (Graphika, February 2021).
79 Ninmo, Hubert, and Cheng.
80 Ibid.
81 Schafer and Brandt, “How China’s ‘Wolf Warrior’ Diplomats Use and Abuse Twitter.”
If China continues to incorporate Russia’s benefits of flexibility, experimentation, and understanding of social media platforms, combined with their goal of pro-CCP ideology and economic influence, how will that change counter-disinformation efforts? As Rosenberger states, collaboration is essential, particularly as China flips through Russia’s playbook: “One of the most important things we can be doing is… our governments working together as partners and allies to stand up together to form joint responses to deal with malicious actors.” As states struggle with domestic fake news moderation, they must also look outwards to create international norms of attribution and consequences of state-sponsored foreign disinformation, as well as mechanisms for enforcement. Otherwise, targeted states will remain in asymmetrical information warfare where they are constantly on the defensive without methods of deterrence. There are no norms of punishment or retaliation when it comes to the softer battle of influence warfare, and creating a joint coalition would allow for a stronger stance against the largest actors in the disinformation sphere: China and Russia.

Additionally, if China does adopt this extended methodology, then the world will be contending with a serious disinformation war, which may demand a more focused method of counter-disinformation. Paul and Matthews propose several methods of more targeted counter-disinformation: (1) priming, (2) effect-focused countering, (3) redirection, and (4) turning off the flow.

The first method, priming, focuses on reducing the first encounter effect either by warning citizens of potential disinformation campaigns before they occur or, because it is difficult to predict the newest viral falsehood, priming them against disinformation tactics. The United States and the United Kingdom are exploring methods of pre-inoculating citizens against disinformation so that they are mentally equipped against influence efforts through gamified education. The United States released “Harmony Square,” a short game where users learn about fake news techniques in a fictional village, and a recent study has shown that users increase their psychological resistance against political misinformation. The Technology Engagement Center at the US Department of State is also in the middle of developing a deepfake-focused game based on countering Russian influence in the Balkan states.

Other methods such as effect-focused countering require analyzing the ‘point’ of the influence campaign (which will become more difficult if China adopts Russia’s ideology of chaos and discord), which requires countering the end-goal. For instance, if China

83 Paul and Matthews, “The Russian ‘Firehose of Falsehood’ Propaganda Model.”
85 Sarah Chen, “Internal Proposal for Fake or Not? Gameified Education on Deepfakes for Balkan Youth” (Technology Engagement Center, November 9, 2020).
is pushing a pro-CCP narrative in a particular country because it’s interested in building infrastructure or debt-trapping it, then that country should be offered alternative investment options. Paul and Matthew believe that countries should also pursue options that do not directly engage with the false information but instead redirect conversation away from the particular topic. Lastly, turning off the flow means partnering with global media platforms such as Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram to doggedly pursue and remove influence operation pages, which will become more difficult to detect if China also picks up the local integration that Russia employs. However, joint partnerships will become an increasingly necessary endeavor as China appears to grab control in platforms that are banned domestically. Of interest is ‘tagging’ media sources as state-sponsored to deflate credibility, which Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram already attempt to do, but greater coordination, particularly if emotionally triggering content is utilized by both China and Russia, would benefit a balance between free digital speech and freedom from manipulation.86

The world should prepare for a ‘hybrid’ China that incorporates Russian tactics and grasp of the disinformation battlefield with China’s greater economic and political influence. To this end, further research should be conducted into indicators that China is planning on more destructive information warfare, increasing its technological abilities, or conducting influence operations in countries it traditionally has held little political interest in. In this globally interconnected world, information and influence are the new currency, and countries must prepare for China to exercise its buying power.

86 Helmus et al., Russian Propaganda Hits Its Mark.
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Observations on Oslo:
How the 1995 Interim Agreement Sought to Resolve Middle Eastern Conflict through International Law
Madeline Walsh

The Oslo Accords were a historic set of agreements attempting to ease tensions between Israel and Palestine. To what degree, however, were they ultimately successful in minimizing conflict between the two parties? This paper analyzes the 1995 Interim Agreement through four lenses: how its design provisions adhered to the theoretical predictions of the Continent of International Law (COIL) research program, how the United States (US) brokerage impacted the Agreement’s outcome, how secret negotiations influenced the outcome of the Accords, and how different variables led to the Agreement’s demise. I begin by arguing that the Arab-Israeli conflict can be characterized by separate distribution and coordination problems in terms of COIL’s theory, which the Accords curb through both imprecise and specific language, respectively. However, the enforcement problem present in the conflict is left curiously untouched, which contributed to instances of noncompliance just years after the Agreement’s signature. I then argue that the method of negotiation provides insight into the respective interests of the parties involved. While not directly impacted by Arab-Israeli violence, US foreign policy dictated that it should be involved in facilitating negotiations to ensure an outcome that would be favorable to its interest in protecting Israel. A secret negotiation process also ensured that both Israel and Palestine avoided influence from radical groups that were growing in strength. My analysis concludes by addressing that while constructed with attention to detail, fundamental design and negotiation flaws left the Oslo Accords unable to procure the conflict resolution they desired.

1. Introduction
Is it possible to solve an international conflict that has existed for nearly a century and outlasted multiple attempts at reconciliation, resulting in the deaths of thousands of civilians? Can two parties who fundamentally disagree with each other put their differences aside for the greater good? To answer these questions, this paper looks to the case study of the 1995 Oslo II Interim Agreement between Israel and Palestine, two parties whose opposition to aspects of each other’s existence has strained international politics since the beginning of the twentieth century.

The Arab-Israeli conflict has been a pervasive source of tension in the Middle East since the creation of Palestine in 1923. The League of Nations assigned Great Britain the mandate territory of Palestine after the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire to give an “underdeveloped” civilization a parent government. Though entrusted to support the Arab people of Palestine, the British used the territory as a national home for the Jewish diaspora and endorsed the idea of an Israeli government working in concert with the Palestin-
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ian people. Unfortunately, this idea did not sit well with the Arabs who called the mandate territory home, since they generally did not approve of the idea that the Jewish people had an inherent religious claim to Arab land. Large influxes of Jewish emigration from Europe, prompted by the Holocaust and the rise of antisemitism in the twentieth century, sparked immense outrage within the Arab community. After a period of infighting, the United Nations (UN) finally stepped in to produce one of the first attempts at quelling Arab-Israeli aggression: United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) Resolution 181, which partitioned the mandate territory along a border called the Green Line.¹ The resolution recognized 57% of the territory as constituting a Jewish Israel and 43% as Palestinian land.

While UNGA 181 did little to appease either party and conflict continued well after partition, both Israel and Palestine were pushed towards ending aggression by the end of the twentieth century. The Arabs, after dealing with both a massive internal uprising against Israeli military occupation in 1987 and the consequences of losing the Soviet Union as a military benefactor due to its collapse, were incentivized to finally end the conflict for economic reasons. Likewise, cuts in American financial support from the Bush administration made peace an attractive option for the Israelis.² With diplomatic support from the US, a series of peace talks began between Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin and chairman of the Palestinian Liberation Organization Yasser Arafat. Their work began with the Oslo I Agreement (known as the Declaration of Principles), a document that outlined the structure of a future peace agreement and expressed support for Arab-Israeli diplomacy. The Agreement’s successor, Oslo II (also known as the Interim Agreement), put these ideas into action. Signed on September 28, 1995 on the White House Lawn, Oslo II established a transition from the Israeli occupation of mandate territory to Palestinian self-governance and formed obligations for both parties in terms of borders, economics, and human rights. While the US-brokered secret agreement upheld the theory of the Continent of International Law (COIL) when it came to certain problems in cooperation between Israel and Palestine, it fell short in adhering to COIL’s framework regarding other cooperation problems, leading to its downfall.

To explore this assertion, this paper will analyze Oslo II with an emphasis on four features of the Agreement. To begin, I observe how well the Agreement mitigated the most pertinent cooperation problems facing the Arab-Israeli conflict. The language of Oslo adheres to COIL’s predictions when it comes to design provisions used in cases of

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¹ The recommendation for partition came from the United Nations Special Committee on Palestine (UNSCOP), an ad hoc committee composed of representatives with Arab, Jewish, and Western European ethnic ties who were tasked with researching on behalf of and advising the United Nations on how best to solve Arab-Israeli disputes. In its proposal for a two-state solution, UNSCOP detailed that decisions regarding border demarcation were made to reduce the size of Arab minorities in heavily settled Jewish areas to protect Arab security “as far as reasonably possible.” An extended summary of the UNSCOP proceedings and findings can be found at https://www.un.org/unispal/document/auto-insert-184992/.

² Watson, 38.
distribution and coordination problems, but the absence of formal punishment provisions leaves the present enforcement problem unaccounted for. Next, I unpack why the US was involved in the Agreement. Given American reliance on Arab oil, it is likely that the US favored Arab-Israeli peace as a means to secure its economic and military interests. I continue my analysis by exploring how secret negotiations benefitted the authors of the Agreement through excluding outside influences that may have sabotaged some of the Agreement’s most important features. Finally, I conclude by arguing that despite Oslo’s strengths, fundamental issues underlying the Agreement led to its ultimate failure.

