



JOURNAL OF  
POLITICAL INQUIRY

NEW YORK UNIVERSITY

Fall 2019

Journal of Political Inquiry

Fall 2019

New York University

19 University Pl., New York

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

---

<b>Revisiting the Nation-State: An Exploration of the Foundation of Citizenship and the Modern Polity</b>	<i>1</i>
<i>Kashif Azam</i>	

---

<b>The Drone Dilemma</b>	<i>12</i>
<i>Scott Vlachos</i>	

---

<b>The Reasons behind the US Differing Support of Tibet and Palestine</b>	<i>22</i>
<i>Nicole Scartozzi</i>	

---

<b>Book Review: The Primacy of Politics—Social Democracy and the Making of Europe Twentieth Century by Sheri Berman</b>	<i>29</i>
<i>Alice Timken</i>	

## **EDITORIAL BOARD**

**JAD ZEITOUNI** *Editor in Chief*

**KITANEH FITZPATRICK** *Managing Editor*

**EMMA HONG** *Managing Editor*

**JAKUB KIBITLEWSKI** *Managing Editor*

**ANDREW PERRY** *Managing Editor*

**MISHELLA ROMO** *Managing Editor*

**ERIKA WAKABAYASHI** *Managing Editor*

**HELEN YOU** *Managing Editor*

**MYUNGHA KIM** *Editor*

**MARTA RAMOS** *Editor*

**VANISHA SAMPAT** *Editor*

**NICOLE SCARTOZZI** *Editor*

**JESSIE WALL** *Editor*

**YIFAN YU** *Editor*

---

## Revisiting the Nation-State: An Exploration of the Foundation of Citizenship and the Modern Polity

---

*Kashif Azam*

There is much debate amongst scholars on the origins of what is a nation-state. Some claim that a nation-state was present as early as the fourteenth century in places such as France and England,<sup>1</sup> while others assert it did not exist until a rising tide of nationalism and revolutionary fervor that gripped Europe in the mid-nineteenth century.<sup>2</sup> For our purposes, the ambiguity over when nation-states developed does not matter nearly as much as what they represented. As the phrase implies, a nation-state is centered on the premise that a nation is an ethnic group with, among other things, a shared language and history. Any distinct cultural identity can be classified as a nation, and any sovereign government can be considered a state.<sup>3</sup> Consequently, a nation can exist without a state, such as in the case of the Assyrian, Tibetan, or Kurdish people, and a state can exist without a nation, as was the case throughout most of human history. Today, every sovereign state is colloquially called a nation, so the two terms have become synonymous; however, in the grand scheme of history, this merger is an incredibly recent—and significant—development.

As notions of universal rights, self-determination, and sovereignty became mainstream in European discourse, the theory behind state legitimacy shifted from a firm belief in despotic Divine-Right theory,<sup>4</sup> to a belief in self-determination along ethnic lines.<sup>5</sup> In other words, the most legitimate states were those that derived their mandate from the people: the Germans ruling Germany, the Italians ruling Italy, and the French ruling France. Of course, the political reality was more complicated, as the European powers of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries did not

---

<sup>1</sup>The deciding factor on when nation-states first arrived largely depends on how strict the definition is. If the only requirement for a Nation-State is the overlap of a distinct cultural identity and independent polity, then the Hundred Years War is a strong candidate for the mantle. “The casual consensus [is] that the Hundred Years War strengthened English identity and catalyzed the employment of the written English vernacular...” See: Duncan Hardy, “The Hundred Years War and the ‘Creation’ of National Identity and the Written English Vernacular: A Reassessment,” *Marginalia* 17 (2013): 20.

<sup>2</sup> Robert John Weston Evans and H. Pogge von Strandmann, *The Revolutions in Europe, 1848-1849: From Reform to Reaction* (Oxford University Press, 2002).

<sup>3</sup> “The ideal of ‘nation-state’ is that the state incorporates people of a single ethnic stock and cultural traditions” See: “Nation-State,” Social and Human Sciences, UNESCO, accessed October 26, 2019, <http://www.unesco.org/new/en/social-and-human-sciences/themes/international-migration/glossary/nation-state>.

<sup>4</sup> “The right of a sovereign to rule as set forth by the theory of government that holds that a monarch receives the right to rule directly from God and not from the people.” See: “Divine Right,” Merriam-Webster, accessed December 5, 2019, [https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/divine right](https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/divine%20right).

<sup>5</sup> George Klosko and Richard Whatmore, “Enlightenment Political Philosophy,” in *The Oxford Handbook of the History of Political Philosophy* (Oxford University Press, 2011-05-26), <https://www.oxfordhandbooks.com/view/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199238804.001.0001/oxfordhb-9780199238804-e-18>.

readily extend these national rights to their colonial dominions, client states, women or minorities in their homeland, or even all adult men in their cultural heartland.<sup>6</sup>

At the same time, instances of ethnicity-motivated conflict became much more frequent.<sup>7</sup> Minorities have historically been discriminated against; however, before the rise of nation-states, minorities never posed an ideological threat to the integrity of a nation. Previously, a sovereign—whether a monarch or an elected official—did not have to worry that the ethnocultural composition of their subjects would determine the legitimacy of their government. This tension between cultural identities became more prevalent as the world modernized until, by the twentieth century, a state with a significant minority population found itself vulnerable to delegitimization both at home and abroad. The results of this development can be seen in the collapse of the last vestiges of the French and British Empires after World War II, and more recently in the 2014 Russian annexation of Crimea under pretenses of protecting the peninsula’s Russian minority.

While the idea that a government derived its right to rule from its ethnic population was powerful and progressive for the 1700’s, it also laid a foundation of ethnocentrism that continues to scar our history and politics. A lot of the ethnic conflict seen in the past hundred years, such as the Armenian Genocide, Rwandan Genocide, and the ongoing Rohingya Genocide can be viewed—but not justified—as a nation-state’s response to claims of self-determination by ethnic groups. Thus, it can be argued that the philosophical basis of the nation-state’s trend toward ethnic conflict is a symptom of a broader drive towards the homogeneity required to maintain its integrity.

## **Jurisdiction and Responsibility**

Outside of episodic genocidal tendencies, the nation-state, in its current manifestation, has another structural limitation: a restrictive notion of jurisdiction and responsibility.<sup>8</sup> This limitation often goes hand-in-hand with ethnocentrism and is partially responsible for our inability to fight transnational issues such as climate change. As things stand, a nation-state is only responsible for maintaining the well-being of a very limited demographic, often at the

---

<sup>6</sup> To see an example of this we can turn to the French Revolution. The first democratic constitution drafted during the Revolution, the Constitution of 1791, featured a system of tiered citizenship. Its framers were conscious of giving the people too much influence in governing the nation and so divided the French people into either active or passive citizens. The constitution restricted suffrage to active citizens (those who paid a certain amount in taxes), which meant that only two-thirds of adult men had the right to vote. See: Michael P. Fitzsimmons, *The Remaking of France: National Assembly and the Constitution of 1791* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002).

<sup>7</sup> “Since 1946, 64% of all civil wars have divided along ethnic lines... civil wars include many self-determination movements that, by definition, are ethnic in nature.” See: Elaine K Denny and Barbara F Walter, "Ethnicity and Civil War," *Journal of Peace Research* 51, no. 2 (2014): 199-212.

<sup>8</sup> One of the more cynical perspectives on the jurisdiction and responsibility of a state is that of a “monopoly of violence” as articulated by Max Weber. For an introduction to the Weberian State as well as its successors, see: Tiina Randma-Liiv, "Neo-Weberian State," in *International Encyclopedia of Political Science*, edited by Bertrand BadieDirk Berg-Schlosser and Leonardo Morlino, 1682-1684 (Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, Inc., 2011).

expense of the broader needs of the rest of humankind. The mandate of a nation-state only pertains to its citizens, and this citizenship is very restrictive. This means that the government of a nation is only incentivized to serve the interests of a small portion of people, corporations, and geographical territory, which inadvertently discourages transnational cooperation and encourages short-term national benefits at its expense.

For many, the current degree of jurisdiction and responsibility for a given state might seem like a natural and rational definition, but a historical analysis of the evolution of citizenship suggests otherwise. The classification of a citizen varied tremendously throughout history, with one recurring feature being a distinction between active and passive citizenship. Initially, the classification of a citizen was restricted to the landowning male elite of a geographical area. However, over time, economic, gender, religious, and ethnic barriers were transcended.<sup>9</sup> With each expansion of this mandate came a sub-textual redefinition of what the nation-state was.

In most nations, the latest expansion came with universal suffrage, which, ironically, was far from universal. Currently, the most significant limitation of citizenship continues to be a birthright and territorial restriction. Outside ancestry, it is difficult to become a citizen of a nation-state even if they are born in, or reside within the nation's territorial borders. Even multi-ethnic nations such as the United States require prospective immigrants to demonstrate patriotic zeal and knowledge of its cultural heritage in order to be granted citizenship— demonstrating the importance of cultural assimilation in maintaining a nation-state's integrity.<sup>10</sup>

The justification for a geographic restriction to citizenship harkens back to the early modern era origins of the nation-state. In early modern Europe, the degree to which an individual could interact with the wider world was severely limited.<sup>11</sup> Most people would spend their entire lives in a constrained geographic area, with travel to foreign lands being virtually non-existent. This began to change with industrialization, at which point the geographic range that people could, and in many cases would have to traverse increased to encompass larger swathes of land; however, linguistic and cultural barriers nevertheless restricted the range of individual nations.

Presently, the forces of industrialization and the advent of the internet have eroded national boundaries. Most people still reside within their immediate geographic proximity, but they interact with people all around the world almost daily. The economies of entire nations are specializing into consumer, manufacturing, or agriculture economies, and there are more multinational corporations than nations. Relative to the physical world, there are very few

---

<sup>9</sup> This process has unfolded at a gradual but different pace across the world, but for an overview of this process in the United States, see: Alexander Keyssar, *Right to Vote: The Contested History of Democracy in the United States* (New York: Perseus, 2008).

<sup>10</sup> Examples of such questions can be found on the US Website of the Department of Homeland Security, see: "Study Materials for the Civics Test," USCIS, accessed October 30, 2019, <https://www.uscis.gov/citizenship/learners/study-test/study-materials-civics-test>.

<sup>11</sup> For an overview of the conceptualization and transformation of the state during the early modern period see: Annabel S Brett, *Changes of State: Nature and the Limits of the City in Early Modern Natural Law* (Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press, 2014).

borders on the internet, and as more of society transitions to the World Wide Web, the concept of a geographically-bound nation-state begins to sound archaic and obsolete.

To clarify, I am not suggesting that nation-states are nothing but a source of conflict and sorrow; to the contrary, I believe that nation-states have played an integral role in the development of liberal ideals. I am, however, suggesting that in the face of an increasingly interconnected world, nation-states need reform, especially regarding their restrictive definitions of citizenship. Another way to frame this question is by addressing a major point of contention in democratic theory: the problem of constituting the demos.

### **Constituting the Demos**

Constituting the demos is just another term for evaluating different methods of creating an electorate. Specifically, the phrase asks whether it is at all possible for a democratic government to create its electorate democratically.<sup>12</sup> The process nation-states have historically used to determine their citizenry has been far from democratic. For example, the people that chose the geographic constraints and the prerequisites necessary to vote in France did so by decree. The Estates-General may have been more representative than an absolute monarchy, but it still left a majority of the population out of the decision making process.<sup>13</sup> The 576 men who took the tennis court oath went on to establish the rules for their new democracy with no input from the masses outside Versailles.

A democratic mechanism can only take over once a government has already established its electorate but, by that stage, the outcomes of all decisions made by the democratic body have already been permanently altered by the initial decision to choose who gets a voice. If a nation-state decided to pass legislation concerning the right to own enslaved people but only allowed wealthy people to vote, many of whom happened to earn their fortunes through slavery, then the possibility of an outcome that favored slavery would be much more likely. The main concern raised by the demos question is that the initial creation of an electorate in a democracy is instrumental in determining its decisions and thus warrants scrutiny. This creates a philosophical conundrum. If a government's legitimacy comes from those it governs, but the creation of that demos is typically achieved in an undemocratic manner, then is it possible to have a genuinely democratic nation-state?

One response to this predicament is the “All Affected Interests Principle [AAIP],”<sup>14</sup> which asserts that the only legitimate way to constitute a demos is by giving all individuals with a stake in a decision the right to vote in it. At face value, the theory appears simple but effective and yet, much like with many hypotheticals, the devil lies in the details—or lack thereof. AAIP

---

<sup>12</sup> Robert. E Goodin, “Enfranchising All Affected Interests, and Its Alternatives,” *Philosophy & Public Affairs*, 35 (2007): 40-68.

<sup>13</sup> Michael P Fitzsimmons, *The Remaking of France: National Assembly and the Constitution of 1791* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002).

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, 42.

leaves essential issues such as what a stake is whether different stakes warrant different voting rights, and how does one quantify someone's stake, open to interpretation. If we lived in a society free of all constraints, then according to the AAIP, the only legitimate democracy would be one that gave anyone, anywhere, anytime, the choice to vote on any matter. In other words, we would need an omnipresent electoral apparatus, and our demos would be all-inclusive.<sup>15</sup>

Whether for better or worse, we do not live in a world free of physical and temporal constraints so we must find a more practical solution to the problem of the demos. Since we cannot redraw political boundaries, we should start by asking whether the current formulation of the demos is sufficient for accurately enfranchising all affected interests. Today, nation-states constitute demos in various ways, but we will see that even the most liberal of these methods are too exclusive.

Most nation-states today have universal enfranchisement, which means that being a citizen gives one a voice in government, or at least it is supposed to. However, voter suppression and other methods of disenfranchisement are prevalent to varying degrees in all nation-states, and these methods directly undermine the rights of certain citizens—usually those of a minority identity—from having adequate representation in government.<sup>16</sup>

Another salient form of disenfranchisement has been incarceration. In many democracies around the world, citizens in prison are stripped of their right to participate in democratic decision-making processes.<sup>17</sup> The United States provides many blatant examples of how incarceration can be used to target a minority population unfairly, such as when President Nixon used the war on drugs to disenfranchise the African American community.<sup>18</sup> In 2018, the total incarcerated population in the United States numbered roughly 2.2 million, which would make it the fifth largest city in the United States. Of these individuals, 33 percent are African Americans

---

<sup>15</sup> As democratic theorist Robert Goodin put it, only a “maximally extensive franchise, virtually (perhaps literally) ignoring boundaries both of space and of time, would be the only legitimate way of constituting the demos to this more defensible version of the ‘all possibly affected interests’ principle.” Goodin, “Enfranchising,” 55.

<sup>16</sup> Voter suppression occurs in all modern democracies partially because none of our present democracies truly enfranchise all affected interests. For more examples see: Michelle Alexander, *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness* (New York: New Press, 2012); or see: Kay Schriener and Lisa A. Ochs, “Creating the disabled citizen: How Massachusetts disenfranchised people under guardianship,” *Ohio St. LJ* 62 (2001): 481.

<sup>17</sup> “In Maine and Vermont, felons never lose their right to vote, even while they are incarcerated. In 14 states and the District of Columbia, felons lose their voting rights while incarcerated, and receive automatic restoration upon release. In 22 states, felons lose their voting rights during incarceration, and for some time after, typically while on parole or probation. Voting rights are automatically restored after this period. Former felons may also have to pay any outstanding fines, fees or restitution before their rights are restored as well. In 12 states felons lose their voting rights indefinitely for some crimes, or require a governor’s pardon in order for voting rights to be restored, or face an additional waiting period after completion of sentence (including parole and probation) before voting rights can be restored.” See: “Felon Voting Rights,” National Conference of State Legislatures, <http://www.ncsl.org/research/elections-and-campaigns/felon-voting-rights.aspx>.

<sup>18</sup> The racial prejudice present throughout the United States’ war on drugs is a topic outside the scope of this thesis, but for an introduction see: Doris Marie Provine, *Unequal under law: Race in the war on drugs* (University of Chicago Press, 2008).

even though only 12 percent of its total population is African American.<sup>19</sup> In addition to being politically disenfranchised, many inmates fall prey to recidivism.<sup>20</sup>

Fortunately, the issue of mass incarceration and institutional racial prejudice has gained much public attention in recent years. As a result, the number of non-violent drug offenses and the skewed race ratio are both decreasing; however, this is just one example of a grievous oversight in the practical implementation of the AAIP, especially considering that some prison systems force inmates to work for private corporations in exchange for little to no pay.<sup>21</sup> Many have equated the systematic abuse and exploitation in the US prison system to modern day slavery,<sup>22</sup> and if we return to our earlier example of the problem with not allowing enslaved people a vote on issues regarding slavery, the parallels between the two, with regard to enfranchisement, become immediately apparent.<sup>23</sup>

One could argue that a murderer should not be allowed to vote. One could argue that they have forfeited their rights as a consequence of breaking the social contract; however, it would seem harsh and undemocratic to extend this line of thinking to include political dissidents, draft-dodgers, or shoplifters.<sup>24</sup> These minor offenders have also broken the social contract; however, they have done so for non-violent reasons. If an underlying fear of giving incarcerated citizens a right to vote is that they will make murder legal, then consider that, in practicality, the number of murderers is infinitesimally small and unlikely to have any meaningful impact on such votes. However, the number of people incarcerated for more benign transgressions is far more significant. Not giving incarcerated populations a voice in government creates a perverse incentive model where governments can mistreat or ignore legitimate citizens with no consequence. This perverse principle can be extended to include all people not represented in a government that affects them, another example of which is undocumented migrants.

---

<sup>19</sup> According to the 2018 United States Census data available at <https://www.census.gov/data.html>.

<sup>20</sup> Recidivism is rampant in federal prisons. This is primarily due to the socio-economic pressures caused by incarceration and the difficulty transitioning into private life, either while gaining and maintaining employment or finding social support programs. See: Cody Tuttle, "Snapping Back: Food Stamp Bans and Criminal Recidivism," *American Economic Journal: Economic Policy* 11, no. 2 (2019): 301–27.

<sup>21</sup> David A. Love, and Vijay Das, "Slavery in the US Prison System," Al Jazeera, September 09, 2017, <https://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/opinion/2017/09/slavery-prison-system-170901082522072.html>.

<sup>22</sup> An overview of the structural and racial dynamics perpetuating abuse in the US Prison System is out of the scope of this paper, but for a surface-level introduction see: Jaron Browne, "Rooted in Slavery: Prison Labor Exploitation," *Race, Poverty & the Environment* 14, no. 1 (2007): 42-44. Alternatively, see: "US Inmates Nationwide Strike to Protest 'Modern Slavery'," BBC, August 21, 2018, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-45261381>.

<sup>23</sup> Kevin Rashid Johnson, "Prison Labor Is Modern Slavery. I've Been Sent to Solitary for Speaking out" *The Guardian*, August 23, 2018. <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2018/aug/23/prisoner-speak-out-american-slave-labor-strike>.

<sup>24</sup> One approach to evaluating whether or not someone has broken the social contract is through John Stuart Mill's 'Harm Principle', which claims that individuals should not have their freedoms restricted unless they use that freedom to harm another member of society. There is continuous debate over how to interpret concepts such as harm; however, for an introduction see: Nils Holtug, "The Harm Principle." *Ethical Theory and Moral Practice* 5, no. 4 (2002): 357-389.

## Suppressing the Subaltern

The Italian philosopher Antonio Gramsci used the term subaltern to describe “any ‘low rank’ person or group of people in a particular society suffering under hegemonic domination of a ruling elite class that denies them the basic rights of participation in the making of local history and culture as active individuals of the same nation.”<sup>25</sup> If someone wishes to suppress the subaltern, then by its very definition, the subaltern will not have a voice to protest. In theory, all democratic governments should aim to ensure that there is no subaltern in their society; however, this pluralistic ideal fundamentally conflicts with the ideology underpinning the nation-state.

Since the outbreak of the Syrian civil war in 2011, the issues of undocumented migrants, refugees, and immigration have come to dominate the global news cycle. Mass migration has, and continues to be one of the defining characteristics of the 2010s, and it is likely that (climate-related) refugee crises will only exacerbate in the coming decades.<sup>26</sup> The causes and magnitude of these major demographic shifts have varied tremendously, and so has the reaction of various governments. With a few notable exceptions, mass migration has been met with an increase in xenophobic attitudes.<sup>27</sup> It would be convenient to attribute these hostile reactions to the xenophobia cultivated within specific demographics, but to do so would ignore the influences of the nation-state as an insidious philosophical entity fostering ethnocentrism.<sup>28</sup>

For a democratic state, a migrant crisis immediately raises problems, especially concerning our contemporary restrictive approach to constituting the demos. The United Nations has maintained a policy of non-refoulement: that no individual can be returned to a country where they face serious threats to their lives or freedom.<sup>29</sup> However, this has not stopped governments from abandoning their obligations by trivializing the plight of those seeking asylum or citing a mandate from their demos.

In the present international system, a state has an obligation to both the international community (treaties) and its citizenry (constitutions), but its citizenry has no obligation to the international community—and is thus free to ignore principles such as that of non-refoulement. By compartmentalizing the complex causal relationships of domestic politics and geopolitics into

---

<sup>25</sup> El Habib Louai, "Retracing the Concept of the Subaltern from Gramsci to Spivak: Historical Developments and New Applications," *African Journal of History and Culture* (AJHC) 4, no.1 (2012): 4-8.

<sup>26</sup> John Podesta, "The Climate Crisis, Migration, and Refugees," Brookings, September 4, 2019, <https://www.brookings.edu/research/the-climate-crisis-migration-and-refugees>.

<sup>27</sup> Jacob Poushter. "European Opinions of the Refugee Crisis in 5 Charts," Pew Research Center, September 16, 2016. <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2016/09/16/european-opinions-of-the-refugee-crisis-in-5-charts>.

<sup>28</sup> In the case of nations such as Germany (reacting to the Syrian crisis) and Bangladesh (reacting to the Rohingya crisis), we can see how a government's reaction to mass migration is not necessarily anti-migrant; however, the aforementioned crises have led to a significant rise in xenophobic domestic political movements. See: Eric Maurice, "[Chemnitz Neo-Nazis Pose Questions for Germany](#)," EUObserver, August 30, 2018. For a more general overview see: Zachary Laub, "Hate Speech on Social Media: Global Comparisons," Council on Foreign Relations, April 11, 2019, <https://www.cfr.org/backgrounder/hate-speech-social-media-global-comparisons>.

<sup>29</sup> Heather A Leary, "The Nature of Global Commitments and Obligations: Limits on State Sovereignty in the Area of Asylum." *Indiana Journal of Global Legal Studies* 5, no. 1 (1997): 299.

discrete realms, insulated by the unbreakable sanctity of sovereignty, we have proliferated a brand of democracy that is structured to systematically suppress the subaltern.

Voter suppression, mass incarceration, and the abandonment of asylum seekers are just a handful of the forms of disenfranchisement present on a national level. If we attempt to evaluate the aforementioned scenarios using the AAIP framework, it would be tough to argue that the subaltern populations are not affected to a great degree by the actions of the state.

There are already numerous NGOs, charities, and foundations attempting to remedy these issues, but none have seen consistent success.<sup>30</sup> This is because, as previously stated, our current governance mechanisms have severe structural flaws that incentivize restricting the demos. In the United States, the two most significant advances in enfranchisement came with the abolition of slavery and women's suffrage, but constitutional amendments were needed to secure both advances.<sup>31</sup> The nation-state is exclusionary by nature, so any attempt to fix problems of enfranchisement without also reforming the structural bedrock of the nation-state (such as its constitution) is misguided.

How then should we change the conceptualization of citizenship to enfranchise all affected interests? The examples we have discussed so far have a relatively straightforward solution: amend the constitution to adhere to non-refoulement, reform the voting process to make it more accessible, and give incarcerated citizens the right to vote. These three reforms would go a long way towards expanding the demos to account for all affected interests; however, even this reformed state could still leave billions of people unjustly disenfranchised.