2. Cooperation Problems

Given the political and ideological differences between Israel and Palestine, the Arab-Israeli conflict is heavily plagued by what COIL calls a distribution problem. A distribution problem “...captures the divergent preferences states have over the substantive terms, and hence the distribution of costs and benefits, of a potential cooperative agreement,” highlighting that cooperation can be difficult when parties expect different outcomes. Agreements can mitigate distribution problems by using imprecise language. When parties are not bound to specific terms, they have more freedom of interpretation and can better incorporate their preferences into an agreement’s demands on an individual basis. COIL hypothesis H6-1 states that agreements characterized by these types of problems are more likely to employ imprecision than not because ambiguous language allows all parties involved to reach a general goal while maintaining their individual preferences.

Oslo II adheres to this hypothesis in regard to Palestinian statehood. Importantly, this classification has nothing to do with Palestine’s literal territory. The question of statehood is one that concerns Israel’s diplomatic recognition of whether or not Palestine should be considered a legitimate political actor. When it comes to Israel and Palestine, both parties diverge on who is entitled to statehood in the mandate territory. Zionism, the dominant Jewish ideology regarding Israel, dictates that Jews should have the right to establish a state in a territory of their liking to escape persecution. With the mandate territory hosting locations with immense religious significance to Jews, they believe it is their God-given right to settle there and host the legitimate governing body of the region. Conversely, Palestinians argue that they have a claim to statehood based on their history as a people. As an ethnic group, they inhabit most of the territory and have for thousands of years while also enduring persecution and placing religious significance on local land-
Thus, Palestine believes it has a right to be considered a state. Both arguments rely heavily on religious connections to land, which makes them difficult to dispute given that religion is so subjective. The distribution problem in terms of which parties should have the right to be considered a state is therefore significantly salient.

Should Palestine be considered a state, it would have a foundation from which it could lobby the international community in support of its claim to the mandate territory. Palestinians would have a more legitimate reason to inhabit a greater portion of land and subsequently gain political autonomy. Unsurprisingly, Israel has a vested interest in Palestine not achieving statehood since Palestinian sovereignty would restrict Israel's ability to engage in Arab foreign affairs and maintain a stable presence in the West Bank.

The wording of Oslo II ambiguously compromises these preferences by including mutual recognition of Palestine's "legitimate and political rights" in the second preambulatory clause of the Agreement. This word choice provides Palestine with a right to self-governance and recognition as a people without weakening Israeli control of the region. In his account of the peace process, former Israeli Prime Minister Shimon Peres explains the wording by stating:

This dispute [concerning the powers and structure of the Council] was linked to several others also stemming from the Palestinians' desire to extend the ambit of self-government so that it would inexorably lead to full sovereignty, and the Israelis' concern to limit it so that the permanent status of the territories would not be prejudiced by the terms of the interim agreement. Thus, the Palestinian negotiators pressed repeatedly for the wording "mutual legitimate, national, and political rights" in the preamble to the Declaration of Principles. We eventually agreed, reluctantly, to "political" but refused to accept "national." It was omitted.

As Peres points out, through leaving the Agreement ambiguous in terms of recognizing Palestine as a nation, Israel and Palestine were able to reconcile their different preferences in terms of whether Palestine has a legitimate claim to statehood by avoiding legal classifications and simply assigning Palestine the rights it desired. The imprecision of the statement ensures that neither Palestine nor Israel triumphed by achieving exactly what they wanted in terms of Palestine's recognition. Instead, they reached a compromise by giving Palestine the liberties it desired without sacrificing Israel's desire to prevent Palestinian statehood. As COIL predicts, this type of imprecision is included to mitigate the

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6 Ibid.
distribution problem at hand.

In addition to being characterized by a distribution problem regarding statehood, the Oslo II Accords also had to accommodate a distribution problem with a coordination problem in terms of literal territorial control. COIL defines a coordination problem as occurring when actors must agree on one specific solution to an issue; otherwise, they see themselves as being better off by not cooperating at all. Any agreement that concerns land ownership is bound to include a coordination problem. Parties cannot agree to multiple possible borders to appease everyone, nor can parties agree to create vague borders which can be evaluated on a case-by-case basis. The distribution problem relevant to territory comes into play when discussing where those borders should be and what areas each party has a right to claim.

The coordination dispute in question is typically initiated by the Arab party. Historical precedent indicates that while Israel is generally lenient when it comes to concessions in international agreements, Palestine embodies much more of an all-or-nothing strategy. Palestine tends to turn down agreements that would slightly disadvantage them, even if an agreement is holistically beneficial. Such a strategy was made apparent when Palestine rejected the British Peel Commission’s suggestion for a two-state solution in 1937. The British recommended that a Palestinian state encompass the majority of the mandate territory, with Israel only receiving 17% of the West Bank (4% of the total mandate territory). This solution would have provided Palestine with defined statehood and control over the majority of the territory in question, yet it was turned down because Palestine believed the only palatable solution included complete territorial cession from Israel. Likewise, in 1967, Palestine was present at the Khartoum Conference, where various Arab nations and groups declared that there would be “No peace with Israel, no recognition of Israel, and no negotiation with Israel.” The Palestinians held one of the more radical views at this meeting, asserting that they would continue to withhold peace from Israel until it liberated all occupied territories acquired after the Six-Day War. Palestine has historically refused negotiations or agreements which serve its interests if it would be territorially disadvantaged in the slightest. In line with the theory of a coordination problem, no cooperation is seen as preferable to cooperation with minor concessions.

Much of this hesitance to cooperate is due to the indivisible nature of the Arab-Israeli peninsula. Theoretical conjecture coined by Ron Hassner dictates that sacred spaces

9 Koremenos, COIL, 34.
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with ties to religious systems are inherently resistant to division.\textsuperscript{12} Places such as Jerusalem are central to the culture and tradition of both Israelis and Palestinians. The idea of having to share a space that carries so much political and ideological capital is undesirable. Regarding Palestine, Hassner’s theory predicts that its all-or-nothing strategy is rooted in the fact that once space as holy as the Arab-Israeli land is divided, it does not carry the same weight; the land’s value is tied to its ‘wholeness.’ Whether it is Jerusalem or the mandate territory at large, Palestine views the historical and religious connotations to the land it seeks as being meaningless if divided. As such, Palestine has made one of the cornerstones of its political platform resistance to any land division compromise which divides an indivisible territory. Ultimately, the indivisibility of the issue serves to make the distribution problem present within the Arab-Israeli conflict more critical than if the relevant land held no cultural significance.

Mollifying coordination problems can be done by using precise language. COIL hypothesis H6-1 states that agreements characterized by coordination problems are more likely to be precise than those which are not.\textsuperscript{13} When language and expectations are specific, parties are more able to outline exactly what they want out of an agreement. Their desires can be met while avoiding the possibility of non-compliance due to misinterpretation or ambiguity. Delineating exactly what belongs to Group A and what belongs to Group B prevents future conflict that might arise because A took what B insists is theirs. While dividing sacred land is not preferable to either party, specifying territorial boundaries makes illegal divisions via invasion or occupation less likely.

Oslo II is incredibly specific regarding borders and territorial control. Article XI of the Agreement dictates that the West Bank should be split into 3 Areas: A, B, and C. Palestine and its new autonomous government would have civil authority in Areas A and B, but they would only have security and military authority in Area A. Area B would be characterized by Israeli military authority, and Area C would be entirely controlled by Israel. Palestine would also have control of the entire Gaza Strip. Corroborating these plans is a series of maps attached to the Agreement which outline exactly where each Area’s borders are and what jurisdiction they embody. Other maps in the Agreement dictate the locations of police deployment, safe passage routes, and where maritime activity may be conducted.\textsuperscript{14} The specifics of land distribution and territorial control were included to mitigate the coordination problem at bay as Israel could not claim any illegal territory as its own under the pretext of ambiguous borders. Palestinian territorial interests were seem-

\textsuperscript{13} Koremenos, COIL, 172.
\textsuperscript{14} “Israeli-Palestinian Interim Agreement on the West Bank and the Gaza Strip,” opened for signature September 24, 1995, United Nations Peacemaker Peace Agreements Database Search.
ingly secure from threats as the Agreement indicates when new territorial acquisitions are out of line.

Of course, the use of specific language does not necessarily solve the relevant coordination problem. As I discuss in Section III of my analysis, Palestine was, in many ways, forced to sign on to the Oslo Agreement without condoning all of the Agreement’s demands. The nation may have remained unsatisfied with the idea of territorial divisions and may still cling to the principle of an indivisible land. However, COIL predicts the inclusion, not the efficacy of agreement design provisions. It should be noted that international law of this manner fundamentally necessitates compromise to a certain degree. When land is an issue of concern, border demarcations are the most feasible means of at least attempting to foster conflict resolution. The use of specific territorial boundaries is the most amiable form of compromise to a Palestinian perspective which is hesitant to divide land in the first place. As such, Oslo II’s plan for territorial allocation does follow COIL’s framework.

While the Interim Agreement generally proves COIL’s hypotheses in terms of distribution and coordination problems, it serves as an outlier to COIL’s framework regarding another problem: enforcement. COIL describes an enforcement problem as one where parties have an incentive to cheat. They can defect from an agreement while still benefiting from others’ cooperation.\textsuperscript{15} The enforcement problem present within the Arab-Israeli conflict is largely driven by Israel. The state has a history of violating international laws and declarations in favor of self-interest while its neighbors maintain cooperation. Israel does not tend to follow international agreements that seriously dictate its actions, and the vague language employed in agreements to mitigate distribution problems gives Israel a loophole through which they can defect from total cooperation. From an Israeli perspective, this tactic presents a huge advantage. The state can appease Palestinian demands for rights on the surface while allowing themselves to benefit from lack of actionable enforcement.