In our economically integrated world, large groups of people are routinely disenfranchised across national borders. Powerful states such as the United States have a considerable impact on people all over the world. Some might instinctively flinch at this statement because of the inevitable conclusion it entails, but any earnest attempt to adopt an AAIP framework must explore this possibility. If a decision made by policymakers in Washington D.C., whether it be to subsidize a crop or declare war, has the potential to substantially alter the livelihood of people all around the world, then should they not have a right

---

<sup>30</sup> According to critics such as Stanley Katz, charities, NGO's, and foundations are being run with the goal of increasing funding rather than developing viable strategies. "I have seen this stress on addressing causes rather than symptoms before, in the thinking of the very earliest American foundation creators, Andrew Carnegie, and John D. Rockefeller. Indeed, I would claim (and in fact Barry Karl and I did so some three decades ago) that what is distinctive about the rich donors in America in the late nineteenth century is that they aimed their giving squarely at causes and not at symptoms; or, to put it another way, they practiced what we now call philanthropy rather than charity. That the great American philanthropists have always attempted to attend to underlying causes is what makes them philanthropists, even if they sometimes made conventional charitable grants-palliative giving-as well. So I am bemused to see the claim that foundations should aim at root causes is touted as a new claim." See: Stanley N. Katz, "What Does It Mean to Say That Philanthropy Is "Effective"? The Philanthropists' New Clothes," *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society* 149, no. 2 (2005): 123-31.

<sup>31</sup> The fifteenth amendment protects the voting rights of all racial minorities, stating that "[t]he right of citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of race, color, or previous condition of servitude." Whereas the nineteenth amendment protects the right of women and non-binary people, stating that "The right of citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of sex."

to a voice in the decision-making process? For example, a decision by Congress to place tariffs on imports from non-American corporations operating in Mexico would, at the very least, affect four groups of people: American consumers, American corporations, Mexican workers, and Mexican corporations.

American consumers would be marginally affected by the decision, possibly facing price increases for certain goods as well as an indirect nudge towards purchasing products from American corporations in Mexico rather than American corporations based in the United States or Mexican corporations. American corporations would receive a substantial competitive advantage over their Mexican counterparts, while American corporations outside Mexico would receive an indirect incentive to move their operations there in order to potentially save on production costs. Mexican corporations would witness the opposite effects of American corporations, considering they would now be competing with more American corporations directly. Finally, Mexican workers at American corporations might receive a small pay increase or increased employment opportunities due to the increased profits of American corporations in Mexico, whereas Mexican workers in Mexican corporations may be more susceptible to layoffs.

In this scenario, it would not be unreasonable to assert that the United States Congress's decision has had an impact on citizens under the jurisdiction of a different government. Which of these four groups should be given the right to vote on such matters? In our present system, only two of the four are given a voice, but their Mexican counterparts are affected just as much.

Now consider the following: due to diplomatic pressure from the United States, the Mexican government is very lax on enforcing labor regulations in the factories used by American corporations. As a result, these factories have become notorious for hazardous work conditions and are riddled with child abuse. In this scenario, the United States government is also directly impacting the sovereignty of the Mexican government, which is indirectly impacting the lives of Mexican citizens. If the American government's actions cause even a single child to be hired by their corporations to work in abusive factories, then it would be absurd to claim that the affected person would not be included under the AAIP, and consequently deserve a say in whether the tariff—or diplomatic pressure—should be applied to begin with.

Why should the United States government ever have an obligation to do more than protect the interest of Americans? Does the worker not get a voice already by having the option to quit their job? If the choice is between destitution and abuse, then it is hardly a choice at all.<sup>32</sup> These rationales may be an apt description of the status quo, but they cannot be justified using the AAIP. The AAIP suggests that the Mexican workers need to be enfranchised because the

---

<sup>32</sup> One prominent example of the difficulty of distinguishing between coercion and choice is when looking at heavily stigmatized communities such as Sex Work. Individuals in harsh environments without accessible support systems often make choices that they would not have made if not under these unjust pressures. See: Larissa Sandy, "Just Choices: Representations of Choice and Coercion in Sex Work in Cambodia," *The Australian Journal of Anthropology*, 18 (2007): 194-206.

United States government has *de facto* influence over certain citizens in Mexico as well as (and sometimes more than) American citizens.

It would be irrational—and possibly unconstitutional—to disenfranchise a group based on the circumstances of their birth (such as disability, race, or sex) so why should the location of one's birth or one's parent's ethnicity—both of which generally determine citizenship—be treated differently? Scenarios such as the one described above happen every day in every corner of the world, yet because of the myth of sovereignty, no nation-state takes full accountability for the true extent of individuals affected by its policies. We must now ask whether or not the status quo can be reconciled with democratic principles of government.

Should the United States government have the right to exploit people from different nations without also enfranchising them? Only if one believes that citizenship changes the value of life, in which case we need only to look to the history of state formation to see just how arbitrary the determination of citizenship can be. Well then, why doesn't Mexico simply join the United States? On top of a plethora of political factors, it is because of the aforementioned ethnocentric character of nation-states. Minorities already face significant cultural stigmatization in many parts of the United States, and the suppression of the Mexican ethnic identity would likely accompany any annexation of Mexico.<sup>33</sup>

## Conclusion

To reiterate, I am not suggesting that borders are inherently arbitrary or need to be erased; I am arguing that, in our contemporary era, the same principles that led to the birth of modern democracy—a desire to enfranchise all affected interests—can, and should, be extended to all people affected by a government regardless of their citizenship status.<sup>34</sup> But what would happen to national sovereignty in such a system? How would the United States and Mexican government share the same jurisdictions?

Even during its heyday in the nineteenth century, the principle of national sovereignty was applied selectively and arbitrarily by the statesmen of various great powers. In today's interdependent world, sovereignty is even more of a myth. Furthermore, our tariff example has demonstrated that the Mexican and United States government already have somewhat

---

<sup>33</sup> Minority populations with a distinct cultural identity pose a tremendous threat to the integrity of any nation-state. There is an abundance of historical evidence supporting this conclusion, but a recent example can be seen in breakup of Pakistan during the 1971 Bangladeshi Liberation War. The West-Pakistani government systematically oppressed the Bengali ethnic group. Their language was banned, their lands were left undeveloped, their intelligentsia was arrested or assassinated, and eventually, the entire state (of East-Pakistan) was targeted in a campaign of ethnic cleansing. See: Gary Jonathan Bass, *The Blood Telegram: Nixon, Kissinger, and a Forgotten Genocide* (New York: Vintage Books, 2014).

<sup>34</sup> The seminal issue in many depictions of the United States independence movement was that of taxation without representation, or, of being a part of the British Empire without having a voice in the British Empire. Yet, citizens of Puerto Rico find themselves in a similar position with Washington. There are still millions of citizens around the world from various communities that are not represented by the power structures that make decisions concerning their community. See: Edgardo Melendez, *Puerto Rico's Statehood Movement* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1988).

overlapping jurisdictions. The only thing that would change is that matters that concern an overlapping jurisdiction would be formally recognized, interested parties would be enfranchised, and disputes would be resolved in a far more democratic manner.

Our restrictive, territorially confined notion of citizenship has had the additional adverse effect of fostering animosity, radicalization, and ultimately conflict. The present conceptualization of citizenship negatively influences public sympathy for “outsiders” or “foreigners”. Public perception of government actions towards non-citizens is judged on a completely different—and often far less critical—standard than actions towards citizens, and we must question whether such double standards are justified or not.

For example, a textile tariff enacted by the United States would have severe repercussions on the citizens of Bangladesh. The people in Bangladesh would suffer, but the political value of that suffering would be diminished because those people fall outside the American government's mandate. As mentioned previously, the rise of xenophobia as a response to the Syrian refugee crisis is also an example of this double standard.

Another, more alarming example would be the development of a major dam along the Meghalaya river in India, which would disrupt freshwater access for most Bangladeshis.<sup>35</sup> In an ideal world, the governments of Bangladesh and India would collaborate on such a project; however, it is entirely possible that India constructs the dam without giving any Bangladeshi citizens a say in the project—prioritizing the needs of its citizens at the expense of “others.” In such a scenario, we once again see how the actions of a particular state can have an enormous impact on the citizens of a separate state. Selfish behavior by a powerful nation-state has the potential to harm millions, even billions of people, while being viewed as just, as long as it benefits the citizens of the perpetrating state. It is time for us to begin seriously questioning this status quo.

---

<sup>35</sup> Access to fresh water is a critical resource for any nation, but control of a freshwater supply is not always feasible. A recent example of the consequences of irresponsible damming projects is the rapid loss of the Aral Sea due to Soviet irrigation projects. The Brahmaputra river is one of two major rivers flowing into the Bay of Bengal and provides a significant portion of Bangladesh's fresh water. The origin of the river is in the Tibetan plateau, and damming projects by either China or India could have disastrous consequences. See: PTI, "Bangladesh' very Concerned' over China Building Dams on the Brahmaputra," *Times of India*, May 31, 2018, <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/bangladesh-very-concerned-over-china-building-dams-on-brahmaputra/articleshow/64405521.cms>.

---

## The Drone Dilemma

---

Scott Vlachos

In the years following the September 11th terrorist attacks, the US has come to rely heavily on the use of unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs), or what are commonly referred to as “drones.” Deploying UAVs offers advantages to the US government for gathering intelligence, as well as for the elimination of high profile targets. However, targeted killings carried out by UAVs have sparked humanitarian and ethical debates due to civilian casualties and other collateral damage. This paper will explore the advantages and disadvantages of deploying UAVs. It will also argue that although UAVs contribute to the reduction of terrorism, the US is setting a dangerous precedent with its liberal use of a weapon that sometimes targets non-combatants or individuals erroneously labeled as terrorists.

Deploying UAVs in overseas operations is not unique to a post-9/11 world, but the evolution of drone usage is a prime example of technology that has changed the face of modern warfare. While soldiers practicing conventional warfare have to face each other on the battlefield and subject themselves to the possibility of injury or death, today’s advancement in UAV technology allows an operator from a base in Nevada to remotely bomb targets in Pakistan.<sup>1</sup> The absence of physical risk for the UAV operator is an advantage for the US, but this is not its major selling point. The UAV successfully combines Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance (ISR) efforts with targeted killing abilities in what Dr. Katharine Kindervater, a fellow at Dartmouth College, refers to as “lethal surveillance.”<sup>2</sup> The practice of lethal surveillance has seen the US undertake an array of missions that showcase the successes of the UAV’s versatility. To list some examples: a Navy-controlled UAV assisted in the rescue of Captain Phillips off the coast of Somalia; UAVs were used to combat and ultimately push back al-Shabaab in Somalia; and both American and French UAVs provided ISR to the French *Opération Serval* in Mali.<sup>3</sup>

The versatility of the UAV has made it an ideal tool for both the US military and the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA). While controversy surrounds both, the CIA’s UAV operations have suffered the brunt of most criticisms.<sup>4</sup> Although the CIA program existed during the George W. Bush administration, it grew more expansive under President Barack Obama; in 2009, more CIA-led UAV attacks occurred in Pakistan than in all of the Bush years combined.<sup>5</sup> The frequency of usage is not the point of contention for critics, however. The CIA kept its

---

<sup>1</sup> Ed Pilkington, "Life as a Drone Operator: 'Ever Step on Ants and Never Give It Another Thought?'" *The Guardian*, November 19, 2015, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/nov/18/life-as-a-drone-pilot-creech-air-force-base-nevada>.

<sup>2</sup> Katherine Hall Kindervater, "The Emergence Of Lethal Surveillance: Watching And Killing In The History Of Drone Technology," *Security Dialogue* 47, no. 3 (2016): 224.

<sup>3</sup> Mike Fowler, "The Strategy of Drone Warfare," *Journal of Strategic Security* 7, no. 4 (2014): 108.

<sup>4</sup> Hillel Ofek, "The Tortured Logic of Obama's Drone War," *The New Atlantis* 27 (2010): 36.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, 36.

operations secret and withheld numerous civilian casualties from the public. The secrecy surrounding the CIA's operations and its incursion of numerous civilian casualties have resulted in a public outcry.