In particular, Israel’s tendency to cheat is demonstrated by the 1967 Six-Day War. After partition in 1948, Israel and Palestine were expected to abide by the fact that the Green Line served as their border. Palestine viewed the border as legitimate and never made first-strike attempts to expand its territory, even though it disagreed with the delineation. However, Israel violated the terms of UNGA 181 in 1967 by occupying the West Bank, Golan Heights, Gaza, and parts of Jerusalem, all designated as Palestinian. The state tripled its size without any reason for doing so other than increasing its regional strength.\textsuperscript{16} Israel was able to do so because Palestine remained within its borders and was unwilling to start any territorial conflict. Furthermore, Israel defied international law

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\item[15] Koremenos, COIL, 32.
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when it acted against United Nations Security Council (UNSC) Resolution 490. While its binding nature may be disputed, UNSC 490 called for a series of Israeli attacks on the State of Lebanon to cease and affirmed Lebanon’s status as a sovereign state. Nonetheless, Israel invaded Lebanon in 1982 to establish a pro-Israeli government and defeat Palestinian guerillas. The fact that other nations abided by UNSC 490 and refused to invade the state gave Israel the space to exert influence in Lebanon. The success of the invasion aside, the reasoning behind it proves Israel’s tendency to defect.

One way of countering an enforcement problem is through including formal punishment provisions in an agreement. COIL hypothesis H8-1 states that agreements that deal with enforcement problems are more likely to contain such provisions as they can act as a deterrent against non-compliance and hold non-compliant actors accountable. Yet, there is no mention of any formal punishment provisions anywhere in the Oslo II Agreement. The Agreement does provide for the creation of quite a few committees to oversee general cooperation between Israel and Palestine, but it never goes so far as to say what power these committees have in issuing retributions. To address this absence, one might point to COIL hypothesis H8-4, which stipulates that bilateral agreements are less likely to contain formal punishment provisions. Theoretically, states in a bilateral agreement can informally decide on reciprocal repercussions amongst themselves. However, Israel and Palestine do not have a positive history of civil interactions, nor do they have mutual definitions of “good” versus “bad.” They would benefit from a formal, indisputable discussion of what should happen to a party that defects. Moreover, with so many issues on the table ranging from territorial demarcations to civil jurisdictions, ‘tit-for-tat’ gestures of conflict resolution are difficult to solidify. COIL hypothesis H8-4 states that if there are not too many rewards at stake and not too many conflicting sides, internal, informal petitions of grievance can be effective. Yet, in the case of the Arab-Israeli conflict, there are multiple conflicting arguments at play, and bilateral dialogue is unlikely to procure solutions. The myriad of subject areas covered by the Oslo Agreements make negotiating a trade-off settlement, whereby two parties would rectify transgressions by allowing the disadvantaged party to reciprocate non-compliance so that both parties are on an equal playing field, arduous. With so many possible bargains to be made concerning the variety of obligations at stake, Israel and Palestine could very well find themselves in a situation where negotiations of punishment provisions are similar in length and depth

19 Koremenos, COIL, 232.
to those originally undertaken to produce the agreement in question. In this case, formal punishments would be of use as they would eliminate the costs, both in terms of time and agreement quality, that would be incurred via bilateral, informal resolution attempts.

Precedent dictates that the two parties could have informally delegated retribution powers to the United Nations given the frequency with which the body involves itself in Arab-Israeli affairs. After Israel annexed the Golan Heights in 1967, the UN General Assembly passed Resolution 38/180A calling on UN member states to suspend economic and diplomatic relations with Israel. Resolution 38/180A was the UN’s way of punishing Israel for its actions, and there are many other instances wherein the UN has sought to alter the international community’s treatment of the Jewish state. However, this explanation of delegating power to the UN is not entirely rational. Neither party has a vested interest in letting the UN solve their problems. Palestine’s history with foreign interference in its internal affairs under British rule was not positive. Having adopted a fairly anti-Western ideology quickly after its inception, Palestine is reluctant to entrust Western-based organizations with its fate. A representative of the Arab Higher Committee in the 1920s exemplified this point when he stated that Palestinian Independence is “a matter for the rightful owners of Palestine to decide.” Israel does not have much reason to give punishment power to the UN either, which has historically taken the side of Palestine in the Arab-Israeli conflict. The body continues to pass numerous resolutions emphasizing the rights of Arab people, yet seldom condemns Palestinian terrorist organizations like Hamas for killing countless innocent Israelis. Additionally, although it has been revoked, the UNGA passed Resolution 3379 in 1975 to declare Zionism, the very ideology upon which much of the Jewish land claim rests, as being a form of racism. As such, neither party would have rationally agreed to exclude formal punishment provisions in favor of informal UN jurisdiction. This oversight makes the lack of punishment provisions a flaw that has little backing in COIL’s framework, particularly when compared to similar agreements.

The enforcement problem at stake was so woefully ignored that former US Department of State Legal Advisor Geoffrey Watson characterized the Agreement by the fact that “each party is probably entitled to undertake countermeasures in response to lesser

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22 It is possible that the US could have been considered as an informally delegated mediating party; we can never know for sure given the secret nature of the Oslo negotiations. Yet, the US has historically been an ally of Israel, sharing with the US Western values and strategic political goals in the region. Similar to why we could expect Israel to reject intervention by the UN, we could anticipate Palestine’s distaste for US mediation. I cover a few of the pro-Israel biases already included in the Oslo agreement due the US brokerage in Section IV of my paper.

23 Watson, 22.

breaches by the other.” Watson highlights that given a lack of punishment provisions to curb cheating, both Israel and Palestine are likely to respond to one party’s infractions with infractions of their own to their advantage. Belligerence was never defined in the Agreement and there was nothing stopping or dissuading Israel from suspending cooperation if Palestine was noncompliant. Israel was so passionate about playing tit-for-tat in terms of carrying out obligations that it stated Israeli troops would not be redeployed from Palestine if Palestinians did not comply with the terms of the Agreement at any point. Then, Israel made the case that a minor delay in amending Palestine’s charter shortly after signing the Oslo Accords was cause for reciprocal noncompliance. With a punishment provision in place, each party would have felt consequences for failing to meet obligations to any degree, possibly preventing the deterioration of the Agreement based on reciprocity principles. If Israel knew there would be consequences for noncooperation regardless of Palestine’s actions, it may have been more open to following through with its obligations promptly.

3. The Role of the US

Regardless of how the Agreement was designed, it is unlikely that Oslo II would have come to fruition at all without the assistance of the US and then-President Bill Clinton, who facilitated negotiations. But why was the US so concerned with ushering in an era of Middle Eastern peace despite not being a party to the Oslo Agreement?

American interest in the Agreement may have stemmed from dependence on Middle Eastern oil. In the 1970s, the US imported nearly one-third of its oil supply from Arab nations and reasoned that it could not reliably depend on other regions such as Venezuela or the Soviet Union for fuel. Given these circumstances, Arab nations had quite a bit of leverage over the US, creating the possibility of a scenario wherein pro-Palestinian OPEC nations could use oil as a political weapon. The US generally takes Israel’s side in political conflicts because of shared Western values and support for Israel’s cause. Countries that sympathize with the Palestinian cause could have provided the US with an ultimatum, only exporting oil to America if the US ended its support for Israel. Brokering Arab-Israeli peace could have eliminated having to choose between the US’s need for energy and its historic Middle Eastern ally.

More relevant is the possibility that the US was interested in mediating Arab-Israeli peace to secure its military interests in the area. The Oslo II Accords were signed just four years after the end of the Persian Gulf War in 1991. The US was coming off the heels

25 Watson, 27.
26 Ibid, 115-120.
of a conflict in which its friendship with Israel proved to be toxic in an environment that required Arab support to defeat Saddam Hussein. During the war, the US had created an anti-Iraq coalition of Arab states to fight Hussein. When Iraq began firing scud missiles at Israel, the success of this coalition became less and less certain. At that point, the US had to fight on two fronts. Not only did they have to continue bombardment against Iraq, but they had to deploy military aid to Israel to protect it from Iraq. If Israel was provoked to retaliate against Hussein, its involvement in the war would split the Arab coalition, pitting pro-Israel nations against those who were not overtly sympathetic to the country. Ending tensions between Palestine and Israel would be the first of many steps needed to ensure that US military involvement in the Middle East would serve American interests efficiently without concern over factionalization. The US would be able to focus its military operations in the area on its strategic goals and avoid having to deploy resources to fortify Israel.

Importantly, there is also evidence that the US brokered the Agreement to provide advantages to Israel. At the time, the US Secretary of State attempted to reassure Palestinian negotiators by saying that “The US will act as an honest broker in trying to resolve the Arab-Israeli conflict.” However, then-State Department employee and Middle East negotiator Aaron Miller characterizes the US as having acted as ‘Israel’s attorney’ throughout the negotiation process. The Jewish state had an advantage during negotiations given that the mediator was on its side and offering them special privileges. The US allowed Israel to create the time frame for the negotiation process and instructed Palestinian leaders to comply with Israeli ideas. As a result, Israel was able to pursue gains in the Oslo II Agreement that the US did not call out as inequitable. For example, in Article XI of the Agreement, precision in outlining territorial boundaries was effective in mitigating the distribution problem of land ownership. However, the location of these boundaries gave Israel a significant strategic advantage over its counterpart. Areas of Israeli control separated Palestinian settlement allocations in the West Bank to prevent them from being contiguous. Israeli-controlled Area C settlements also prevented Palestine from having any jurisdiction over international borders — it would only share boundaries with Israel. On paper, the territorial divisions appeased both sides’ demand for concrete borders. Yet,
Israel was able to secure strategic strongholds that gave the state the ability to coalesce into a uniform group of people with mobilization power and power over Palestine’s foreign affairs. Additionally, the US pressured Palestinian representatives to accept whatever autonomy Israel was willing to offer them, allowed Israelis to opt-out of meeting with Palestinians whom they considered ‘undesirable,’ and refused to specify the necessity of total withdrawal of Israeli forces from Palestinian areas.  