Operations conducted by the CIA were outside declared war zones, and as such, the Obama administration kept its UAV program under the veil of secrecy, refusing to acknowledge it publicly for years.<sup>6</sup> The Obama administration came under heavy fire when reports of strike missions resulting in non-combatant deaths flooded the foray of watchdog publications.<sup>7</sup> In an effort to quell critics and promote transparency, the White House released information claiming "that airstrikes it has conducted outside conventional war zones like Afghanistan have killed 64 to 116 civilian bystanders and about 2,500 members of terrorist groups."<sup>8</sup> However, human rights groups like the American Civil Liberties Union were not satisfied with the data. They claimed that the government failed to release information specifying the date and location of UAV strikes, so that the government data could be compared with independent accounts.<sup>9</sup> Indeed, independent accounts of civilian casualties see a significantly larger toll than the government's claim of 64 to 116. Some watchdog groups have estimated that the civilian death toll could be as high as 800.<sup>10</sup> However, due to the lack of specificity within the government's data, it is difficult to determine the actual number of civilian casualties. Watchdog groups like the Bureau of Investigative Journalism, which indicates that the casualty totals are higher than the government's report claims, are subject to inaccuracies due to the secrecy of the information as well as the occasional danger of verifying reports.<sup>11</sup>

In further efforts to dampen public criticism of UAV strikes under Obama's tenure, national security officials and intelligence analysts shared their insights with *The Washington Post* on the process by which targets are selected for strikes. According to the article, the Obama administration developed a targeting list dubbed the "disposition matrix."<sup>12</sup> The matrix takes data accrued by the CIA, the Joint Special Operations Command, and the National Counterterrorism Center to compile a database consisting of information on terrorists such as biographies, locations, known associates, and affiliated organizations.<sup>13</sup> According to Jutta Weber, professor at the University of Paderborn, these data are then "searched and clustered to produce patterns of

---

<sup>6</sup> Spencer Ackerman, "Obama Claims US Drones Strikes Have Killed up to 116 Civilians," *The Guardian*, July 1, 2016, <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2016/jul/01/obama-drones-strikes-civilian-deaths>.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> Charlie Savage and Scott Shane, "U.S. Reveals Death Toll From Airstrikes Outside War Zones," *The New York Times*, July 1, 2016, <http://www.nytimes.com/2016/07/02/world/us-reveals-death-toll-from-airstrikes-outside-of-war-zones.html>.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> Ackerman, "Obama Claims."

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> Greg Miller, "Plan for Hunting Terrorists Signals U.S. Intends to Keep Adding Names to Kill Lists," *The Washington Post*, October 23, 2012, [https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/national-security/plan-for-hunting-terrorists-signals-us-intends-to-keep-adding-names-to-kill-lists/2012/10/23/4789b2ae-18b3-11e2-a55c-39408f6e6a4b\\_story.html](https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/national-security/plan-for-hunting-terrorists-signals-us-intends-to-keep-adding-names-to-kill-lists/2012/10/23/4789b2ae-18b3-11e2-a55c-39408f6e6a4b_story.html).

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

correlations between [them] and thus to discover knowledge in databases.”<sup>14</sup> Based off the patterns and correlations found within the matrix, profilers utilizing the data hope to predict the future behavior of targets.<sup>15</sup>

Data are also being collected from digital devices and social media outlets such as Facebook and Twitter. Information gathered from cell phone lists, laptop images, thumb drives, and various social media accounts is entered into the “Terrorist Identities Datamart Environment” (TIDE).<sup>16</sup> By amassing these various data points and processing them through the matrix, the government hopes to better predict the future actions of suspects as well as name any and all persons associated with each suspect. However, processing this data can lead to errors. The government uses controversial metadata analysis and cell phone tracking technologies to identify targets. Once a target has been selected based on the location of his or her cell phone, a strike can be ordered by the CIA or military without confirming the target’s identity with operatives or informants on the ground.<sup>17</sup> Lack of confirmation could lead to unintended deaths, either because the automated process of selecting a target via the matrix pulled the name of a no risk or low risk person, or because the cell phone had switched hands.

It is possible that persons posing zero risk to US security have been added to watchlists, and possibly kill lists. For example, Al Jazeera journalist Ahmad Muaffaq Zaidan was erroneously placed on a watchlist. His job as a journalist has taken him to places like Pakistan, where he has interviewed and written articles about al Qaeda and the Taliban.<sup>18</sup> The way the data mining system is designed, simply being in contact with persons already on a watchlist is reason enough to be also be added to the list. This is an inefficient way to single out persons of interest or potential targets. It could lead to civilian fatalities. Such inaccurate methods of highlighting targets are a waste of government resources and needs to be improved.

Despite the access to data from social media and digital devices, there exists a vital lapse in the government’s data collection process. The site of a high profile target following a UAV strike is seldom searched. There is no denying that it is most preferable to bring in a target alive so that he or she may be interrogated.<sup>19</sup> By killing a target via UAV strike, it not only removes the possibility of interrogating the target, but it also minimizes the data collected within the vicinity of the target. After targets have been slated for termination via UAV strike, there are seldom ever troops or agents on the ground to collect vital pieces of information or evidence from a target’s house.<sup>20</sup> Data collection is at the heart of the UAV targeting program, but strike

---

<sup>14</sup> Jutta Weber, "Keep Adding: On Kill Lists, Drone Warfare And The Politics Of Databases," *Environment And Planning D: Society And Space* 34, no. 1 (2016): 109

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, 109.

<sup>16</sup> Jeremy Scahill and Ryan Devereaux, "Blacklisted," *The Intercept*, July 23, 2014, <https://theintercept.com/2014/07/23/blacklisted>.

<sup>17</sup> Weber, "Keep Adding," 112.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, 113.

<sup>19</sup> Ofek, "Tortured Logic," 37.

<sup>20</sup> Cora Currier and Peter Maas, "Firing Blind," *The Intercept*, October 15, 2015, <https://theintercept.com/drone-papers/firing-blind>.

missions can minimize the amount of intelligence gathered. Without intelligence, targets cannot be selected, and without targets, new intelligence cannot be acquired. The process can therefore be flawed and counterproductive.

Beyond what the government has voluntarily divulged regarding the disposition matrix, information leaked to *The Intercept*, a national security news website, details the National Counterterrorism Center's definition of terrorism which agency? According to *The Intercept* article "Blacklisted":

[The] definition of "terrorist" activity includes actions that fall far short of bombing or hijacking. In addition to expected crimes, such as assassination or hostage-taking, the guidelines also define destruction of government property and damaging computers used by financial institutions as activities meriting placement on a list. They also define as terrorism any act that is "dangerous" to property and intended to influence government policy through intimidation.<sup>21</sup>

The definition for "terrorist" is too broad, and when taken in conjunction with the disposition matrix, it raises some pressing concerns. "Reasonable suspicion" is the minimum necessity for someone to be placed on a watchlist.<sup>22</sup> As a result, many targets entered into the system may not even pose devastating risks to US national security. The ambiguity in labeling someone a "terrorist" can be problematic. For example, one condition for being placed on a kill list is to be a member of an "organized armed group."<sup>23</sup> This definition could be applied not only to armed insurgents, but also to an American family that owns guns or to "a group of tribal elders in Waziristan who traditionally carry weapons as a sign of their status."<sup>24</sup> As the matrix continues to bank more people who are deemed "terrorists" even without concrete facts or evidence, the government will find itself wasting resources on low threat targets while perhaps unwittingly allowing serious threats to slip under the radar.<sup>25</sup>

It is possible to argue that the disposition matrix is designed to guard against targeting persons at low or no risk because it is not a fully automated process. After all, the process of selecting a target for a lethal UAV operation involves the president's direct input. During his presidency, Obama had elected to personally review and greenlight lethal UAV operations by reviewing a dossier that members in the administration have likened to a "baseball card."<sup>26</sup> The president was given a biography of each potential target and a "baseball card," which included a portrait of the person along with the threat that he or she poses.<sup>27</sup> On average, the president took about 58 days to sign off on a target and the US forces will have 60 days to carry out a strike.<sup>28</sup>

---

<sup>21</sup> Scahill and Devereaux, "Blacklisted."

<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

<sup>23</sup> Weber, "Keep Adding," 110.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid., 110.

<sup>25</sup> Scahill and Devereaux, "Blacklisted."

<sup>26</sup> Weber, "Keep Adding," 109.

<sup>27</sup> Jeremy Scahill, "The Assassination Complex," *The Intercept*, October 15, 2015, <https://theintercept.com/drone-papers/the-assassination-complex>.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

It may seem reassuring that the government is meticulously combing through a diverse array of data points to compile a list of terrorist suspects for watch and kill lists. However, these efforts have often failed. Take the case of Umar Farouk AbdulMutallab, otherwise known as the “underwear bomber.” In 2009, AbdulMutallab attempted to smuggle and detonate a bomb hidden in his underwear onto a plane. While he ultimately failed in his plan due to technical difficulties, the case of AbdulMutallab is notable for two reasons: AbdulMutallab’s father warned authorities at the US embassy in Nigeria that his son was planning an attack<sup>29</sup> and AbdulMutallab was listed in TIDE.<sup>30</sup> With both a physical witness providing factual information and a listing in the TIDE database, this is a clear failure of the US government to prevent a serious threat.

President Obama responded to these criticisms by acknowledging a “systemic failure” and promised “corrective efforts” in conjunction with ordering “agency heads to establish internal accountability reviews.”<sup>31</sup> This did not make the system foolproof. In a 2012 report by the US Government Accountability Office (GAO), it was noted that “no entity is assessing whether watchlist-related screening or vetting is achieving intended results from a policy perspective, or if adjustments to agency programs or the watchlisting guidance are needed.”<sup>32</sup> In other words, the accountability Obama promised in 2010 had not materialized and no one was verifying the threat of persons being added to government watchlists.

Escalating pressures from human rights and watchdog groups appalled by the government’s broad-sweeping documentation of people classified as “terrorists” and the civilian casualties wrought by the secretive CIA UAV operations resulted in the Obama administration curtailing its reliance on the CIA in targeting killing missions. In 2016, the US began shifting responsibility for lethal counterterrorism operations to the Pentagon.<sup>33</sup> This action, in conjunction with the White House releasing its data on casualties, was an effort by the Obama administration to both increase transparency as well as address criticisms that the CIA has become a “paramilitary organization” in the years following 9/11.<sup>34</sup>

The transition from the CIA to Pentagon neither decreased the deployment of drones, nor reduced non-combatant targeting. Former US air force UAV operators like staff sergeant Brandon Bryant have made public their stories about firing Hellfire missiles on targets. From an

---

<sup>29</sup> “Underwear Bomber Abdulmutallab Sentenced to Life,” *BBC News*, February 16, 2012, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-17065130>.

<sup>30</sup> Scahill and Devereaux, “Blacklisted.”

<sup>31</sup> White House, “Remarks by the President on Strengthening Intelligence and Aviation Security,” Office of the Press Secretary, January 7, 2010, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/remarks-president-strengthening-intelligence-and-aviation-security>.

<sup>32</sup> U.S. Congress, U.S. Government Accountability Office, *Terrorist Watchlist: Routinely Assessing Impacts of Agency Actions since the December 25, 2009, Attempted Attack Could Help Inform Future Efforts*, March 31, 2012, <http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-12-476>.

<sup>33</sup> Greg Miller, “Why CIA Drone Strikes Have Plummeted,” *The Washington Post*, June 16, 2016, [https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/national-security/cia-drone-strikes-plummet-as-white-house-shifts-authority-to-pentagon/2016/06/16/e0b28e90-335f-11e6-8ff7-7b6c1998b7a0\\_story.html](https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/national-security/cia-drone-strikes-plummet-as-white-house-shifts-authority-to-pentagon/2016/06/16/e0b28e90-335f-11e6-8ff7-7b6c1998b7a0_story.html).

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*

air force base in Las Vegas, Bryant was ordered to fire on a group of men and their camel because they were suspected of carrying explosives for use on US troops.<sup>35</sup> Upon close inspection, however, there were no signs of weapons on the men or camel, and after Bryant fired the Hellfire missile, there was no secondary explosion to indicate the detonation of the alleged explosives carried by the men.<sup>36</sup> On another mission, Bryant was asked to kill three individuals on the grounds that they were “reinforcements coming to join anti-US Taliban forces.”<sup>37</sup> However, upon scrutinizing their movements, Bryant deduced that their actions indicated they were “terrified” and “unlikely to be trained fighters.”<sup>38</sup> He killed them anyway because he was ordered to do so. This poses the question: are targets who present themselves to be untrained and frightened deserving of death by Hellfire missiles? Data from these operations to prove that Bryant successfully prevented explosives from harming Americans or prevented reinforcements from joining anti-US Taliban forces are not available to the public. Whether or not this is an example of low risk individuals being targeted by the disposition matrix is uncertain, but combined evidence from the account of operators like Bryant, leaked documents by whistleblowers, and allegations from watchdog groups all suggest fatal miscalculations have been made.