Offering Israel a leg up in the negotiation process allowed the US to solidify a crucial alliance that offered Americans tremendous benefits in the past. Prior to the Oslo negotiations, Israel allowed the US Navy to dock in Haifa, kept Syria in check during a standoff with Jordan, and provided the US with Soviet weaponry to use for intelligence purposes. These benefits came in addition to Israel’s advancements in military technology relative to its neighboring states and the shared connection of Westernism and Western values felt by the US. For the US, remaining on Israel’s good side ensured the preservation of a strategic ally in a volatile region, creating spaces for further US-Israeli cooperation in the future. Brokering the Oslo Accords was a golden opportunity for the US to covertly show its dedication to the Israeli cause.

4. The Role of Secrecy

Interestingly, both the Declaration of Principles and the Interim Agreement were negotiated secretly. Twelve people maximum were kept up to date on the status of the Agreement at any given time. Both Palestine and Israel even restricted the amount of information provided to national leaders and officials regarding Oslo. Given the landmark nature of Oslo II in terms of its unprecedented unification of Arab-Israeli leaders, one may wonder why the two parties were so eager to keep its development under wraps.

For Rabin and Arafat, secrecy was a necessity given the rise of radical interest groups in the Middle East at the time of the Oslo Accords. A theoretical conjecture developed by Barbara Koremenos stipulates that secrecy is more valuable to negotiations when interest groups are characterized by extreme preferences. Periods of agreement negotiation allow salient civil organizations to mobilize, influence negotiators, and receive immediate benefits from original treaty wording. They receive the outcome they desire from the beginning of an agreement’s inception instead of expending resources to change the agreement later.

33 Sanders, 49-50.
In the late twentieth century, powerful interest groups in the Middle East took the form of terrorist organizations that held considerable power in civil society. Hamas, an Arab organization born out of the Muslim Brotherhood, began gaining major political traction after the 1987 Palestinian Intifada uprising against Israel. Hamas claims to be the true voice of the Islamic people, questioning the authority of the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) — which had been recognized as the legitimate government of Palestine — and promoting anti-Israel extremism. In November 1988, the PLO announced intentions to accept a two-state solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict. Hamas responded by rejecting any peace talks with Israel and demanding the complete liberation of Israeli occupied territory as well as threatening future confrontation.\textsuperscript{38} Hamas continues to have a considerable following by Arab Nationalists who seek to assert Palestinian regional dominance through violence. Should Oslo negotiations have been public, Hamas would have had the opportunity to disrupt the peace process and undermine any possibility of cooperation with Israel. Given its terrorist nature, the group could have responded with grave attacks on Israeli citizens which may have dissuaded Israelis from seeking diplomacy. In keeping the Oslo process covert, Arafat was able to prevent Hamas from influencing the outcome of the Agreement by only allowing recognized governments to make decisions.

Hezbollah, another anti-Israel terrorist organization, also gained traction around the time that the Oslo Accords were negotiated. The Lebanese organization formed as a result of the Israeli invasion of Lebanon and had been conducting various guerilla attacks against Israel since the 1980s. However, the 1990s marked a period of serious military development for Hezbollah. Hezbollah official Sheikh Nabil Qawook compared the organization during the last decade of the twentieth century to a standing military, boasting a strong combat infantry and significant financial backing.\textsuperscript{39} Hezbollah has a defined interest in the destruction of the Jewish state based on the atrocities Israel committed in Lebanon in the past. Open negotiations could have provided the organization to persuade Israel away from making peace with the Arab world via a new degree of violence, given Hezbollah’s strong internal bureaucracy. The Accords had to be negotiated covertly to prevent interruption from terrorist groups who sought to eliminate Israel. Otherwise, local interest groups could have escalated regional violence and wreaked havoc on relevant government structures to further their own agendas regarding the Arab-Israeli conflict.

On the Israeli side, radicalism and extreme anti-Palestinian sentiment manifested in Gush Emunim, a Zionist group formed in 1974. Pioneered by young Israelis seeking Jewish sovereignty in areas like Samaria and the Gaza strip, Gush Emunim evolved into a settlement organization wherein members would oust civilians from territories that Gush

\textsuperscript{38} Roy, 46-47.

Emunim figured would be better suited under Israeli control. The organization also had a history of negotiation with the Israeli government. Though Israeli authorities had tried to halt Gush Emunim’s first settlement crusade, activists from the organization struck a deal with then-Minister of Defense Shimon Peres to make the settlement official and relocate Arabs to an Israeli Defense Force (IDF) base.\textsuperscript{40} One can infer that Gush Emunim would have capitalized on open negotiations to promote its territorial demarcation beliefs to the negotiation team. A group that feels so strongly about the limits to which Israeli sovereignty should reach could have the capacity to pressure prominent negotiators, subsequently altering solutions to the pressing land-based coordination issue.

Additionally, secret negotiations are more valuable when agreements cover a wide variety of subject areas.\textsuperscript{41} With more issue areas present, there are more opportunities for external actors to demand trade-offs. Altering one policy position in favor of concessions regarding another is more possible with more complex agreements, allowing interest groups to use bargaining power to get what they want out of negotiations. Oslo II covered a lot of ground in its outline of Arab-Israeli peace. Its reach is connected to the specificity it boasts relating to coordination problems. Various issues ranging from economics to human rights were elaborated upon with great precision to avoid transgressions in the name of ambiguity. Secret negotiation of Oslo prevented one subject area from being used as a bargaining chip for another. For example, groups passionate about Palestinian statehood could have advocated for a more precise definition of Palestine’s international status in exchange for receiving fewer territorial concessions. With public negotiations, the possibility of specificity being altered by the civil organizations, who could have influenced the strength of certain provisions to offset others, greatly increases. This would have been fatal to the provisions used to mitigate the distribution and coordination problems at the root of the conflict.

5. Concluding Remarks

After analyzing its provisions and negotiations, it is worth questioning the overall success of the Oslo II Agreement. Unfortunately, Oslo was unable to procure Middle Eastern peace to the degree which was expected. By 1996, Israel announced that its plans to redeploy forces in Palestine (which were agreed upon under Oslo) were halted.\textsuperscript{42} One year later, Hamas bombed Tel Aviv and killed three Israeli citizens without the Palestinian Authority government making any effort to stop the group (though they agreed to do so


\textsuperscript{41} Koremenos, “Covenants,” 21.

\textsuperscript{42} Watson, 47.
under Oslo).\(^43\)

The downfall of the Agreement can be attributed to a few different variables. For one, the lack of punishment provisions led to the exacerbation of pre-existing enforcement issues. Moreover, biased American mediation left Palestine victim to a treaty favoring its opponents, which may have left the Arab party feeling alienated.

Most importantly, the Oslo Accords did not ensure peaceful relations between Israel and Palestine because the Agreement was not made with optimism or in good faith. For both parties, the goal of the Agreement was not to facilitate reconciliation — it was to protect security interests.\(^44\) Israel wanted to retain as much of its occupied territory as possible and Palestine wanted to protect its right to land. Rabin and Arafat were not pulled to cooperate, nor motivated by benevolence. Rather, economic factors pushed them to negotiate. With indivisibility existing at the forefront of the issue which prompted the Oslo II Agreement, one can observe how both Israel and Palestine would not be eager to approach the negotiating table with an intent to compromise. Dr. Iffat Malik describes the situation best in his analysis of the Oslo Accords, saying:

The assumption implicit in the Oslo Accords was that once Israel and Palestinians stopped fighting and started cooperating, an atmosphere would evolve that would be conducive to the resolution of the major outstanding issues between them. In other words, that once a harmonious working relationship developed, it would become that much easier to settle disputes over Jerusalem, borders, etc. This assumption was too optimistic. It underestimated both the depth of hostility between Israelis and Palestinians, and the extent of the difference between them on various issues.\(^45\)

Fortunately, though the Oslo Accords were unsuccessful in achieving their overall goals, there is much to be learned from their negotiation and design. Future diplomats seeking to quell Arab-Israeli tensions should observe the strengths and weaknesses of Oslo II, basing their work off precedent to procure the most effective conflict resolution possible. Certain components of Oslo II were effective. The use of ambiguity to appease divergent preferences and the adherence to a secret negotiation process resulted in an agreement which respected divergent ideas but neglected extremism. Such design provisions should be replicated by future Arab-Israeli peace deals. However, weak points in Oslo II’s design proved detrimental to its success, highlighting what should be done differently in future negotiations. The Oslo Accords clearly demonstrated the need for formal punishment provisions in any peace agreement between Israel and Palestine, as

\(^{43}\) Ibid, 224.