Some of the rhetoric coming from inside Bryant’s base is also cause for concern. Labeling children as “fun-sized terrorists” and referring to the act of killing targets as “pulling the weeds before they overrun the lawn” could be indicative of a dangerous attitude towards civilian casualties.<sup>39</sup> Perhaps it is an indication that some members at the base viewed the killing of children or civilians as preventative measures. What is even more worrisome is the desperation with which the air force is seeking operators. When he failed a student that demonstrated a disturbing eagerness for bombing civilians, Bryant was reprimanded on the grounds that the air force did not employ enough operators to have the luxury of turning away interested applicants.<sup>40</sup> If Bryant’s allegations are true, combining dubious language with desperate hires will only increase future civilian casualties.

Taken in conjunction with the accounts from former UAV operators, a wealth of documents given by a whistleblower to *The Intercept* illustrate the failures of UAV precision attacks. In what was known as Operation Haymaker, a comprehensive campaign in Afghanistan was led by the US government to pinpoint and eliminate al Qaeda operatives.<sup>41</sup> However, Operation Haymaker failed because “the vast majority of those killed in airstrikes were not the direct targets.”<sup>42</sup> According to the military’s analysis of the operation, approximately 9 out of 10

---

<sup>35</sup> Pilkington, “Life as a Drone Operator.”

<sup>36</sup> Ibid.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid.

<sup>41</sup> Ryan Devereaux, “Manhunting in the Hindu Kush,” *The Intercept*, October 5, 2015, <https://theintercept.com/drone-papers/manhunting-in-the-hindu-kush>.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid.

people who died in airstrikes were not intended targets.<sup>43</sup> Casualties are labeled as “enemies killed in action” and it is commonplace to classify the dead as enemies until they are proven otherwise.<sup>44</sup> As was mentioned previously, there are instances where operatives are not on the ground to collect data after a successful strike operation. Not only does this limit the government’s ability to collect data on the target, but it also prevents the proper identification of unintended casualties.

The collateral damage when using UAVs to promote US national security weigh heavily on the public conscience. Yet warfare, conventional or not, always comes with the potential for injuring or killing civilians. Human rights groups will criticize the loss of civilian life while governments and militaries may deflect such criticisms with adages such as “the ends justify the means.” Sacrificing the few for the many could be used as justification for the continuation of the US’s lethal surveillance activities so long as the US is able to successfully meet its core objectives.

The main purpose for lethal UAV operations is to target terrorists and their strongholds in the Middle East, and subsequently reduce terrorist attacks.<sup>45</sup> So has the US been successful in weakening terrorists via the use of its UAVs? According to an empirical study on Pakistan’s Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) by Ummad Mazhar, the data suggest UAV strikes “have significant negative effect on the size of terrorism.”<sup>46</sup> Mazhar’s study offers several key insights. First, terrorist attacks are approximately 8 times larger in terms of causing damage than UAV strikes, and they occur much more frequently.<sup>47</sup> This is important because it can be used as justification for the idea that the lives of the many outweigh the lives of the few, especially if those few are high profile terrorists who are plotting deadly attacks. Additionally, more civilians are explicitly targeted and killed by terrorists’ attacks than by UAV strikes.<sup>48</sup> Ultimately, the study concludes that UAV strikes do have a significant negative effect on terrorism.<sup>49</sup> This is confirmed in another study by the RAND Corporation. The study’s empirical analysis also shows a significant negative correlation between UAV strikes and terrorist activities within the FATA area.<sup>50</sup> The takeaway here is that the UAV program is successful in fulfilling its main purpose.

In the two studies by Mazhar and RAND, it is clear that UAVs carry out their purpose and decrease terrorist activity by an empirically significant degree. However, the efficacy of this program is not reflected in public opinion. The US’s UAV program is almost universally

---

<sup>43</sup> Ibid.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid.

<sup>45</sup> Ummad Mazhar. "Do Remotely Piloted Aerial Vehicles Make Terrorism More Costly For Terrorists?" *International Journal Of Conflict Management* 27, no. 4 (2016): 471.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid., 475

<sup>48</sup> Ibid.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid., 482

<sup>50</sup> Patrick B. Johnston and Anoop K. Sarbahi, "The Impact Of US Drone Strikes On Terrorism In Pakistan," *International Studies Quarterly* 60, no. 2 (2016): 215.

opposed in Pakistan, and “Pakistan’s Thirteenth National Assembly (2008-13) even declared unanimously that the program violated Pakistani sovereignty.”<sup>51</sup> If the program is successfully protecting Pakistanis from terrorist attacks, which cause far more collateral damage than targeted UAV strikes, why is the public opinion of it unfavorable? To answer this question, it is first necessary to trace where Pakistanis receive their information regarding UAVs. In a series of empirical studies conducted by associate professor C. Christine Fair of Georgetown University, Fair first identified the differences between the formation of public opinion in developed countries versus developing countries. According to Fair, “poor, developing countries do not have the same environments for the supply and demand for political communication that rich, developed countries do.”<sup>52</sup> For the Pakistanis to formulate an opinion about UAVs, they first require access to engaging reports absent of misinformation campaigns and state-controlled propaganda. Studies have shown that people in developing countries are typically apathetic to political communication, and political apathy is usually a product of one’s education and socio-economic status.<sup>53</sup> Pakistanis who are not in politically stimulating atmosphere therefore rely on the opinions of elites “to parse political issues that they do not fully understand.”<sup>54</sup> According to Fair, elites include: “a famous television or radio commentator; an editorial writer in a paper; a political figure; or a teacher at a local secondary school.”<sup>55</sup> The views of such people are subsequently taken as expert views. Aside from listening to elites, people also formulate political opinions by speaking to trusted friends, neighbors, and family.<sup>56</sup> Indeed, Fair’s study indicates that an overwhelming 87% of participants within her survey received formulated their political opinions via word of mouth.<sup>57</sup> Television contributed 65.2%, traditional gatherings 41.1%, and religious leaders 39.3%.<sup>58</sup>

In a second study, Fair confirms that most Pakistanis are exposed only to negative information regarding US UAV operations.<sup>59</sup> This negative information is disseminated by Urdu-language media and then spread by word-of-mouth.<sup>60</sup> Further, negative views on UAV operations also coincide with negative views about the US itself. As Fair states, “The more negative the respondent was about the United States in general, the more likely he or she was to oppose drone strikes.”<sup>61</sup> The US has taken these negative views into consideration and has adjusted its UAV operations by utilizing more precise targeting systems and reducing the frequency of UAV

---

<sup>51</sup> C. Christine Fair, Karl Kaltenthaler, and William Miller, "Pakistani Political Communication And Public Opinion On US Drone Attacks," *Journal Of Strategic Studies* 38 no. 6 (2015): 853.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, 858.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, 858-859.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, 859.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, 860-861.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, 861-862.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, 865.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, 866.

<sup>59</sup> C. Christine Fair, Karl Kaltenthaler, and William J. Miller, "Pakistani Opposition To American Drone Strikes," *Political Science Quarterly* 131, no. 2 (2016): 418.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, 418.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, 418.

strikes.<sup>62</sup> It has even coordinated with the Pakistani government and sold unarmed ISR UAVs so as to facilitate a cooperative UAV effort in the fight against terrorists. If the US is to continue its UAV operations in Pakistan, it knows that it must win over the hearts of the Pakistani people with more than just empirical evidence proving reduction in terrorist activity.

While the study uses Pakistan's views to represent those of a developing country, it's important to note that the US and European Union also generally hold a negative view on UAV strikes. In developed countries, information is not exclusively influenced by the views of the elites or word-of-mouth gossip. Rather, opinions are shaped predominantly by "law-based arguments about sovereignty and protecting civilians."<sup>63</sup> Regardless of the efficacy of the UAV strikes on terrorist targets, Western public opinion of drone usage hinges on the rhetoric of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and international organizations.<sup>64</sup> NGOs like Amnesty International have raised concerns "that targeted killings by US drones occurring outside the conditions of armed conflict violate the prohibition of arbitrary deprivation of life and may constitute extrajudicial executions."<sup>65</sup> Claims like these negatively affect the public's opinion on UAV operations in developed countries as people ponder the broader impact of the continued use of these weapons in shaping the political, legal, and ethical future of the international community.

Taking everything into consideration, the current risks posed by lethal UAV strikes put the world in a precarious situation. The US is setting a precedent of asymmetrical warfare that could result in catastrophic consequences in the future. As more states continue to research and advance their UAV technology, it is only a matter of time before these weapons will be used to unleash targeted killings against the US and its allies as either an act of war or as an act of defense against "terrorists." Even if enemy states do not intend to conduct lethal surveillance against the US, there exists the possibility of non-state actors hijacking this technology. Without fear of consequences or condemnation by the international community, terrorists could unleash mass havoc on a world ill-equipped with preventative measures. When benign drones appeared at Gatwick airport,<sup>66</sup> they caused panic and chaos even though no physical damage occurred. A repeat of the incident with an armed drone or a drone that stealthily rams into a jet turbine would have catastrophic consequences. Why should other countries stay their hand from harming civilians if the US—the pioneering architect of UAV warfare—will not do the same? It is not possible at this stage to remove drone technology from use, but the US could change tactics and use UAVs strictly for ISR missions. Perhaps they could go a step further and repurpose their combat UAVs to drop food and medical supplies to troubled areas that cannot be reached by conventional

---

<sup>62</sup> Ibid., 419.

<sup>63</sup> Sarah E. Kreps and Geoffrey P. R. Wallace, "International Law, Military Effectiveness, And Public Support For Drone Strikes," *Journal Of Peace Research* 53, no. 6 (2016): 839.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid., 839.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid., 831.

<sup>66</sup> "Gatwick Police 'Not Prepared for Two Drones,'" *BBC News*, July 9, 2019, <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-england-sussex-48929442>.

means.<sup>67</sup> There are other ways to conduct counterterrorism operations outside of drone deployment, and the US can reallocate funding from its lethal UAV projects to researching methods of suppressing terrorist activity that will not result in numerous unintended casualties.

In sum, the non-combatant deaths incurred via the use of lethal UAV operations are cause for concern. When assessing the efficacy of neutralizing targets by UAV strikes, it is important to understand how those individuals are chosen. The US's use of a complicated network of databases via the disposition matrix has left room for a notable margin of error. Because the term "terrorist" is broad, many people who possess no risk or low risk of threat have been added to the database, which in turn taxes the government's resources. High threat targets like Umar Farouk AbdulMutallab have slipped through the system, and although President Obama promised more accountability and improvements in the system, a report by the GAO made it clear that such shortcomings were not successfully addressed by the government. When targets are selected, UAV strikes have the potential to terminate civilians and kill anyone (terrorist or not) surrounding the intended target. Collateral damage caused by secretive UAV strikes outside of war zones have earned the ire of human rights groups and government watchdogs, as well as people who live in states besieged by UAV operations.

Despite negative public opinion, empirical data demonstrate a significant negative correlation between UAV strikes and terrorist attacks. Taking all of these aspects under consideration, it is best for the US to reinstate its policy of transparency and reevaluate its usage of drones. Even a single civilian casualty is one too many, and terrorists are better taken alive so that they may be interrogated. UAVs are great tools for ISR and they should continue to be used for those purposes. Continued deployment of UAVs outside of war zones should be suspended until greater improvements are made to targeting systems and terrorist classification. If the US continues liberally using UAVs while disregarding the civilian consequences, it invites revenge drone attacks by enemy states, terrorists, and hackers. The US is at the forefront of deploying UAVs and it should endeavor to set a strong precedent for exemplary targeting, transparency, and accountability.

---

<sup>67</sup> Austin Choi-Fitzpatrick, "Drones For Good: Technological Innovations, Social Movements, And The State," *Journal Of International Affairs* 68, no. 1 (2014): 24

---

## The Reasons behind the US Differing Support of Tibet and Palestine

---

Nicole Scartozzi

A country's statehood status permits them the exclusive right to self-advocate for their citizens in various International Organizations (IOs). The platform of IOs allows states to address accounts of foreign victimization in a legitimate setting through institutions associated with the UN. The inability of disputed territories such as Palestine and Tibet to effectively partake in these international institutions makes the overall livelihood of their people dependent on influential states. The United States is one of the most powerful members in the international system with capabilities to influence other actors economically, militarily, and veto resolutions in the UN. Under these circumstances, the US would ideally be the best strategic partner for such vulnerable members, such as Palestine and Tibet. People assume that actors in the international system including the US act rationally. However, there is a debate on whether their intentions are out of self-interest or morality of larger ideals. Analyzing why the United States economically and politically supports the Tibetan government but not the Palestinian government can provide greater insight into a state's behavior. More specifically, looking at this international puzzle through a constructivist and realist theoretical framework will employ two differing justifications to determine which holds superior rational.