\(^{44}\) Roy, 235.

clearly outlined retribution policies would likely deter tit-for-tat non-compliance. An honest, impartial broker is also necessary when participating in peace talks; no party should have a favored advantage over the other when attempting to set rules and obligations. Lastly, when working to foster collaboration and cooperation between Israel and Palestine, negotiators must be mindful of the deeply entrenched ideological roots of the conflict at hand and the cultural value of the Arab-Israeli territory. Should both parties approach the negotiation table with empathy for the opposing side and an authentic desire to promote friendship (as opposed to being coerced into negotiations or pressured by economic variables), future laws developing diplomacy between Israel and Palestine may prove to be more fruitful than the 1995 Oslo Accords.
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War-Time Trauma and Korea-Japan Bilateral Relations:
Considering the Importance of Emotions and Memory in the Context of the Comfort Women Issue
Harrison Kelly

Despite being key alliance partners, Japan and South Korea have a complicated and often tense relationship. Much of this tension stems from the legacy of Japan’s occupation of Korea during the Asia-Pacific War. The Japanese military’s use of sex slavery during this conflict, commonly referred to as the comfort women issue, features as a centerpiece of these tensions and continues to strain relations to this day. To better understand the bilateral relations between these states, it is important to consider emotions and memory in this context. The following essay seeks to consider these often-neglected factors in the context of the 2015 Comfort Women Agreement between Japan and South Korea. From my analysis of this case study, emotions such as pride and shame emerge as key factors in this context. I draw two primary conclusions from my analysis: first, emotions can be mobilized by civil society to compel states towards desirable behavior; second, although they are influenced by these emotions, states can also attempt to manipulate discourse to foster public emotions that better align with their geopolitical interests. By considering these conclusions, the more adversarial behaviors these states exhibit towards each other can be better understood as being driven by emotions and memories of trauma. Furthermore, engaging with these less concrete factors can aid analysis of this complicated bilateral relationship.

1. Introduction

In spite of their mutual alliance with the United States (US), relations between Japan and the Republic of Korea (ROK) are often volatile and adversarial. This dynamic represents a puzzle in the field of international relations (IR), whose conventional theories struggle to explain why, despite being key alliance partners, these two states’ relations are not always cooperative or as warm as expected. To better understand the nuances of this relationship, it is necessary to take a different approach and consider the often-neglected role of emotions and memory in IR and the extent to which these factors can influence state behavior. Traditionally, emotions have received little attention in mainstream IR literature due to the historically positivist nature of the field. However, this neglect is gradually changing as a growing body of literature has started to recognize and consider the influence emotions have on political phenomena.

The following essay will draw from this literature, and use a conceptual framework focused on emotions and memory to analyze the relationship between the ROK

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HARRISON KELLY was a 3rd year at the University of Queensland when this piece was written. He has since graduated with an extended major in International Relations and a minor in Peace and Conflict Studies"
and Japan. With this conceptual focus, this essay will research and analyze the issue of “comfort women,” as this topic commonly features as a focal point of the tensions between these states. This term refers to women who were victimized under a sex slavery system run by the Japanese military during the Asia-Pacific War. In my analysis of this case, emotions of pride and shame emerged as key influencers of the relationship between Japan and the ROK. Therefore, I ultimately argue these emotions stemming from the comfort women issue influence the relations between Japan and the ROK to a significant extent. Furthermore, unless the emotions which drive these states to disagreement are understood and analyzed, the comfort women issue will remain a thorn in the side of Japanese and South Korean relations.

In the interests of maintaining a focused scope, the issue of comfort women has been selected as this essay’s focus. Though there are other issues plaguing the relationship between these states, such as the legacy of war-time industrial slavery, the comfort women topic is the most ideal for investigation as it is a highly emotional topic for both populations, and therefore provides a wealth of potential insight into how important emotions and memory are in this context. To further narrow this scope, I will focus my analysis on the 2015 Comfort Women Agreement (hereafter referred to as the ‘2015 agreement’) and its significance for different actors.

Furthermore, the remainder of this essay will be structured into sections with corresponding subsections. First, the history of the comfort women issue will be discussed. Following this section, this essay will provide a literature review on relevant emotions and memory literature. After this, the case study on the 2015 agreement will be analyzed and the relevance of emotions in this context considered. In this section I will advance my main argument by showing how emotions such as pride and shame can help us understand the nuances of Japan-ROK relations.

### 2. The History of the Comfort Women Issue

Before such an analysis can begin however, it is necessary to provide context on the issue of comfort women. This background section will not be exhaustive, but rather identify and familiarize the reader with key pieces of information that will become relevant further below in the analysis section of this essay.

**Defining Military Comfort Women and the Comfort Station System**

It is first necessary to define what is meant by the phrase “comfort women.” The term has its origins in the Asia-Pacific war between 1931 and 1945. During this war, it was common practice for the Japanese military to create “comfort stations” as they made

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2 The problematic nature of this term will be briefly discussed in my conclusion.
military advances.\textsuperscript{4} Throughout this time, women from Korea, China and other occupied nations were forcibly recruited and moved to these stations where they were forced to perform sexual acts for Japanese soldiers.\textsuperscript{5} Though it is contested by Japan, the number of women victimized under this system is immense, with international estimates being around 200,000.\textsuperscript{6}

It is from this history that terms such as “military comfort women” or the shorter version, “comfort women,” derive from. This name is a translation of the Japanese word \textit{Ianfu} and the Korean word \textit{wianbu}, both of which frequently appear in relevant literature.\textsuperscript{7} The term is frequently used in news media and has subsequently become the default term used to describe these women.\textsuperscript{8} As such, for the remainder of this essay, the term “comfort women” will be used to describe these victims.

\textit{The Prevalence of Korean Comfort Women}

The comfort women controversy is particularly salient in ROK and Japan relations because of the significant number of Korean women forced into this system. Though the suffering of women of other nationalities should not be discounted, it is necessary to note that an estimated 80-90 percent of comfort women were Korean, as can be derived from a medical report written by a Japanese Military Surgeon stationed in Shanghai in 1939.\textsuperscript{9} Furthermore, this large percentage is not mere coincidence, but instead reflects a deliberate effort to systematically use Korean women as sex slaves.

This deliberate effort was undertaken for the purposes of addressing problems the Japanese military was facing as a result of widespread civilian rape of Chinese women.\textsuperscript{10} To try and reduce this, women were taken from Korea and made to work as comfort women in occupied parts of China. Korean women were forcibly recruited, primarily through violence and coercion. However, it is also worth noting that deception also played a significant role.\textsuperscript{11} For one example, in the book \textit{True Stories of the Korean Comfort Women}, survivor Kim Tŏkchin describes how she was tricked into believing she was going to work in a Japanese factory before being forced into a comfort station in Shanghai.\textsuperscript{12} The harrowing experiences women like Kim underwent do not need to be described in detail

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{5} Ibid, 620-626.
\item \textsuperscript{6} Ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{7} Keith Howard, True Stories of the Korean Comfort Women (London: Cassell, 1995), v.
\item \textsuperscript{8} See news such as: The Dong-A Ilbo, “Comfort women victim says all she wants is apology,” The Dong-A Ilbo, January 25, 2021, https://www.donga.com/en/article/all/20210125/2393539/1/Comfort-women-victim-says-all-she-wants-is-apology
\item \textsuperscript{9} Howard, True Stories, 16.
\item \textsuperscript{11} Chin Sung Chung, “The Origin,” 221-225.
\item \textsuperscript{12} Howard, True Stories, 42-44.
\end{itemize}
here in this essay, however, should the reader need confirmation of the extent of these atrocities, the aforementioned book edited by Keith Howard is appropriate reading as it provides substantive firsthand accounts.

3. The Direct Involvement of the Japanese Military

In providing a background on this topic, the most important fact to establish is the Japanese military’s unequivocal involvement in this sex slavery system: a point of significant contestation by Japan. Furthermore, it is necessary to state and make clear that at all levels of the comfort station system, the Japanese military was involved and responsible for the egregious crimes committed against these women.

Though comfort stations were haphazardly set up in the early years of the war, from 1937 onwards, they became formally incorporated into Japanese occupation plans. Subsequently, the Japanese military consciously planned, implemented, and participated in this system at every level. Often Korean intermediaries were used to deceive women into recruitment, making false promises of industrial work in Japan before trafficking women to occupied areas in China to work as comfort women. Beyond these connections to intermediaries, the Japanese military conducted every other step of the system. Comfort stations were typically established in close proximity to barracks and were policed by Japanese soldiers. These stations exclusively serviced Japanese soldiers and were either administered directly by military personnel or indirectly through civilian proprietors on a Japanese payroll. Furthermore, the Japanese military provided stations with condoms and forced comfort women to have regular check-ups at military hospitals. Ultimately, all available evidence suggests the Japanese military was responsible for the crimes committed against comfort women. Considering this, one might expect contemporary compensation and apologies to be forthcoming from Japan, yet this has not been the case, leading international human rights organizations to condemn Japan’s response to this issue as insufficient and laden with denial.