Through the analysis of political theories, like realism and constructivism, one can further gain insight into this international phenomenon of state motivation. Classical realists, like Thucydides, Hans J. Morgenthau, and Thomas Hobbes, argue that states are self-interested maximizers of power without the ability to fully trust other fellow states due to defense insecurity.<sup>1</sup> A state's uncertainty of territorial security can be seen in the marginalization of disputed territories in structural institutions due to their presence undermining the stronger states they inhabit. China and Israel are exemplary states that inhibit disputed areas within their borders, such as Tibet and Palestine, from engaging with full capability in the international arena, highlighting the potency of the argument by Thucydides: "...The strong do what they can and the weak suffer what they must."<sup>2</sup> This illustrates that in conflictual, asymmetrical relations between states and disputed territories, one experiences the loss of morality at the expense of self-interest.

This idea is due to the foundations of realism describing the world as it is, not how ideally it should be. For instance, this concept can be illustrated in renowned political scientist Kenneth Waltz's writing, *Man, the State and War: a Theoretical Analysis*, where he blatantly

---

<sup>1</sup> Gregory Crane, *Thucydides and the Ancient Simplicity: the Limits of Political Realism* (Berkeley, CAC: University of California Press, 1998), 35.; Hans J. Morgenthau and Kenneth W. Thompson, *Politics among Nations: the Struggle for Power and Peace* (New Delhi: Kalyani Publishers, 2014), 84.; Thomas Hobbes, "Chapter 30: Of the Office of the Sovereign Representative," essay in *Hobbes: Leviathan: Student Edition*, edited by Richard Tuck (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 239.

<sup>2</sup> Crane, *Thucydides and the Ancient Simplicity*, 27.

disregards individuals outside of the political entity of the state allowing the reader to assume their trivial relevance. For example, he writes, “War may result because state A has something that state B wants. The efficient cause of the war is the desire of state B; the permissive cause is the fact that there is nothing to prevent state B from undertaking the risks of war.”<sup>3</sup> Thus, one can argue that disputed territories are secondary, illegitimate actors in their host countries that warrant no rights under realist thought. This essay will accept this premise and understand that even though these disputed territories carry no weight in the international field, under realist thinking, the US benefits from supporting the Tibetan government in a way the country would not from assisting the Palestinian government.

“International politics, like all politics, is a struggle for power.”<sup>4</sup> This quote by Hans J. Morgenthau depicts the importance for countries to maintain power—the status quo—or to increase their potential and actual power at any cost. One can argue the US choice to financially and politically endorse the Tibetan government is a strategic tactic to highlight human rights abuses in China. This ploy aims to redirect China's international policy, such as aggression in the South China Sea, to one of an internal policy ultimately achieving the US's interest in the region—maintaining a stronghold in Asia. US-China relations are built on the conflictual interest of achieving political dominance over the other. The South China Sea is the most recent platform to continue this struggle of power but is a part of a deeper cyclical pattern. For example, the two actors' repetitive competition for political superiority is displayed in their various opposing alliances, as seen in the Korean War, the Vietnam War, and the Cold War.

One rationalization for this rivalry is China's past inferiority in the world system, which enabled China to be sliced and subsequently subject to unethical foreign occupation in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century. This can be illustrated in numerous cases with the British occupation of Hong Kong after the Opium Wars, the Sino-Japanese wars with the Russians that occurred on Chinese soil, and the German occupation of Jiaozhou Bay until the end of World War II. Thus, regardless of China's ethical justification for maintaining and increasing power, its rise is inevitably seen as a threat to US hegemony. The security dilemma illustrates the inability of the US and China to realize the morality behind the other's power buildup, which keeps them in a perpetual state of conflict.<sup>5</sup> Realism is dependent firmly on logic, and Morgenthau's view that all problems are susceptible to rational thought gives validation to both sides' lust for power; though the US and China's insecurities prevent them from effectively communicating their concerns to one another. Negotiations require a level of vulnerability and honesty that neither side is willing to make in their relationship—i.e. inter-state interactions—in order to obtain a trusting dynamic. Therefore, they try to outspend each other monetarily and energetically.<sup>6</sup> An example of this is the United

---

<sup>3</sup> Kenneth N. Waltz, *Man, the State and War: a Theoretical Analysis* (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 2018), 231-235.

<sup>4</sup> Morgenthau and Thompson, *Politics among Nations*, 111.

<sup>5</sup> Shiping Tang, “The Security Dilemma: A Conceptual Analysis,” *Security Studies* 18, no. 3 (October 8, 2009): 587-623, <https://doi.org/10.1080/09636410903133050>.

<sup>6</sup> Morgenthau and Thompson, *Politics among Nations*, 132.

States' calculated scope to focus on Tibet, China's largest territorial insecurity of separatism disguised as a humanitarian concern to the outside world.

The three million dollar increase in US funding to the Tibetan government-in-exile illustrates the US commitment to sustaining the Tibetan cause both in and outside of China.<sup>7</sup> At first glance, the US donation seems to come from humanitarian intent, but in reality, this is done based on self-interest. The lack of uniformity in US support to similarly disputed territories governments, specifically Palestine, is a key indicator morality is not the determinative motivation for US assistantship. Rather, the United States attempts to find a strategic regional partner to assist in its maximization of power. For the reasons, there was no possibility of a regional alliance in Asia involving China. But the absence of other relative powers in the area meant the US had to balance the influence of China's rein by itself. For example, the US attempted to weaken China's prestige by giving the Dalai Lama, the leader of Tibet who is perceived by China as a domestic terrorist, a platform to voice his message of "cultural autonomy."<sup>8</sup> However, if the US had the option between a viable state actor and non-state actor partnership to counter China's power, the US would choose the state actor. This strategic decision is because, under realist theory, a state could provide assurances to the preservation of US regional control financially and militarily, while a non-state actor cannot, due to its inferiority in the international system. Unfortunately, a state actor was not an option in Asia for the US, but the US did have a potential for a state actor partner in the Middle East, Israel. However, the US-Israeli alliance would come at the expense of US-Palestinian relations.

"Immature thought is predominantly purposive and utopian. Thought which rejects purpose altogether is the thought of old age. Mature thought combines purpose with observation and analysis."<sup>9</sup> This excerpt from a publication, *The Twenty Years' Crisis* by E. H. Carr, warns against the pitfalls of the human mind to think actions are done with moral intent over objectively driven goals. This subject is demonstrated in how Israel offers the US a stronghold in the Middle East and due to that, the US prioritizes Israeli interests over the Palestinian government's conflicting needs. The concept of the Palestinian "right to return" to a land now claimed by Israel directly challenges Israel's territorial integrity. Thus, based on the controversial history between Israel and Palestine, particularly how Israel acquired its statehood displacing large volumes of Palestinian people, the US could not be impartial in the Israel-Palestine strife and obtain an effective partnership with either party.<sup>10</sup> Therefore, the US stood politically and economically with the Israeli government as a result of its superior statehood status. The US

---

<sup>7</sup> Jamphel Shonu, "US Congress Approves Increased Funding for Tibetans in Tibet and Exile," Central Tibetan Administration, March 29, 2018, <https://tibet.net/us-congress-approves-increased-funding-for-tibetans-in-tibet-and-exile/>.

<sup>8</sup> Emily Wax, "Tibetan Leader Warns Of Cultural 'Extinction'--Dalai Lama Marks Uprising's Anniversary," The Washington Post (WP Company, March 11, 2009), <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2009/03/10/AR2009031000206.html?noredirect=on>.

<sup>9</sup> Edward Hallett Carr, *The Twenty Years' Crisis* (London: Macmillan, 1940), 65.

<sup>10</sup> Joel Beinin, "The Israeli-Palestinian Conflict and the Arab Awakening," *Palestine - Israel Journal of Politics, Economics, and Culture* 18, no. 1 (2012): 52-60.

strategically chose Israel as its ideal partner because Israel enjoys a plethora of capabilities including building a military that Palestine could not due to its disputed territory label. For example, some academics believe that “engaging non-state armed actors has posed a distinct challenge to international peace-building and state-building efforts.”<sup>11</sup> As a consequence, Hamas’ military buildup in Gaza exemplifies the inability of a non-state military to be met with acceptance in the international system as his regime creates regional instability. Thus, by the US supporting the stronger actor (in this case, Israel) the state would directly derive the most benefits from this uncontested partnership.

The foundation of the US-Israeli alliance was built on securing Israel’s physical security from domestic terrorists like Hamas in exchange for achieving US objectives. As a result, the US interest in ensuring a strong Israeli state comes at the cost of a virile Palestinian government within Israel. The US willingly makes this concession in order to maintain surveillance operations in the Middle East dire to its own security concerns. For example, “the US and Israel collaborated on one of the most-sophisticated malware systems ever created, Stuxnet, to infiltrate Iran’s cyber infrastructure and slow progress towards nuclear weapons without firing a shot.”<sup>12</sup> This quote illustrates the financial and militaristic investments the US has in Israel. Due to the high success in acquiring both its self-interests in this alliance, the US wants to maintain the regional status-quo of power in the Middle East but opposing leadership in the Palestinian governments poses a risk to this political hierarchy and threatens its ally Israel, sequentially challenging US foreign investment in the state.

If the US was not biased towards the Israeli government in ensuring its own interests, morally, the US would still be unfit to support the Palestinian governments under realist thought. The opposing leadership of Hamas and Fatah in Palestine incur risks to the international order that the Tibetan government could not base on its unified messages, ambitions, and authority.<sup>13</sup> For instance, Hamas’ de-facto government in Gaza is labeled a terrorist organization by the US, based on their tactics of suicide bombing and systemic use of violence, while the Palestine Authority headed by Fatah encourages peaceful co-existence.<sup>14</sup> These opposing ideals of leadership weaken the functionality of both governments since the Palestinian people become politically divided and as a result, the governments have low authoritative control over the people they lead. This enables anarchy to assume the power vacuum and allows this disputed area to be viewed negatively by a majority of states. In the international system, states may be in a perpetual state of conflict; however, there is uniformity in their makeup that Palestine lacks,

---

<sup>11</sup> Claudia Hofmann and Ulrich Schneckener, “Engaging Non-State Armed Actors in State- and Peace- Building: Options and Strategies,” *International Review of the Red Cross* 93, no.883 (September 2011): 603-621, <https://doi.org/10.1017/s1816383112000148>.

<sup>12</sup> Alex Lockie, “Here’s Why the US and Israel Are Such Close Allies,” *Business Insider*, February 18, 2017, <https://www.businessinsider.com/us-israel-allies-2017-2>.

<sup>13</sup> Moregenthau and Thompson, *Politics among Nations*, 90.

<sup>14</sup> “Foreign Terrorist Organizations,” U.S. Department of State (U.S. Department of State), <https://www.state.gov/j/ct/rls/other/des/123085.htm>; Qadura Fares and Hatem Abdel Kader, “The Changing Face of Fatah?: Voices of a New Generation,” *The Washington Institute for Near East Policy*, November 6, 2003, <https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/view/the-changing-face-of-fatah-voices-of-a-new-generation>, 2.

posing a risk to international order. The concept of political stability (order) aligned with realist thought highlights why economically and politically, the US cannot support Palestine as it goes against the most basic of realist theorem.<sup>15</sup> The remainder of this essay employs the same theoretical question with a constructivist investigation to identify other reasons why the US would have differing support between these territories.

Constructivism is a political theory that is based heavily on the way individuals relate to each other. This school of thought provides great insight into the cultural environment that cultivates people's inherent beliefs.<sup>16</sup> For instance, constructivist Alexander Wendt believes if people encounter a self-help order in politics, this is from the process of states' engagement rather than the structure of the international system.<sup>17</sup> This demonstrates the powerful impact of human behavior on shaping their internal community within states rather than this being external to their control. Thus, people's identities and interests are constructed through interaction--since people create societal/state norms, they can also redefine them. This concept is demonstrated in the quote, "Anarchy is what states make of it."<sup>18</sup> Wendt highlights how the realist explanation is inadequate alone to describe the international system due to the lack of recognition of individual power as people possess the ability to exert influence on states' dynamics.

To conclude, under the constructivist theory, the more people understand our habitat, the further they expand their knowledge. Constructivism adds value for the study of international relations mainly in the emphasis of explaining how individual actors can learn from their past mistakes and do better in the future. This offers an optimistic view of international politics, which can assist in investigating why the US has different approaches towards the Palestinian and Tibetan governments. Under a constructivist analysis, the paper will be examining the ideas, norms, and practices which inhibit Palestinian support from the US that Tibet reframes from as an actor.

The US political and economic support of Tibet is not dependent on chance, rather, on the shared values of democracy, non-violence, and co-existence. These shared beliefs allow Tibet's rise to be met with acceptance while a powerful Palestine is viewed as a threat due to its insufficient commitment to these values. An exemplifying case is Palestine's failure to universally embrace Israel's right to exist. This inability of acknowledgment is an important ideal to social constructivism because the security environment of a state is both materially and culturally/conceptually constituted.<sup>19</sup> As a result, Palestine jeopardizes the socially constructed norms of peaceful co-existence in international politics that the US has spent extensive time and influence cultivating for Israel. Thus, one can assume the US current assistantship towards the

---

<sup>15</sup> Moregenthau and Thompson, *Politics among Nations*, 98.

<sup>16</sup> Alexander Wendt, "Anarchy is What States Make of It: The Social Construction of Power Politics (1992)," *International Theory* 46, no. 2 (1995), [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-349-23773-9\\_7](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-349-23773-9_7), 112.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, 142.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, 140.

<sup>19</sup> John Gerard Ruggie, *Constructing the World Polity: Essays on International Institutionalization* (London: Routledge, 2006), 43.

Tibetan government does not incur the same risks that supporting the Palestinian governments would to the US idea of international order. These differing beliefs permit the US and Palestine to socially construct identities of each other in relation to their perceived negative actions embedding further obstacles towards Palestinian aid. This illustrates that conflicts are both ideational and material in international politics. However, there is a possibility of transformation because if these beliefs and ideas change, the social relationship can change for the better.<sup>20</sup> Until then, Israel will ideologically remain as a barrier to Palestinian governmental support from the US.

The US and Israel have an extensive history that has led to the two states adopting similar cultural, historical, and religious identities. For example, both nations began out of immigrant societies, seeing themselves as a place for people who believed in their messages. Such that, the “American Dream” and the “Holy Land” both incorporate the ideas of a better life for individuals. Both of these terms encompass states executing morality principles towards their citizens over self-interest concerns. By contrast, China as a communist society and with its opposing values of social orientations in governance is more worried about self-preservation than the livelihood of its people. As a result, the US and China do not share this type of positive affirming identities the way the US does with Israel. Thus, supporting Tibet within China’s borders does not come at a moral predicament the way going against Israel by aiding the Palestinian government does. This ideological explanation illustrates how political and economic assistance have different significance in these two varying cases but “structurally” are the same. According to constructivist theory, actions of a state are aligned with its identity which is why the US assists the Tibetan government and cannot offer buttress to the Palestinian government.<sup>21</sup> Wendt highlights how states exist within a world of their own making, rather than adhering to international norms they have no control of. Specifically, if China wants to influence the US stance on Tibet, it has to improve its own relationship with the US.

China has denounced the US numerous times for the US assistance to the de facto government of Tibet within its borders. However, under constructivist thought, the US support of the Tibetan government is heavily reliant on the US and China’s differential ideals of human rights. For example, President Obama reiterated the US stance on Tibet being one of humanitarian concern: “I again affirmed America’s unwavering support for the human rights and fundamental freedoms of all people, including freedom of assembly and expression, freedom of the press and freedom of religion... denying ethnic minorities equal treatment are all problematic, in our view, and actually prevent China and its people from realizing its full potential.”<sup>22</sup> This excerpt illustrates that if the US and China could agree on what conceptually constitutes the fundamental care of people within any border, then there would be no need for

---

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., 25.

<sup>21</sup> Wendt, “Anarchy is What States Make of It,” 138.

<sup>22</sup> “Remarks by President Obama and President Xi of the People’s Republic of China in Joint Press Conference,” National Archives and Records Administration, Office of the Press Secretary, September 25, 2015, <https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/the-press-office/2015/09/25/remarks-president-obama-and-president-xi-peoples-republic-china-joint>.

monetary assistance to the Tibetan government's cause. This universal definition for China and the US could only be achieved by working together to fundamentally transform their viewpoint from seeing the other as an obstacle to the strategic partners they could be. This would require the states to put aside their short-term interest in the attempt to acquire a lasting peace, not guaranteed, but reliant on their individual efforts collectively as a whole.

Constructivism and realism can be complementary as explained in this essay. Both offer insights into this observable inconsistent US foreign policy pertaining to why the US offers political and financial buttresses to the Tibetan government and not the Palestinian government. However, they differ in the logic behind the United States' motivation coming from social influence both morally and ideally (constructivism) or self-interest intent as well as security concerns (realism). In this case, the dilemma is neither one nor the other, but a combination of the two influences. Realism is flawed with oversimplification and due to that, this theory does not account for the US and Israel's shared identities, enabling for a moral conflict by supporting Palestine. The main theme of this paper has been explaining the US differing relations with Tibet and Palestine in regard to the states they inhabit, demonstrating the importance of the physical state that constructivists overlook. As a result, to look at this issue separately would be doing a disservice to the international relations field. The true indicator of the superior rational theory is dependent on individual outlook. Politicians will prioritize morals or self-interest due to their own backgrounds and beliefs. This example is not illustrating pure constructivism because it lacks the standardization for individual opinion—some people simply are selfish/bad in nature. Thus, both constructivism and realism are equally valid in explaining this conflict together and separately.

---

## Book Review: *The Primacy of Politics—Social Democracy and the Making of Europe's Twentieth Century* by Sheri Berman

---

Alice Timken

### Introduction

How is it possible that non-democratic nationalist and fascist ideas are gaining traction in social democratic systems? Are these two ideological positions not polar opposites? It turns out we should not be surprised by ideological shifts in once-perceived social democratic strongholds toward less democratic perspectives. After all, the historical development of social democracy and fascism are similar. Through a detailed narrative of the interrelated development of democracy and fascism, Professor Sheri Berman's *The Primacy of Politics: Social Democracy and the Making of Europe's Twentieth Century* offers a useful context to better understand the reemergence of nationalist and fascist ideologies in contemporary European politics.

*The Primacy of Politics* is a comparative historical analysis of social democratic, national socialist, and fascist ideologies in 20th century Europe. By examining the political development of five countries, Germany, Austria, France, Italy, and Sweden, Berman traces the intellectual development of all three ideologies back to Marxist theory. She concludes that social democracy, national socialism, and fascism are closely related ideologies despite their perceived differences. All three ideologies grew to prominence by furthering the same doctrine: the primacy of politics and communitarianism. Berman identifies these as the two primary ideological wants of the populous. However, Berman's study is regrettably limited in scope and societal dimension, and it fails to offer causal evidence for the success of one ideology over another in each country. Despite these limitations, Berman's core finding, that social democratic, national socialist, and fascist ideologies are linked in theory and practice, has meaningful implications for studies on institutions and democratization, as well as for our collective understanding of the alarmingly close relationship between "successful" social democracy and extreme authoritarianism.

Berman makes two principal arguments: first, she identifies a coherent and compelling ideological connection between Marxism, social democracy, national socialism, and fascism. Second, in making this connection, she challenges the dominant liberalist and triumphalist narrative in European politics. Upon these foundational arguments, Berman warns of the potential for regimes to slip between these ideologies- a warning that feels almost prescient in context of today's political climate. Despite valid critiques of her analytical approach and use of the Scandinavian model, Berman crafts a compelling argument on the ideological connection between social democracy, national socialism, and fascism, cementing Berman as an authority on the development of European political ideology.

## Social Democracy's Ideological Genealogy

Berman traces the development of socialist ideology in countries that played key roles in early 20th century European political development: Germany, Italy, France, Austria, and Sweden. She demonstrates an intellectual family tree beginning with Marxism in the late 1800s and ending with social democracy in Sweden and national socialism and fascism in Germany and Italy during World War II. Her narrative weaves through the beginnings of democratic revisionism (approximately 1883-1900), early experimentations in social democracy (approximately 1900 to 1914), the rise of fascism and national socialism (approximately 1914 to 1945), and social democracy in the postwar era after 1945. Berman establishes their shared ideological roots and forces readers to confront an uncomfortable and often unconsidered reality, that the line between democracy and fascism may be much finer than previously thought.

Around the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, in the wake of the first industrial revolution, Europeans began to question socio-political theories based on what Berman identifies as the “primacy of economics,” paving the way for theories that favor the “primacy of politics,” or the idea that political forces can and should have authority over economic forces. In this context, the era’s dominant theories were thought to have fundamental weaknesses: liberalism failed to account for the negative consequences of early capitalism,<sup>1</sup> and orthodox Marxism “did little to meet the psychopolitical needs of mass populations,” especially in light of capitalism’s increasingly unlikely decline.<sup>2</sup> The “primacy of economics,” or the notion that economic forces dictate the course of history, as espoused by liberalism and Marxism, failed to appeal to a public who desperately sought protection against economic forces. According to Berman, addressing this public desire for primacy of politics and communalism in the face of strong economic forces has been the purpose of political parties to this day.

Marxists responded to this psychopolitical need by introducing an element of human agency—the primacy of politics—into their understanding of socialist political development. These revisions took two forms:

...Two distinct strands of thinking emerged. The first was revolutionary and epitomized by the work of Georges Sorel. For Sorel, a radical and perhaps violent overthrow of the existing order seemed the surest path to a better future ... The second strand of revisionism was democratic and epitomized by the work of Eduard Bernstein. Like Sorel, Bernstein believed that socialism would emerge from an active struggle for a better world, but unlike Sorel he thought this struggle could and should take a democratic and evolutionary form. Where Sorel’s work would help lay the groundwork for fascism, Bernstein’s would help lay the groundwork for social democracy.<sup>3</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> James T. Kloppenberg, *Uncertain Victory: Social Democracy and Progressivism in European and American Thought, 1870-1920* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press; 1986), 199.

<sup>2</sup> Sheri Berman, *The Primacy of Politics: Social Democracy and the Making of Europe's Twentieth Century* (Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 13.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 14.

Berman traces social democracy back to Eduard Bernstein, a late 19th century philosopher and a member of the German socialist party who vocally questioned the International Socialist Movement's faith in Marx's revolutionary logic. Rather than accept Marx's claim that an inevitable proletarian revolution will lead to socialism, Bernstein was interested in whether capitalism and democracy could be jointly harnessed to promote socialist programs. This radical idea was rejected by the orthodox international party, but Bernstein continued to argue for engagement with "bourgeois" politics which created the foundation for social democracy, which while related, is wholly separate from traditional socialism. Through Bernstein's dissidence, the new ideology of social democracy was born out of Marxism.<sup>4</sup> The social democratic school of thought inspired socialist parties across all five of Berman's examples to engage with their state's democratic electoral system in the years leading up to World War I, an attempt at "democratic revisionism."

Berman argues that the roots of national socialism and fascism are quite similar, identifying Georges Sorel, another socialist party member and philosopher, as the progenitor of both socialist nationalism and fascism. Sorel agreed with Bernstein that the ultimate goal of socialism needed direct means through mass mobilization and revolution. Sorel pioneered a socialist justification for revolutionary violence as a means for proletariat liberation. During the interwar years, Sorel's intellectual framework rose as the dominant ideology in Europe, while democratic revisionism was thought to have failed the socialist cause. An impoverished and war-torn post-WWI Europe was eager for communitarian and political protections, and leftist leaders adopted interpretations of Sorel's framework to answer this call. Two of these leaders were Benito Mussolini in Italy and Adolf Hitler in German. Sorel's revolutionary revisionism paved the way for the fascism and national socialism in World War II.<sup>5</sup>

In this narrative, Berman asserts that the ideological differences between social democracy and fascism are not a result of differences in society, but rather a result of different answers to the same public desires for the primacy of politics and communitarianism. By showing that social democracy, national socialism, and fascism belong to the same ideological family tree, Berman demonstrates they have the same commitments and thus public appeal:

For social democrats, the primacy of politics meant using a democratic state to institutionalize policies that would protect society from capitalism's harshest effect [...] For fascists and national socialists, the primacy of politics meant using a tyrannical state to control markets, ostensibly for the good of society [...] However critical these differences turned out to be, it is important to recognize that shared commitments to the primacy of politics and community fundamentally differentiated social democrats, fascists, and national socialist from contemporary liberals and orthodox Marxists.<sup>6</sup>

---

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., 38.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., 69.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., 206.