16 Howard, True Stories, 65.
18 Ibid, 45.
4. Contemporary Tensions and Historical Revisionism

Following Japan’s defeat in 1945, surviving comfort women returned home. After escaping their awful circumstances, however, few were able to live without their trauma haunting themselves both physically and mentally.20 Due to gendered conceptions of female chastity in Korea, many former comfort women suppressed their experiences and hid them from public view.21 It was not until December 1991, 46 years after the war ended, that the issue of comfort women became publicly problematized when Korean victim Kim Hak-sun went public with her experiences.22 The publicity Kim Hak-sun generated opened the door on the comfort women issue. In the decades that followed, victims around the world, as well as international organizations such as the United Nations, came forward and became involved.23

In response to these developments, Japan made some notable attempts to resolve the issue, such as the 1993 Kono Statement and Asian Women’s Fund (AWF) Compensation Project.24 The former refers to a formal apology issued by Japan’s then Chief Cabinet Secretary, Yohei Kono, to all victims of the comfort women system.25 The AWF compensation project refers to an international charity foundation to which Japan provided money to assist former comfort women.26 While the AWF project was outright rejected by the ROK government, the Kono Statement at least accepted the moral responsibility the Japanese government had to these victims. However, despite this moral acceptance, Japan made no effort to acknowledge and take on legal responsibility, and court cases brought forth by victims continued to be rejected.27 Ultimately, neither of these solutions satisfied all interested parties.

As a result, the comfort women issue carried on well into former Prime Minister Abe Shinzo’s time in office. Due to Abe’s personal opinions on the topic as well as his nationalist politics, his time in office served to heighten diplomatic tensions over the issue. Abe was a staunch revisionist, serving as a founding member and executive secretary of an association of politicians which roughly translated to “Group of Young Diet Members for Consideration of Japan’s Future and History Education.”28 Among other revision-

21 Ibid.
23 Kazue, “The ‘comfort women’ issue and the embedded culture of sexual violence in contemporary Japan,” 621.
25 Ibid.
26 Ibid.
27 Ibid, 623.
ist goals, this group advocated for the removal of all mentions of comfort women from school history books, as it was their belief that Japanese children should be proud of their country’s history. Abe’s connection to such attitudes and the nationalist focus of his prime ministership intensified tensions with the ROK over the comfort women controversy. Other scholarly studies on historical revisionism have described approaches such as these as “malevolent bigotry.”

Such then was the backdrop of the 2015 agreement between the ROK and Japan. Understanding this agreement, including what led to its creation and how it has been received by various groups, can help explain the extent to which this issue influences the relationship between these states. So far, conventional theories have struggled to do so. I argue the lack of consideration these theories give to emotions in this context is a key reason for this lack of understanding.

5. Emotions and Memories of Trauma

To deconstruct the complex relationship between the ROK and Japan, it is necessary to consider the importance of emotions and memory in IR. As noted at the onset of this essay, there is a growing body of authors beginning to engage with emotions as serious factors of consideration in IR. The following section will provide a literature review on this topic to determine how emotions and memory can be useful to an analysis of the comfort women issue.

**Why Emotions are Under-Theorized in International Relations**

Before engaging with this literature, it is useful to first consider why it is a somewhat novel area of study in IR to begin with. Arguably the most prevalent contemporary development in IR is the newfound consideration being given to emotions, as such factors have historically been neglected and treated as tertiary concerns in a field focussed on rationalism. In their efforts to establish IR as a respectable school of study, early scholars treated IR like the natural sciences so that clear conclusions about the nature of social reality could be drawn. This positivist approach unfortunately resulted in intangible concepts, such as emotions, being pushed to the periphery. More recently, however, scholarly work is departing from these positivist roots and incorporating emotions, adding a much-needed consideration into the fold and expanding the scope of the field in a meaningful way. This essay will draw from such literature in an attempt to show how emotions born from comfort women trauma can help us understand the relationship between the involved states.

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Emotions and Collective Identity

To begin with, this literature review will consider the connection between emotions and identity and attempt to show how emotions born of trauma can construct collective identities. To be more specific, how emotions construct conceptions of the ‘self’ and the ‘other’ can have an obvious influence over the behavior of affected groups. Traumatic events have profound emotional impacts on those involved and serve to shape one’s identity and subsequently their behavior. In the context of Japan-ROK bilateral relations, this dynamic is particularly important considering the historical trauma of colonization which can subsequently shape identity and behavior.

Traumatic events generate powerful negative emotions such as hate and fear, framing how victims and their communities perceive and interact with others. Such is the notion expressed by scholars Hutchinson and Bleiker, who argue in the context of the war on terror that emotions born of past traumas can construct a society’s collective identity, binding people together for a common purpose. They further argue such identity construction marks a critical point in the cycle of violence. When negative emotions such as hate and fear dominate trauma affected communities, Hutchinson and Bleiker argue that violence and conflict will be perpetuated.

Additionally, as these authors note, negative emotions are far more common responses to traumatic events than positive emotions. This is, at least in part, because such emotions are easier to manipulate for political ends. As Hutchinson and Bleiker observe in the context of post-9/11 America, emotions of hate and fear were deliberately fostered by the Bush administration to domestically legitimise the war on terror. Furthermore, the way in which negative emotions can be politically manipulated into particular constructions of collective identity is operationalized as an important consideration in the context of comfort women and Japan-ROK relations.

Emotions and their Impact on State Behavior

Emotions can also become institutionalized within state structures and subsequently influence state behavior. This notion contrasts many of the positivist theories which dominate the IR school. According to positivist IR theories like realism, states ought to be understood as unitary and rational actors who will behave according to their best interests. This rational actor model typically does not consider the potential influence of emotions, as these are perceived as irrational features of day-to-day life which

32 Ibid, 66.
33 Ibid, 60.
do not have significant bearing on states. Even realists who recognise emotions as valid factors, would ultimately privilege the rational state as the main unit of analysis over emotions. However, this relative neglect for emotions is ill-advised here.

Despite rationalist conceptions of the state, they are ultimately still run and operated by individuals, who can also be influenced by emotions. Emotions stemming from past trauma can, in this sense, become institutionalized within state government through the people who run them. This is an idea expressed by scholars Pace and Bilgic, who suggest emotions impact institutional agency and identity.\(^{35}\) The discussion on collective identity is relevant here, as such processes of identity construction are shown to occur at the institutional level as well. In their study on the European Union’s (EU) foreign policy, Pace and Bilgic describe speeches given by EU representatives as ‘emotional performances’ which institutionalize emotions into the Union’s approach to conflict in the Middle East. There is a cyclical quality to this identity, where the influence of emotions on the EU is expressed by the emotional performances of representatives who themselves normalize and reconstruct a foreign policy approach embedded in particular emotions.\(^{36}\) In this sense, emotions have influence on government and foreign policy and ought to be considered whenever state behavior is being analyzed.

**Emotions and Social Movements**

Emotions do not only influence the state, but are also vital to civil society organizations. So far in this literature review, emotions have been shown to both influence states and be influenced by them. They constitute important factors in the construction of state identity and agency, and have also been proven to be salient targets for political manipulation. Yet both of these points can also be made with regard to civil society as emotions are uniquely critical factors in the creation of social movements and their behavior.

Social movements are often born from powerful emotions such as fear or anger. Indeed, throughout the social sciences there is a growing understanding among scholars that emotions play a critical role in the success of social movements.\(^{37}\) Of particular relevance to this essay is the notion of emotional channeling. This is a process sociologists identify as central to effective social movements and refers to the idea of channeling existing feelings about a topic into other, more useful emotions for the purpose of the movement’s goals.\(^{38}\) Examples of this channeling abound in contemporary social movements. For example, scholar James M. Jasper identifies this practice in the context of anti-nuclear

\(^{35}\) Michelle Pace & Ali Bilgic, “Trauma, Emotions, and Memory in World Politics: The Case of the European Union’s Foreign Policy in the Middle East Conflict,” Political Psychology 39, no. 3 (December 2018): 514, https://doi.org/10.1111/pops.12459

\(^{36}\) Pace & Bilgic, “Trauma, Emotions, and Memory,” 514-515.


activism. He highlights how fear of the reactors, which itself is a paralyzing emotion, is channelled into anger at the proposed projects, which is a more useful emotion to encourage protests.\(^\text{39}\) In this sense, emotions can be mobilized by civil society to achieve certain goals.

Furthermore, memories of trauma and associated emotions are also critical to the success of some social movements. To garner support, it is typical practice to appeal to a target audience’s emotions. In post-conflict affected contexts, stories of specific traumas can serve to rally communities to action. The more emotionally evocative these stories are, the more likely they are to garner support for the social movement.\(^\text{40}\) Groups such as the child sexual abuse survivor’s movement encourage open displays of these emotions born of past trauma, as a means of rallying supporters to the movement out of sympathy and anger.\(^\text{41}\) Such emotional provocation shows how emotions are important to non-governmental groups and civil society organizations. In the context of comfort women, these ideas will be important in understanding how various social movements concerned with this issue can mobilize emotions against state actors.

6. Emotions in the Context of the Comfort Women Issue

The following analysis will argue that emotions and memories of trauma stemming from the comfort women issue can help us understand the nuances of Japan-ROK relations. Emotions such as pride and shame will be identified as particularly influential in the context of the 2015 agreement. The way these emotions frame the agreement and influence public perception of it show some of the ways that emotions affect the broader relationship between Japan and the ROK. These emotions will be explored in three sections. First, the lead up to the 2015 agreement will be discussed. Then, how emotions of pride and shame influence both Japan and the ROK will be analyzed in two corresponding sections.

**The Lead-up to the 2015 Agreement**

This section briefly considers how both states arrived at this agreement, and the extent to which emotions influenced them. Before 2015, the topic of comfort women represented a thorn in the side of Japan and ROK relations. In the time since it was first problematized in 1991 through 2015, Japan was regularly put under pressure to address

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its past crimes. This pressure came from both the Korean government and civil society organizations such as the Korean Council for Women Drafted for Military Sexual Slavery by Japan, often referred to as the Korean Council. In considering the Japanese response to this pressure, I categorize it into two phases as follows. In the early years following Kim Hak-sun's public statement, Japan's response can be described as tokenistic and done to 'save face.' However, according to most academic literature on the subject, following these early efforts in the 1990s, the state's response became rooted in denial as it focused on delegitimizing and attacking former comfort women.\textsuperscript{42}

In this first phase, Japan sought to maintain its image through the Kono Statement and AWF Compensation Project, all the while failing to address the grievances of victims. The acceptance of moral responsibility provided by the 1993 Kono Statement was greatly contested in Japan, as right-wing political groups sought to undermine it, both at the time and in the years since. For example, in writing this essay, scholar Muta Kazue and their 2016 article have been frequently referred to. In their article, their source of information on the Kono Statement was Japan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, whose website provided a translation of the statement in English. However, as Kazue appears to have predicted in their notes, this webpage has seemingly since been removed, perhaps due to political backlash.\textsuperscript{43} In addition to the Kono Statement, Japan also made attempts to compensate victims through the AWF Compensation Fund. The Korean government, however, rejected this effort, holding that paying money to and going through a private fund and not the government directly was an improper resolution of the issue.\textsuperscript{44} The Japanese backlash from politicians and the public against this project also undermined its authenticity as it did not appear to be an agreed upon apology.\textsuperscript{45}

Following this first phase, Japan shifted its stance to one characterized by denial and nationalistic pride, as they began to refute their responsibility for the crimes committed against comfort women. Arguments could be made that this approach reflected how the nation felt from the start, but at the very least, from the late 1990s through to 2015, it was clear that Japan had little sympathy for Korean comfort women. Controversies such as former Prime Minister Koizumi Junichiro's frequent visits to Yasukuni Shrine, a memorial for Japan's war dead which includes several war criminals, only served to intensify feelings of fear and distrust among Koreans.\textsuperscript{46} These feelings were not abated when Abe Shinzo

\textsuperscript{42} Song, “Denial,” 163.
\textsuperscript{43} See “Note 5” in Kazue, “The 'comfort women' issue and the embedded culture of sexual violence in contemporary Japan,” 632.
\textsuperscript{44} Kazue, “The 'comfort women' issue and the embedded culture of sexual violence in contemporary Japan,” 623-625.
\textsuperscript{45} Ibid, 624.
first became Prime Minister in 2006. As previously noted, Abe’s own revisionist and nationalist views served to intensify tensions between the two states. After Abe returned to office in 2012, the comfort women controversy was still unresolved. Anti-Korean sentiments had also risen in Japan, in tandem with Abe’s “Japan is great” nationalist movement.47

Subsequently, in the lead up to the 2015 agreement, the ROK was still dissatisfied with the way Japan had handled the issue as the states continued to disagree on Japan’s responsibility to victims. To make matters more volatile, the dominance of nationalism in Japan during this time made the notion of making amends for past crimes not only a non-priority but also a source of great political backlash for Japanese politicians. With emotions and tensions high, both states sought to satisfy their constituencies through the 2015 agreement.

7. The 2015 Agreement

On December 28, 2015, Japan and the ROK’s foreign ministers released a joint statement on the issue of comfort women.48 The key outcomes of this agreement are that Japan formally apologized for the military’s role in the crimes against comfort women and agreed to provide a lump sum to a foundation to be established by South Korea to support victims. Additionally, the agreement will be the final resolution of the comfort women issue and the South Korean government will take steps to remove the controversial comfort women statue in front of the Japanese embassy in Seoul.49 Though this agreement is not legally binding, it held significance for various actors, including both states, their populations and of course victims.50

8. Japanese Reception of the Agreement

The reception of this agreement among the Japanese public supports the argument that emotions, particularly pride and shame, influence the relationship between these states. Other scholarly studies have suggested the Japanese reaction was split along liberal and conservative lines. Scholar Myung-Hee Park observed that liberal news outlets in Japan emphasized the cooperative element of the agreement and the responsibility the Japanese government has to former comfort women.51 Conversely, conservative newspapers emphasized the supposed final nature of the agreement and put the onus of responsi-

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bility on the South Korean government. Furthermore, the following analysis will unpack these reactions, identifying pride and shame as important emotions in this context and will attempt to show how they influence Japan-ROK relations.

For Japanese liberals, I argue shame is a dominant emotion in the context of the comfort women issue and contributed to the government’s pursuit of the 2015 agreement. Liberal-leaning Japanese voters appear to have been pleased with the 2015 agreement as Abe’s approval rating increased during this time. As a conservative prime minister, this increase likely came from liberal voters satisfied by the steps taken to improve the country’s ties with the ROK. Additionally, Japanese liberal views of the agreement seem to reflect a desire to alleviate war-time shame. This shame manifests in the perception that Japan has a moral responsibility to former comfort women. Following the conclusion of the Second World War in the aftermath of the atomic bombs, an anti-militarist collective identity began to emerge as a means of attributing blame for the atrocities Japanese people endured. This collective narrative attributed blame to the Japanese military takeover during the 1930s and subsequent expansionism and war crimes as the source of Japan’s trauma. In this sense, shame and anger directed at the Japanese military became significantly embedded in the collective identity of Japanese liberals. These emotions born of trauma have been mobilized before the 2015 agreement, such as the mass protests in the 1960s against the US-Japan Security Treaty. In the context of the 2015 agreement, these same emotions of shame and anger appear to have contributed to the satisfaction of Japanese liberals with this agreement since it also accepts the moral responsibility of the Japanese military. These emotions likely contributed to Abe’s pursuit of this agreement as a means of increasing his popularity among these voters. In this regard, I contend that shame has influenced this agreement and its reaction among the Japanese public.

Considering the information above, one might expect Japanese conservatives to react negatively to the agreement, yet this was not the case. The reaction from Japanese conservatives was mainly positive, albeit for completely different reasons as the agreement generated different emotions in this group. For these constituencies, pride played a key role in their reaction to this agreement. Conservative-leaning news outlets in Japan emphasized the supposed final nature of the agreement. A claim advanced by news outlets such as Sankei Shimbun who, in the years since the 2015 agreement, repeatedly allege

52 Ibid, 489.
56 Sankei Shinbun, “EDITORIAL | Moon Jae In’s South Korea Must Stop Feigning Ignorance of the Comfort Women Agreement,” January 21, 2021.
the ROK has ignored the final nature of the agreement. I argue here that the focus on this aspect is a reflection of the significance of pride as a central emotion for this group. As discussed, contemporary Japanese politics under Abe were dominated by nationalism, a key part of which is pride. The comfort women issue naturally positions Japan in a negative light to international institutions and other nations.\(^{57}\) Furthermore, the continued shadow cast by the comfort women controversy threatens this nationalistic pride. Therefore, this constituency wanted the issue to be irreconcilably resolved and forgotten.

Another point of interest in this agreement is the clause requesting the infamous comfort women statue in Seoul to be “resolved,” presumably through removal. This statue was erected in 2011 to mark the 1000th weekly demonstration against Japan’s refusal to address the comfort women issue.\(^{58}\)

![Comfort Women Statue in Front of Japanese Embassy in Seoul](image)

**Figure 1: Comfort Women Statue in Front of Japanese Embassy in Seoul.**\(^{59}\)

Japanese conservatives, including Abe and his colleagues, have what can only be described as a veritable obsession with this statue. The fact that it features as a focal point of the only one-page 2015 agreement speaks volumes as to the space it appears to occupy.

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in the minds of these groups. Furthermore, in a report submitted to the United States Supreme Court in 2017 objecting to the erection of a replica statue in Glendale California, the Japanese government went so far as to describe this concern as part of its core national interests.\textsuperscript{60} This focus on the comfort women statue and the onus of the South Korean government to remove it reflects emotions rather than rationality. According to rationalist mainstream IR theories, a mere piece of art should not be the concern of nation states, yet it is a significant concern to the state of Japan. Most recently, scholar David Chapman discussed this statue and the influence it has on the relationship between these two states.\textsuperscript{61} He identified the statue as a textbook example of so-called “visual politics” and discusses at length the influence it has as both a physical effigy but also as a digital force. The key takeaway here is that the statue evokes behavior on behalf of state actors that is not conventionally rational.

I argue the obsession Japanese conservatives have with the comfort women statue, as reflected in the public’s reaction to the 2015 agreement, is born of nationalistic pride. To many Japanese conservatives, the statue infringes upon their collective identity as a proud people. As mentioned in the literature review, emotions can both influence, and be manipulated by political elites. In this case, Abe’s nationalist platform and repeated message that “Japan is great!” fostered emotions of pride. In the context of the comfort women issue, Japan’s conservative population subsequently reacts negatively to any notion which might undermine this pride. Overall, whether liberal or conservative, the Japanese public’s reaction to the 2015 agreement appears to be significantly affected by emotions.