As Berman explains, the policy agenda, public appeal and path to success of all three ideologies are functionally similar, establishing their deep association and furthering social democracy from its perceived roots in liberalism.

Described as “iconoclast,” Berman’s *Primacy of Politics* goes against liberalist triumphalism which traditionally dominated the narrative.<sup>7</sup> Berman inserts a counter-narrative that relegates liberalism to the peripheral and draws ideological parallels that may better explain the political trends of today. Berman’s narrative represents a larger global conversation between the primacy of economics and the primacy of politics.<sup>8</sup> In an increasingly globalized capitalist economy, this debate is not receding any time soon. For this reason, Berman’s findings as expressed in *The Primacy of Politics* and many of her succeeding writings remain relevant, as she interrogates the role of ideology in response to present and past calls for the primacy of politics.

## Critique

Berman’s *Primacy of Politics* has been critiqued from three primary perspectives: that of electoral and political party scholars, European historians, and democratic preconditionists who hold that democracy is best achieved in a specific sequence of events. While scholars point out the limitations in scope and breadth, none attempt to diminish Berman’s conclusion on the link between social democratic ideology and national socialism or fascism. This suggests that this work, while narrow, is also remarkably robust.

The most compelling critique of *The Primacy of Politics* is its inability to make causal inferences about political party success. Susan E. Scarrow argues the book takes a thin approach and omits electoral topics such as expanded suffrage, party tactics, vote and legislative seat counts, or waves of enfranchisement: “for a book about political parties, elections and institutions have a rather secondary place throughout.”<sup>9</sup> Scarrow applauds Berman’s historical narrative, but demonstrates that the work’s emphasis on ideology limits its contemporary application. This is evident in Berman’s concluding suggestion that the declining European social democratic movement should regain its legitimacy through a “return to its ideological roots.” To Scarrow this presents an unsupported logical leap:

Whether or not her optimism about the power of the ideas is justified, it is less clear that a return to its roots offers the social democratic left a recipe for electoral success. After all, this is a book about the dominance of ideas over electoral history—even if social democrats get the ideas right, they won’t necessarily win elections.<sup>10</sup>

---

<sup>7</sup> Jan-Werner Müller, “Recovering the Age of Social Democracy: Sheri Berman’s *The Primacy of Politics* Social Democracy and the Making of Europe’s Twentieth Century” in *Dissent* (Denville, NJ: Dissent 2007), 135.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, 135.

<sup>9</sup> Susan Scarrow, “Reviewed Work: *The Primacy of Politics: Social Democracy and the Making of Europe's Twentieth Century* by Sheri Berman” in *German Politics & Society* (Washington, DC: Berghahn Books, 2007), 100.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, 102.

In practical terms, Berman's work is lacking, largely because of its unbalanced emphasis on ideology.

Underlying Scarrow's critique is a greater comment on the work's one-dimensionality. This sentiment is echoed by Lynch who comments, "The tight focus on one branch of the political family tree leads inevitably to some distortions—but also to some new insights."<sup>11</sup> While Berman's one-dimensional argument has significant theoretical implications, it lacks in two areas: 1) to provide a deep historical political analysis of factors outside of ideological genealogy, and 2) to account for possible confounding variables. This is the Achilles heel of *The Primacy of Politics* and the reason why Berman's insights on the so-called "success" of the social democratic party in Sweden and "failure" of its equivalent party in Germany feel inapplicable to contemporary case studies. Her analysis does not provide enough evidence to support her conclusion that superior strategy and execution by the Swedish social democratic party was the primary reason for its victory over national socialism or fascism. This critique reminds the reader that Berman's book should be understood as narrow in scope and restricted in application. However, as both Scarrow and Lynch clarify, one-dimensionality is certainly not reason enough to discount this work.

My own critique of Berman's *The Primacy of Politics* builds on Scarrow's concern over unidimensionality to challenge her chosen success case, Swedish social democracy, as well as her suggestion that Swedish social democratic program presents a replicable model for success. I find that Berman's claim regarding the Scandinavian Model – that social democracy survived the interwar wave of authoritarianism due to political maneuvering of Scandinavian democratic socialist parties – plausible but not probable. She fails to consider the possible impact of homogeneity in the successful development of social democracy in Sweden, which could drastically undermine her argument that political party prowess was the key to success. Recent studies on the relationship between state welfare and heterogeneity, particularly with regard to immigration, have shown a negative relationship between the two.<sup>12</sup> Berman's justification for Sweden's success would be more persuasive if it included a model that controls for the percentage of ethnic minorities or foreign-born persons within each country at the time of development of social democracy. In the context of new information on the relationship between heterogeneity and social benefits, the success in Scandinavia, a relatively homogeneous country, could be considered a product of environmental rather than institutional factors. Further, in Sweden the recent rise in foreign-born residents<sup>13</sup> coincides with a rollback in social benefits,

---

<sup>11</sup> Julia Lynch, "Book Review: Berman, S. (2006). *The Primacy of Politics: Social Democracy and the Making of Europe's Twentieth Century*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press," in *Comparative Political Studies* (UK: Sage Journals, 2008), 250.

<sup>12</sup> Udaya R. Wagle, *Heterogeneity Link of the Welfare State and Redistribution* (Switzerland: Springer International Publishing, 2013), 103.

<sup>13</sup> "World Population Prospects - Population Division," United Nations, September 27, 2019. <https://population.un.org/wpp>.

suggesting that homogeneity is an important factor within welfare systems that function on the primacy of politics. This would diminish the validity of Berman's advice for today's social democratic movement to return to its ideological roots. While well-executed ideology may be impactful, it may not be as impactful in different societal conditions, such as increased heterogeneity.

### **Berman's Continuum of Work**

*The Primacy of Politics* is part of a robust continuum of work by Sheri Berman which taken together presents a comprehensive thesis on political development in Europe, directly and indirectly questioning what does and does not make democracy work. Considering topics in comparative political development, political history, democratization, globalization, and the history of the Left, Berman's works tell the story of European political development through a unique lens that emphasizes social and ideological factors and their relationship with political institutions. Her prominent works feature an obvious commitment to historical accuracy of intellectual transmissions, thoughtful considerations of public sentiment, and deep analysis of the influence of political institutions on the behavior of governing regimes. While her works lack causal findings that can be applied to contemporary global politics, they offer focused and attentive accounts of the political development that serve as a model for scholars analyzing ideological political development.

Soon after completing her doctorate in 1994, Berman established herself as a burgeoning voice in the field of democratization studies by analyzing the relationship between civil society, institutions, and democracy. This is exemplified by her articles "Civil Society and Political Institutionalization"<sup>14</sup> and "Civil Society and the Collapse of the Weimar Republic."<sup>15</sup> In the former, she argues against an idea shared by both Mass Society and Neo-Toquevillian theoreticians, that civil society fuels democracy. This challenges the work of prominent scholars such as Robert Putnam,<sup>16</sup> Francis Fukuyama,<sup>17</sup> and Benjamin Barber.<sup>18</sup> In the latter, Berman illustrates her conclusions by analyzing the collapse of "the twentieth century's most critical democratic experiment, Weimar Germany" through the development of civil society.<sup>19</sup> In both, she challenges the formerly assumed causal relationship between civil society and democracy, illustrating how an active civil society without robust institutions are more likely to result in the collapse of democracy and the cooptation of democratic institutions for non-democratic ends.

---

<sup>14</sup> Sheri Berman, "Civil Society and Political Institutionalization" in *American Behavioral Scientist* 40 (1997): 562.

<sup>15</sup> Sheri Berman, "Civil Society and the Collapse of the Weimar Republic" in *World Politics* 49 (1997): 401-29.

<sup>16</sup> Robert Putnam et. al, *Making Democracy Work: Civic Traditions in Modern Italy* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1993); Robert Putnam, "Bowling alone: America's declining social capital" in *Journal of Democracy* (Washington, D.C.: The Johns Hopkins University Press 1995), 6; Robert Putnam, "The strange disappearance of civic America" in *The American Prospect* (Washington, D.C.: 1996), 24.

<sup>17</sup> Francis Fukuyama, *Trust the Social Virtues and the Creation of Prosperity* (New York: Simon & Schuster 1995).

<sup>18</sup> Benjamin R. Barber, *Jihad vs. McWorld: How the planet is both falling apart and coming together—and what this means for democracy* (New York: New York Times Books 1995).

<sup>19</sup> Berman, "Civil Society and the Collapse of the Weimar Republic," 401.

The multi-functional understanding of political institutions, most notably political parties, as both supporting and undermining democratization is a foundational pillar of Berman's work.

In contrast to earlier works, Berman's *The Primacy of Politics*, received less attention despite being more thorough in her analysis of ideology, institutions, and democratization. The work's underestimation was possibly due to the timing of its publication, over 15 years removed from the collapse of the Soviet Union and during a period of democracy-building efforts by Western powers. Possibly in response to the field's inattention, Berman spends significant energy in the following years contextualizing *The Primacy of Politics* and warning the West of its potential to repeat the errs of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Her article "The Primacy of Economics versus the Primacy of Politics" asserts the relevance of her findings in light of the 2008-9 economic crisis:

The current economic crisis has once again brought debates about capitalism and globalization to the forefront of the political agenda. [...] the issue at the heart of globalization debates - whether political forces can dominate economic ones or must bow before them - is not new at all. I show that many of the great ideological and political battles of the last century were fought over precisely this ground, and argue that because we have forgotten or misunderstood these earlier debates our current discourse is thin and impoverished.<sup>20</sup>

In the wake of the economic crisis, Berman uses this article to insist that the primacy of politics and communitarianism is a primary concern for the global population and astute theorists and parties must address these calls. She makes a compelling case for a timely reconsideration of her findings and warns social democrats not to "peddle 'fascism lite' nor accept nativism or prejudice" at risk of resembling dangerous steps toward authoritarian ideologies taken by social democratic thinkers in the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

As 21<sup>st</sup> century democracies espouse growing nationalist sentiments through limiting international border flows, voting against participation in regional organizations, and waging trade wars, Berman's warnings are increasingly poignant. In this context that Berman published her latest work, *Democracy and Dictatorship in Europe: From the Ancien Régime to the Present Day*.<sup>21</sup> This book is an extensive consideration of European political development that unites and refines her investigations of transitions from monarchy, intellectual transmissions, and the impact of institutions. Berman touches on a broad array of historical cases and addresses (some but not all) critiques of one-dimensionality through the incorporation of graphs on electoral results, elites participation, gross domestic product, distribution of labor force, emigration, and more. Berman posits that this work contributes to the study of democracy in three ways by: 1) deepening our understanding of the challenges that new democracies face by exploring those of the past, 2) providing more realistic criteria by which to judge new democracies, 3) providing a

---

<sup>20</sup> Sheri Berman, "The Primacy of Economics versus the Primacy of Politics: Understanding the Ideological Dynamics of the Twentieth Century" in *Perspectives on Politics*, 7, no. 3 (2009): 561.

<sup>21</sup> Sheri Berman, *Democracy and Dictatorship in Europe: From the Ancien Régime to the Present Day* (Oxford: Oxford University Press 2019).

better understanding of what it took to make democracy work in Europe.<sup>22</sup> In today's political climate, liberal democracy is again under pressure to adapt. Unfortunately, as Berman notes, it has "often taken tragedies like democratic collapse, violent dictatorship, and war to force elites and publics to recognize the value of liberal democracy and what it takes to make it work."<sup>23</sup> On this ground, Berman implores us to stay vigilant and thoughtful and face threats to liberal democracy head on.

## Conclusion

*The Primacy of Politics* is a powerful book that offers insights on the development of social democratic, national socialist, and fascist ideologies in 20th century Europe. It lays the groundwork for future analyses on the role of ideology and institutions in democracy, identifies a coherent and compelling ideological connection between Marxism, social democracy, national socialism, and fascism, and disproves the dominant liberalist triumphalist narrative in European politics. In its fearlessly "iconoclast" consideration of the history of social democracy, the work presents an important counter-narrative that may better explain contemporary political movements. Bracing the field for future studies on nationalist democratic movements, Berman's *The Primacy of Politics* does the important work of reframing our collective understanding of the dangerously close relationship between "successful" social democracy and violent authoritarianism.

---

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., 405-407.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., 407.