9. South Korean Reception of the Agreement

In contrast to Japan’s reception of the agreement, the response in the ROK has been more homogenous and largely negative. A common theme in IR emotions literature is the relationship between trauma, emotions, and collective identity. Traumatic events such as the comfort women crimes can be used to construct powerful collective identities which frame how societies view themselves and the so-called ‘other’. In the context of the comfort women issue, this dynamic is evidently at work in the ROK. Emotions associated with these traumas influence how South Koreans see themselves and how they see Japan. Emotions such as fear, anger, and shame are particularly prevalent. I argue here that these emotions are deliberately manufactured by stakeholders such as news media, social movements or the state itself. How this manipulation of emotions unfolds will now be the subject of analysis.

In South Korea, the reaction to the 2015 agreement was overwhelmingly negative. In particular, victims and activists resented the lack of consideration their govern-

\textsuperscript{60} Ibid, 376-377.


\textbf{Southern California International Review - Vol. 11 No. 2}
ment had given to them in these negotiations. According to civil society organizations such as the Korean Council, the 2015 agreement was negotiated and reached with no consultation with victims or these groups.\(^\text{62}\) This left many South Koreans dissatisfied with the agreement. I argue this reaction, and the developments that followed demonstrate how emotions can be mobilized by victims and civil society to influence the behavior of states.

In the ROK, the Korean Council has significant influence over public perception. As the body which represents and supports former comfort women, the Korean Council is a significant voice in representing Korea’s war-time trauma. I maintain that emotions associated with trauma, such as fear, anger and shame are channelled through the Korean Council. The victim testimonies, laden with such emotions, are published by the Council, providing it with a powerful representative voice on the issue of comfort women. Therefore, whenever or not the Korean Council takes a stance, its opinion is often highly influential among the public.\(^\text{63}\) The South Korean government pays significant regard to the Council’s stances on various events, recognizing the extent to which the Council embodies the collective emotions of the Korean public. Understood this way, emotions appear to be a significant tool for civil society organizations seeking to influence the actions of states.

This conclusion is supported by the South Korean government's behavior after the 2015 agreement. Following the political backlash it received, the government backtracked on its commitments. Despite the clause stating the 2015 agreement was to be the final resolution of the issue, the South Korean government has openly disregarded it and taken the side of the Korean Council in calling for further apologies and recognition.\(^\text{64}\) This acquiescence to public emotions has occurred before in this context, when, in response to pressure from the Korean Council in 1995, the government retracted its positive stance on the AWF compensation project and rejected it in line with the Council’s stance.\(^\text{65}\) The Korean Council in this case, targets emotions such as anger and fear and channels them into action against a perceived ‘other.’ Ordinarily this action is directed against the Japanese government. However, as was the case after the 2015 agreement was released, the Council was able to redirect these emotions against its own state when it feels they are not aligned with their views. This provides a useful example of how emotions can


effectively be used by social movements to achieve their goals. However, emotions are not exclusively the tools of civil society. In fact, the South Korean government itself also manipulates and mobilizes emotions when deemed politically necessary. In line with the arguments made by Hutchinson and Bleiker, the South Korean government often deliberately fosters emotions to achieve its goals. A feminist analysis, such as the one employed by scholar Emma Dolan in her piece titled “Sexual Violence, Political Apology and Competing Victimhoods,” is particularly useful in illustrating this.

In her article, Dolan discusses how the ROK’s government problematizes the issue of comfort women in order to distract from the ongoing crisis of sexual violence against camp town women. This term refers to women who, since the end of the Second World War, have worked as sex workers around U.S. military bases in South Korea. Despite increasing international attention being given to how these women experience sexual violence at the hands of the U.S. military, the South Korean government is yet to recognize it as an issue. While ignoring this ongoing issue, the same government regularly draws attention to and problematizes the comfort women crimes committed by Japan. This turning of a blind eye is made even worse by claims that suggest the South Korean government is actually involved in this system, even tricking women into work as sex workers in a manner reminiscent of the old Japanese military. Dolan chalks this disparity up to the geopolitical interests of the South Korean state as well as gendered constructions of femininity and rape mythologies.

I argue there is a distinct emotional quality to this prioritization of the comfort women issue. In Dolan’s discussion of gender, she often refers to the concepts of pride and shame. I argue, in line with Dolan’s own analysis, that the emotion of shame dominated the comfort women topic prior to its problematization in 1991. The prominence of shame in this context is evident in victim accounts of their experiences. For example, in describing how she was treated after returning to Korea, victim Mun Okchu recalls how her Aunt said, “…they couldn’t allow someone like me to stay at home and disgrace the family.” Such societal conceptions of gender and shame had obvious effects on victims, as Okchu further recounts, “I kept my life in China to myself. I was so ashamed of what had happened that I did not want to let other people know anything about it.” In the 1990s, however, I argue this discourse of shame shifted to one where former comfort women were

68 Ibid, 188-189.
71 Howard, True Stories, 113.
72 Ibid, 114.
seen as innocent victims of a foreign enemy. Kim Hak-Sun’s testimony and the emergence of the comfort women issue in public discourse coincided with a wider international shift in the perception of sexual violence. In part due to the atrocities committed in Rwanda and Bosnia, the international community reconstructed its conception of wartime-sexual violence, framing it as a serious concern instead of an unfortunate byproduct of war. The public testimonies of former comfort women formed a significant part of this changing discourse. In the South Korean context, shame was replaced with pride as the collective identity of the nation shifted. This shift is evident in the attitudes of former comfort women such as Okchu, who also expresses, “Now that everyone knows the story, however, I feel I have nothing to fear.” I argue that this emotion of pride is deliberately promoted by the South Korean government and news media, all the while camp town women are perceived with the same shame that used to silence comfort women.

This focus on the comfort women issue allows South Korea to construct a proud collective identity which can focus its attention on a foreign other. News media in the ROK is consistent in this portrayal. The conservative Japanese news reports discussed earlier are reproduced and exaggerated in the ROK. Liberal news is drowned out in favor of the more emotionally-evocative conservative takes. I argue the adversarial framing of Japanese conservative media is used in South Korea to further entrench their collective identity as an innocent victim of a brutish enemy. I argue, this consistent attention given to the comfort women issue effectively distracts the South Korean public from the geopolitically inconvenient issue of camp town women. As the ROK is dependent on these U.S. military bases, it is in their interest not to problematize them. The wider implication of my conclusion is that states will target and foster public emotions that align with their geopolitical interests, while suppressing emotions which do not.

10. Conclusion
The preceding essay has discussed the significance of emotions and memories of trauma in the context of the comfort women issue between the ROK and Japan. I have sought to support the growing amount of literature in IR which privileges the importance of emotions and memory. Additionally, I have analyzed the complex relationship between Japan and the ROK through this lens. I ultimately argue, using a case study on the 2015 agreement, that emotions such as pride and shame, born from memories of trauma from the comfort women issue, influence Japan and South Korean relations to a significant extent, and can thus help us understand this complicated bilateral relationship. It is therefore important that emotions be incorporated into future analysis of these states. Without

74 Howard, True Stories, 114.
them, key pieces of the puzzle will be missed, thus hampering the chances of reconciliation in this space.

From my analysis of this case study, there are two main conclusions I make. First, public emotions can be mobilized against state actors and impact their behavior. In Japan, this relationship is evident in how both liberals and conservatives reacted to the 2015 agreement. Emotions of pride and shame, expressed by conservatives and liberals respectively, appear to have pushed the government to reach an agreement that satisfies both constituencies. In the ROK, a general dissatisfaction with the agreement has shown the extent to which civil society can mobilize emotions against the state, as pressure from the Korean Council appears to have made the government backtrack on the agreement. In this regard, this case study also posits victim's voices as potentially powerful catalysts for change.

My second conclusion strikes a delicate balance with the first, as I argue these same states can manipulate public emotions to align with their geopolitical interests. In South Korea this dynamic is evident in the government's prioritization of comfort women over camp town women. In Japan, Abe's nationalism and focus on fostering pride has also greatly influenced public sentiment on the issue. Furthermore, the 2015 agreement itself gently pushes liberal voters towards this pride, through its attempts to alleviate war-time shame.

Both of my main conclusions are important to consider when attempting to understand the adversarial aspects of Japan and South Korean relations. To understand why these states are not as cooperative as one would expect from key-alliance partners, it is necessary to take a comprehensive view. Conceiving of these states as wholly rational and unitary actors, obscures important details which can only be grasped by considering the effect emotions have in this context. Indeed, if emotions of pride and shame can be mobilized to influence the behavior of states, then the failure to consider these factors would leave one unable to understand the dynamics of this bilateral relationship. Additionally, if emotions can also be manipulated by states themselves, then actions taken by Japan and the ROK need to be reflected upon with this in mind, lest the motivations behind their behavior be misunderstood. More broadly, my conclusions support the growing body of IR literature which posits emotions as important considerations.

In the interests of maintaining a concise scope, there is a great deal of research that could not be incorporated into my essay. For example, pride and shame and their relationship with collective identities of the self and the other have been central considerations in my analysis. Further research on this topic, therefore, may benefit from a psychological analysis of these two emotions specifically. Additionally, due to their link with gender in this context, a feminist analysis of pride and shame could provide additional insight. Finally, the language used in this essay, derived from mainstream literature
on the topic, is itself worthy of research. Terms such as “comfort women” and “comfort stations” are themselves products of particular narratives, often popularized through Japanese media. For instance, one should question why these women are not more accurately described as sex slaves who were trafficked into rape camps. Such a description would certainly be more accurate than one including ‘comfort’. It should also be questioned why a term developed by Japan should be used to describe victims whom they themselves deny victimhood.\textsuperscript{76}

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